



Valley Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Dear Friend in Christ,

I am happy to share with you the next week of our autumn sermon series “The Whatabouts: Responding to Questions with Faithfulness.” This week, we address the question “What about the hypocrisy?” as we shift testaments in the Bible and read from James 2 with an eye to stewardship.

Please use following phone numbers and links between 10:15am and 10:30am. You can join in one of two ways:

By computer, smart phone or tablet:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86757133623?pwd=OTFUQWJvU2lMMmR6bkY5SitpelRlUT09>

By Phone: 1 (312) 626 6799 ID 867 5713 3623,
Passcode 205879

(If you need a live link to the Worship link, you can go to the homepage of our website at www.vccbhm.org with the passcode 205879 OR click on “Zoom Links” then the Sunday Worship link.)

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

Christ’s and yours,
Pastor Eric

Valley Christian Church

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

October 11, 2020

PRELUDE

"Lord, Be Glorified"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name.

People: I write to you, parents, because you know him who is from the beginning

Leader: I write to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one.

People: I write to you, children, because you know the Father.

Leader: I write to you, parents, because you know him who is from the beginning.

People: I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you.

(1 John 2:12-14, NRSV)

HYMN OF PRAISE

"God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending"

*God, whose giving knows no ending
From your rich and endless store
Nature's wonder, Jesus's wisdom
Costly cross, grave's shattered door
Gifted by you, we turn to you
Offering ourselves up in praise
Thankful song shall rise forever
Gracious donor of our days*

*Treasure too you have entrusted
Through your powers your grace conferred
Ours to use for home and kindred
And to spread the Gospel Word
Open wide our hands in sharing
As we heed Christ's ageless call
Healing, touching, and reclaiming
Serving you by loving all*

INVOCATION

Eternal God, we ask your steadfast, guiding presence to be here as we worship you in song and in Word, in communion and in fellowship. Be with us and within us, among us and around us, on this day of worship. Amen.

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, as we gather around your divine throne in prayer, we remember you in the words you have given us, the deeds you have done, and the people, our loved ones and neighbors, whom you have given us. We lift them up to you today in our worship of you, O Lord, that you would continue to be with them as we pray for them each by name...

SCRIPTURE

James 2:14-20

MEDITATION

"The Whatabouts: What About the Hypocrisy"
See Insert for Meditation

HYMN

"O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee"

*O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free
Tell me thy secret, help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care*

*Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love
Teach me the wayward feet to stay
And guide me in the homeward way*

*In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way
In peace that only thou canst give
With thee, O Master, let me live*

SHARING OUR OFFERING WITH GOD

Share your financial offering with the church by mail or bring it by the church office. Thank you for your love gifts.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Gracious God, we turn over to your will that which we have produced through our will—these tokens of our sacrifices and labors. May you bless them and transform them into building blocks for your kingdom. Amen.

CALL TO COMMUNION

May we remember the righteousness with which Jesus went to the Cross in the face of mockery and scorn.

**COMMUNION
HYMN**

"I Bind My Heart This Tide"

*I bind my heart this tide to the Galilean's side
To the wounds of Calvary, to the Christ who died for me
I bind my soul this day to the brother far away
And the sister near at hand, in this town, in this land*

*I bind my heart in thrall to the God, the Lord of all
To the God, the poor ones' friend, and the Christ whom
God did send*

*I bind myself to peace, to make strife and envy cease
God, knit thou sure the cord of my thralldom to my Lord*

**COMMUNION
PRAYER**

Conclude by praying together the Lord's Prayer

**HOLY
COMMUNION**

Partake of the holy communion (bread, juice, or whatever is available to you)

**WORDS OF
INSTITUTION**

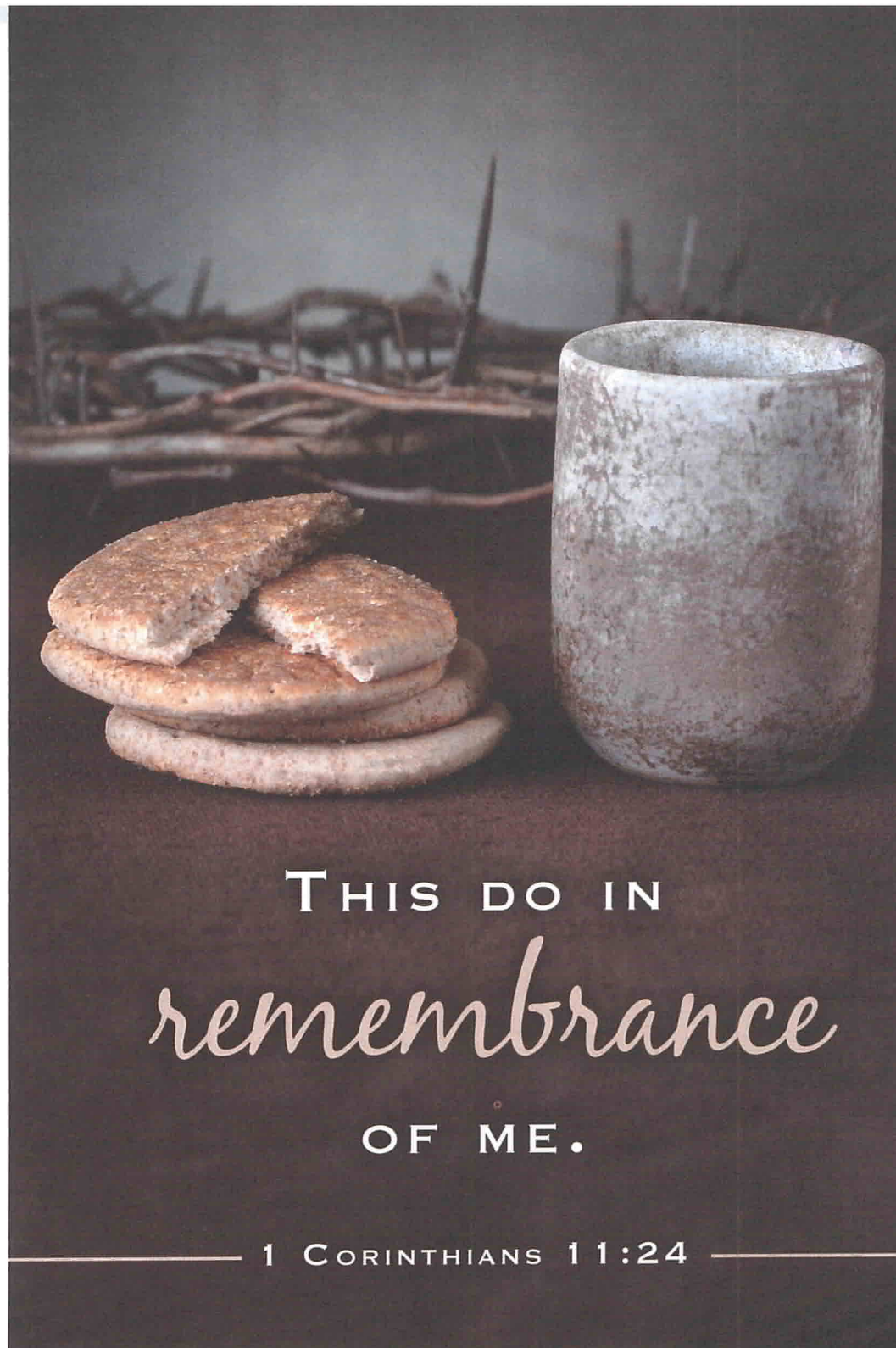
Hear the words of Jesus when He said, "Take and eat, this is my body, broken for you. Take and drink, this is the cup of the covenant poured out for you."

BENEDICTION

Now may the God who sees and rewards righteousness for righteousness' sake send you out to sow and spread that righteousness in your lives, and may the blessing of the Lord be with you now and always. Amen.

This Sunday's worship leaders

Leader: Mrs. Andrea Clark
Elder: Mrs. Carolyn Nunnelly
Pianist: Mrs. Margaret Cox
Minister: Rev. Dr. Eric Atcheson



THIS DO IN
remembrance
OF ME.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24

MEDITATION

Sunday, October 11, 2020

“What About the Hypocrisy?” James 2:14-20

“The Whatabouts: Responding to Questions with Faithfulness,” Week Five

I still remember, amusingly, the surprised faces of my friends as they would return from using the bathroom of my apartment my senior year of college. I saw their faces and I knew—they had seen the brochures I had put there as an ill-humored joke that were from an apocalyptic, end-times televangelist who marketed things like a videotape to set aside for your left behind, unbelieving loved ones after you had been raptured and a series of Bible studies that would rapidly become obsolete as one global threat after another failed to bring forth the Biblical Antichrist.

The nature of what this televangelist was selling left no doubt in my mind that this person was a con artist, a huckster preying on people like my relative, a true believer who has given this televangelist literally thousands of dollars until my family intervened to make it stop. Even though I disagree with significant portions of my relative’s theology, I cannot, and never have, doubted their faithfulness. And so part of my own faith formation, as a Christian and as an ordained pastor, has been witnessing up close and personal the fleecing of the faithful by snake oil salespersons who make silver-tongued proclamations with the Bible in one hand and a pickpocket’s dexterity with the other.

I still remember learning when and how my family had finally put an end to my relative’s donations, and I remember the feeling of uncensored betrayal I felt at this televangelist for taking advantage of my loved one. But far from making me more reticent to talk about matters of money and stewardship in church, that memory has steeled my resolve to ensure that we talk about such things responsibly and healthily. And as we are now in the swing of our autumn stewardship season, that feeling—that lesson, really—feels especially relevant.

This sermon series is my first as your new minister here at Valley, and I arrived at it after multiple conversations with the search

(over)

committee about how and why evangelism came to be noted as so important a trait in the congregation’s search and call profile. And specifically what I heard was a need to be equipped to talk to people about faith in a way that could answer their questions—questions to which we may or may not have all the answers, or not feel comfortable answering.

The way I experienced doing evangelism on the West Coast would sometimes come in the form of fielding questions from folks skeptical of the nature of my faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and I came to think of those questions as “the whatabouts,” as in, “Well, what about...?” Being honest in those moments was vital for my own integrity and for my friendship with the person asking me. I crafted this sermon series to tackle many of these questions as a way for me to share with you what evangelism has looked to me and in my ministry, by trying to answer those whatabout questions, and as a way to let you into my own theology and faith.

Today’s question is, “What about the hypocrisy?” And I acknowledge at the off that this question could go any number of ways, because sometimes Christians have been the church’s own worst PR. But as we come to you to ask you to pledge to our 2021 budget, I think stewardship rises to the top.

I could just as easily have gone this direction to begin our sermon series a few weeks ago, with the Genesis 1 story and specifically God’s mandate to keep the earth as its stewards. Especially given the green ministry presence here at Valley, that would have been a great fit. But—and I think especially after the dramatic news this week—a message on the importance of science and medical science especially felt important and relevant as well.

The good thing about stewardship, though, is that it is not limited to just one Biblical passage, but is rather a recurring and predominant value throughout Scripture, and the epistle of James, the brother of Jesus, addresses it at some length in a few different ways.

For James, stewardship is as much about equity as anything else—about ensuring that the church, in its stewardship, is doing right by the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the worker, and his words here in 2:14-20 lie at the heart of that concern.