



# 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.” Today’s whatabout question is “What about the cherrypicking?” We will read a familiar passage in 2 Timothy about the nature and purpose of Scripture, and we will talk about how such passages get used to create our very own canons within the canon.

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=OTFUQWJvU21MMmR6bkY5SitpelR1UT09>

**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](http://www.vccbhm.org) with the passcode 205879 OR click on “Links to Zoom” then the Sunday Worship link.)

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

Christ’s and yours, Pastor Eric

# Valley Christian Church

## Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

November 15, 2020

### PRELUDE

*"I Will Enter His Gates/This Is the Day"*

*Margaret Cox  
Pianist*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God

People: The Word became flesh and lived among us

Leader: We have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth

People: From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace

(John 1:1, 14-16, NRSV)

*Sara Simon  
Worship Leader*

### HYMN OF PRAISE

*"Take My Life"*

*Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee  
Take my moments and my days, let them flow  
In ceaseless praise, let them flow in ceaseless praise*

*Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love  
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee  
Swift and beautiful for thee*

*Take my voice and let me sing unto God my praise I bring  
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee  
Filled with messages from thee*

*Take my love my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store  
Take myself and I will be ever only all for thee  
Ever only all for thee*

### INVOCATION

*Sara Simon  
Worship Leader*

### SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

### PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, in this season of gratitude we give you thanks for your presence that is made known to us in new relationships, building community, and seeking truth together. We ask your continued presence with us, with all your children, and with the people whom we lift up to you in prayer, both silently and aloud by name at this time...

*Rev. Dr. Eric Atcheson*

### INSTALLING THE MINISTER

See first insert

*Rev. John Mobley  
Regional Minister of  
Alabama-NW Florida*

### SCRIPTURE

John 11:17-27

*Sara Simon  
Worship Leader*

### MEDITATION

*"The Whatabouts: What About the Cherry-picking?"  
See second insert for Meditation*

*Rev. Dr. Eric Atcheson*

### HYMN

*"Wonderful Words of Life"*

*Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life  
Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life  
Words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life*

*Christ the blessed one gives to all, wonderful words of life  
Sinner list to the loving call, wonderful words of life  
All so freely given, wooing us to heaven  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life*

*Sweetly echo the Gospel call, wonderful words of life  
Offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life  
Jesus only Savior, sanctify forever  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life*

### 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.

*Sara Simon  
Worship Leader*

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

*Sara Simon  
Worship Leader*

### CALL TO COMMUNION

May we remember how Jesus sought our own liberation, including at His own expense, that we might freely live.



**COMMUNION  
HYMN**

*“Great is Thy Faithfulness”*

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with thee  
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not  
As thou has been thou forever will be*

*(Refrain)*

*Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed, thy hand hath provided  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me*

*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love*

*Refrain*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside*

*Refrain*

**COMMUNION  
PRAYER**

Conclude by praying together the Lord’s Prayer

*Katelyn Clark  
Elder*

**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**

May the God who called you to build the kingdom together give you the gifts, strength, and perseverance with which to do so, and may the blessing of that same Lord be with you on this day and on all days. Amen.

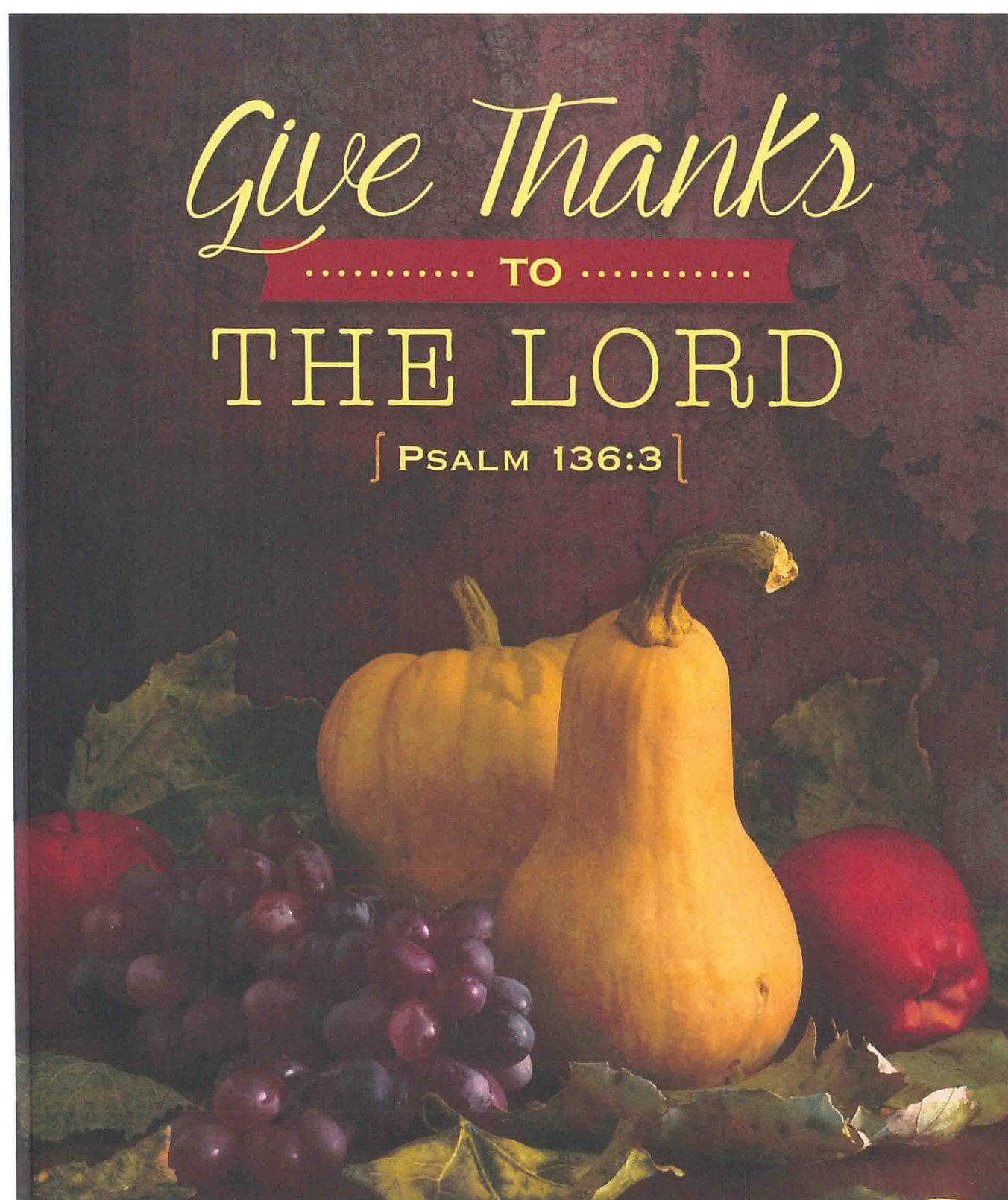
*Rev. Dr. Eric Atcheson*

**POSTLUDE**

*“For the Beauty of the Earth”*

*Margaret Cox  
Pianist*

*You are warmly invited to remain in our Zoom worship space for some online fellowship time following the postlude.*





## MEDITATION

Sunday, November 15, 2020

“What About the Cherry-Picking?” 2 Timothy 3:14-17

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

My parents did their level best to raise two children with serious sweet teeth with a healthy, balanced diet. I was the one kid in class who never got to eat at McDonald’s. We went without pop tarts and soda pop, and to this day I still do not know what buckeyes taste like—although that may simply be because I was raised by Michigan alumni.

But I would still get the occasional box of sugary cereal, and I did what probably every other kid has at one point tried to do with their Lucky Charms: with surgical precision, I fished out and ate all the marshmallows, while leaving behind all the...whatever the rest of Lucky Charms is made out of. Great is the mystery, I suppose.

I may have been (and still am) terrible at the game Operation, and I may navigate my smartphone’s keyboard with all the dexterity of the bull in the proverbial china shop, but you give me a bowl, a spoon, and some milk, and I will bet that it is just like riding a bike.

Of course, eating just the marshmallows deprives you of whatever (marginal) nutrition the rest of the bowl of cereal is supposed to provide, and while it may taste good going down, it is both unhealthy and a bad habit...which, I worry, contributes to the image we in the church have of how we read our Bibles.

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

(over)

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 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 whatabout question is, “What about the cherry-picking?” And by this question what my peers really meant was, “What about taking individual Bible verses out of context and then super-sizing them?” Or, as it were, taking the marshmallows that may taste best to us while leaving behind the rest of the spiritual food that is meant to nourish us and sustain us for longer stretches of time.

I am not kidding when I say that how we read our Bibles can create the spiritual equivalent of a starvation diet, but we may not even be aware that we are fasting! We may think we are getting the food we need when we reach for the religious version of saccharine, and it may make us feel good in the moment, but there is a very real low that comes after that Christian version of a sugar high. Our goal must be to move from those sugar highs followed by lows to a healthier spiritual and Biblical diet, nourished by the totality of God’s Word to us.

**Service of Installation for Rev. Eric Atcheson**  
**Valley Christian Church, Birmingham, AL**  
**Sunday, November 15, 2020**

Statement of Purpose

Rev. John Mobley

Leader: There are different gifts,

**People: But it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

Leader: There are different ways of serving God,

**People: But it is the same God who is served.**

Leader: Each one is given a gift by the one Spirit,

**People: To use for the common good.**

Leader: Together we are the body of Christ,

**People: And individually members with one another.**

Leader: Within our common ministry some members are  
chosen for particular work as ministers of the Word.  
They are ordained to a representative ministry and  
charged:

- To lead in transmitting the Christian tradition from one generation to another;
- To interpret the scriptures and proclaim the gospel of Christ;
- To administer the sacraments, serving to inspire a company of Christians in continuity with the life and faith of the apostles, and through the power of God's Holy Spirit;
- To serve God's people with pastoral care and to share in the transforming of the church in its life and mission;
- And to act as pioneers and leaders in the church's reconciling work in the world.

We now come to this moment in which one of the church's ordained ministers, having been called with due seriousness to minister within this congregation, is officially received and installed to this office.