This is when a picture is worth a thousand words.

Savor Him! Savor your time with the Lord!

For the last two weeks, we have been emphasizing our relationship with the Lord is worth savoring, Jesus is worth slowing down for. It's wise to hang out with him because after all he is the One Who Is Not Worried About a Thing.

The bliss of being relaxed in the Lord's Presence. It's a little bit like savoring a Lindor ball.

My only sadness…? I am all out of Lindor balls.

Let us review these beautiful and wise scripture verses. For our final week, let's recite them together, ready?

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and lean not on your own understanding,

in all your ways submit to him,

and he will make your paths straight.

Lovely. It is almost like you've heard that passage before.

During this series, a couple of you have shared with me Proverbs 3:5-6 is your "life verse". It's been good to hear that!

If you are unfamiliar with "life verses", let me explain.

A "life verse" is a passage of scripture that resonates deeply with you, something you feel God has given you personally, that anchors you.

It offers guidance, encouragement, comfort and purpose over the whole of your life. You often have it memorized and you have repeated it to self and God many times in your life maybe helping you with career choices, whom to marry, how to serve God.

Reflecting on "life verses", gave me an idea. What if we did a sermon series on your "life verses"? Let me know your verses, keep you anonymous, but I think it would be enriching and encouraging.

In our last week in this text, we will be focusing on this promise, **"and he will make your paths straight."**

Before this line…we had our part to play, we had to trust in the Lord, not trust in our own wisdom, and submit all our ways to Him.

Now this metaphor. Now we can talk about the good stuff, the benefits that come our way when we live wisely, in step with God.

As we learn more and more how to trust God completely and align our wills in word and deed with God's will…God will help make our life's journey clear, righteous, and in harmony with His purposes.

Another metaphor I like, similar to this promise, is how God loves to draw straight lines with crooked sticks.

We are the crooked sticks and God loves working in our lives to heal us, encourage and grow us, to straighten out our priorities over our lifetimes.

Marshman introduced another analogy around this last line when she shared how she loved dancing with her husband.

There is another phrase used when we walk with God over the long haul…it's also called being part of the dance, or joining the dance, or joining the divine dance.

And that resonated with me. I love dancing. I can't help myself when we are rocking it in worship, I have to move my body. One of you described it as "bebopping". I love to bebop.

When I was reading about Marshman's lovely image of dancing with her husband, it reminded me of a little dance thing I used to do, it was pretty "look away" embarrassing.

I worked at Borders Bookshop in my late 20's. And sometimes a customer would come in pretty worked up. When things had finally resolved, I'd call my co-workers together behind a wall of books and I'd do a little dance, we'd do a little dance. We survived!

It was like I was downhill skiing knees bent/locked and stirring a big pot with my arms, hips going in circles in the opposite direction…it was a mess. I'd say, "Stirring the porridge." And others would do their little victory dance.

One day, we had a big blow up with a customer, and afterwards I walked away, forgetting to call for the dance.

But one of my co-workers stopped me and said, "Do your thing, Amy. Do the dance!" And we danced, we had to dance. We had to celebrate the good when we could.

Looking back, I felt pretty cringy about that silly dance, until I came across this clip from Seinfeld. Enjoy!

In case you couldn't hear it, George, in total shock says, **"Great dancing Moses!"**

Oh my, Elaine is so awkward and un-ware.

I no longer feel embarrassed about my little dance. And now none of us should feel embarrassed in how we dance. Because I think everyone should spontaneously break out in dance every once in a while.

So, what is God's part to play in the dance?

Dancing with another person and walking with God share some strong parallels; they both require trust, connection, ability to follow subtle clues, and surrender.

Dance is a great metaphor for how we grow spiritually. Dancing is synergistic, a sacred loving give and take, interwoven movements between how God is at work in us and how we are at work in our relationship with God.

The Apostle Paul's words in Philippians beautifully capture this interplay, this dance, **"…continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."**

Here is another example of holy interdependence, from St Augustine. He writes, **"God provides the wind. Man must raise the sail."** Powerful image between our efforts (raising the sail) and God's guiding influence in providing the wind. Both are needed.

Instead of throwing up our arms in despair, we throw them up in faithful dependence.

This is what Paul was getting at in Ephesians, when he tells us to **"…be filled with the Holy Spirit".** The Greek Paul used indicates it is a command. But not for you to do something, rather than you being the doer, you are to let something be done to you.

So much of the dance with divine grace involves opening ourselves and our lives and all things to His grace. It's about letting something happen to us, to let him transform, to let grace overwhelm us, to be humble.

I'm still learning those dance steps.

Perhaps one of my favorite metaphors about this skill of dependence and synergy might also be a favorite of any gardeners we have out here. Any gardeners here this morning?

This metaphor is so fitting this time of year, when gardeners and nature are preaching this truth in all they do, from John, chapter 15, verses 4 -5:

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

In other words, we don't produce life on our own. Life comes only through connection to the Lord. But we do have to stay connected. This is your part in the dance.

Our part is opening ourselves to God through prayer and study of God's word, worship, fellowship, communion, the acts of service. The gracious hand of God transforms us from within.

And when we struggle with remaining…we tell Him. Remember? Remember we tell Him what is truly in our hearts. And as we do, we find him meeting us at our point of honesty.

Love the simplicity of this metaphor.

Megan, her husband Randy, and their son Foster would go on walks together. Over every alleyway Randy would consistently tell Foster to hold his hand tightly.

Before crossing every single alley, the two of them would pause with Randy reminding Foster to grab his hand. The truth was, though, it didn't matter how tightly Foster held Randy's hand.

Why? Because Randy was holding his.

Our Heavenly Father has a hold of your hand and he will never let you go.

The world tells us that the highest virtue is independence, but Scripture tells us that God will make your path straight.

He was already working in your life before you sat down this morning. And he will continue to work in your life after you get up for fellowship and head into your day.

While you can't figure it all out or grow yourself by yourself, you do have a role to play. You don't have to have all the answers, but thankfully, you're growing in an honest relationship with the One who does.

As we wrap up, wonder with me, what if we became a people that encouraged each other to dance in the good times and in the bad, to join the dance of life and dance with God?

Just one more clip, of how walking with God is like dancing with God.

Have you ever watched Evan Almighty?

It's a modern-day Noah and the Ark story. God (played by Morgan Freeman) picks Steve Carell to be his new Noah. But Steve wants nothing to do with God at first. Spoiler alert: it is the end of the movie that I love the most.

As you watch Morgan review Steve's life and impact, think back on your life. Notice how and where your paths were straightened out by God. Enjoy!

Oh, friends, never forget whether we can see God or not, God is there.

Never forget God is always watching over each of us in love, always straightening out our paths, and God is always dancing with us. Amen!

Time of Reflection:

1. As you look back over your life, can you identify a moment where God took a "crooked place" in your life and made your path straighter?

2. Where in your life might God be inviting you to trust he is at work and simply dance by faith, dance with Him in trust and celebration?