

Alright. Well, hey, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek online, wherever you are in the world today. I am so glad that you are here with us. Hope is here, everyone is welcome and Jesus changes everything. You see, I realized for a lot of us, this was another hard week in a series of what feels like has been a lot of hard weeks. I know in the midst of the news reports and the information, and the coronavirus, and all that different kinds of stuff, the fear and the stress, and the anxiety all seems to peek with everything else as it's being said to, being peeking all around us.

And I just want to take a moment, just even before we get started, to just talk to you and just say, I know the fear of the unknown, the fear of the future, the fear of what's going to happen, all those things are real. But can I just remind you, you have not been given a spirit of fear, you've been given a spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

That perfect love casts out fear. The love of God literally drives fear out of our lives. And so any place where fear is ruling and reigning, is a place where we've lost sight of the love of God for us. And so if fear has moved into your life, it's because you've lost sight of God's love for you. So today, can you turn your attention and your focus back to God's love? Can you know and rely on the love that He has for you? Can you receive and rest in God's love regardless of what is happening in the world around us?

You see, today, what we're doing is we're ramping our series, 167: Activate Your Faith Where It Matters Most. And this has been a really big, and a really significant series in the life of our church. To be honest with you, I've been wanting to do this series for a long time.

And it actually has worked out really well because you hearing it in your home creates a totally different context for your spirit to receive that which God wants to speak to us. You see, if you're just joining us along the way, or to remind you what this is, 167, you say, well, what is that? Well, there are 168 hours in a week, seven days a week times 24 hours a day, 168 hours. And most of us are familiar with one hour a week of church, and then 167 other hours where we just kind of do our life and just kind of go about along with the flow of the world. And if we're honest, we've got an active faith in one hour a week but not necessarily so much in the 167 of the rest of life.

And what we've been talking about in this series is how we often leave our faith at church. We often leave Jesus at our campus, that the extent of the borders or the boundaries of our faith is often within the four walls of the church.

But we're supposed to have an active faith in the 167 of life. That the gathering is not meant to be the extent of your faith, it's meant to be a catalyst of it. And we've talked about how it's really easy to have a big faith when you come to the gathering. Everything is prepared for you. There's other people with faith there. It's easy to look like you've got a big faith when you're around other people with big faith. It's easy to look fruitful when you're hanging out with

fruitful people. It's easy to look like you're a follower of Jesus when you're surrounded by other people who are following Jesus. But the real question is this, what does your faith look like in the 167 of the rest of your life? And if we're honest, what this coronavirus season has done is it's exposed and revealed the reality of what our faith is really like. The coronavirus season hasn't created your faith or lack thereof, it's just revealed what is already there.

And we said it's time to take some responsibility, to take some ownership, to take some initiative of our faith journey because you can't abdicate your faith, you can't delegate your relationship with God, and you can't have a mediator in between you and Jesus. And so the question today as we wrap this whole thing up is really, it's just simple, it's how's your faith? How active is your faith right now? Like don't even worry about the past. Like in the 167 of this season, how active has your faith been? How active has your faith been in work, at home, in school or the lack thereof, and the comings and the goings of your life? Like how active is your faith? You see, no one else can answer that question except you. And what I want you to understand is we're all on this journey of trying to bring Jesus into the center of our life.

If you just think about this graphic with me for a second, if this is the center of the focus of your life, we all start in this place. And in the center of our life is our self, is the world, it's our sin, it's all the things that we want and we run after. And Jesus is kind of somewhere out there. But we're all on this journey of trying to reach out and grab a hold of Jesus, and by faith, bring him into the center of our life to displace our self, to displace the world, to displace sin, and to bring Jesus into the center of our lives.

And so my question for you right now is simply this, in this season, has Jesus moved closer into the center of your life or has he moved farther away? You see, I think the way a lot of us live is we bring Jesus into the center of our life for one hour a week and then we push him back out to the fringes for the 167. But Jesus wants to be in the center of the 167 of your life.

And so the question is this, has Jesus been moving closer to the center or has he been moving further away? Because it doesn't really matter where this is right now. What matters is the direction that it's going. Is he coming closer to the center in this season or is he moving further away from your life in this season? That's what really matters. And you say, well, how do I know what does an active faith look like? Well, it's the same thing that we've saying all along in this series. An active faith is being aware of his presence. Like can I just ask you, like how aware of the presence of God are you in the 167 of your life? Are you ever aware that He's with you? Do you talk to Him? Do you listen to Him? Are you more Jesus-focused or COVID-focused? Are you more Spirit-centered or self-centered?

Are you more focused on the kingdom of God or the kingdom of this world? Like how aware are you of the presence of God in your daily life? And are you receiving His grace? Do you receive fresh grace for your failings, and your struggles, and your difficulties? Do you allow his grace to fill you up and grow the fruit of the Spirit in your life to supernaturally empower you

for the things that He has called and created you to do? Are you seeking more of Him? Do you ever engage the Scriptures or pray or confess and repent, or worship, or just ask God for wisdom and insight and direction on your life? Do you submit to His lordship, which basically just means, are you willing to obey God? Are you obeying His voice and His commands? Are you following Him? Are you submitting and surrendering to His authority in your life whether you understand it or like or not? And then are you engaging in His mission in any way, shape and form?

Are you living in a way that you're trying to help other people have an encounter with the hope of Jesus? Are you moving in this direction or are you moving away from this direction? This is what an active faith looks like. And so the question is, is your faith being activated or is your faith becoming inactive? And if you say, well, I'm not really sure. How do I actually know that?

Well, let me show you this next thing. Here's a really easy way that you can just tell if your faith is getting activated in the 167. Listen, your words reveal your heart. Jesus says, "The mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart." In other words, whatever is in here will come out of here. Like it or not, your words betray your heart. And there are often times we say things like I didn't mean to say that. That's not really me. Actually, it is. Because Jesus says, your words reveal your heart.

So if you want to know if your faith is growing, just look at your words. They tell us what's going on in here. So in this season, are your words full of faith, hope and love? Are they full of peace and joy? Are they encouraging and inspiring? Do they uplift and build and strengthen others or do they tear down? Are they full of hate and judgment and depression and despair? And woe is me and how bad it is, that will tell you if your faith is being activated or not.

And then you can just look at this, your behavior reveals your identity. We say this all the time in our church, identity determines behavior. Who you are determines what you do. And so if you look at your behaviors, it tells what you really believe about who you are. Like think about it, we say this all the time. Like fish swim. Birds fly. Dogs bark. Cats meow. Sinners sin. Righteous people live righteously.

Holy people live a holy life. Set apart people live a set apart life. People with an active faith follow Jesus. People with an inactive faith follow the world. And so if you want to know how your faith is doing, just look at your behaviors. Because right now, your behaviors over this last season, reveal your faith or what you really believe about who you are in Jesus.

And then the last thing is just your time reveals your values. If you want to know how active your faith is, just look at your time because you will always make time for what you value most. This is why Jesus says, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and everything else will be added unto you." In other words, he says, put me first and I'll take care of the rest. You will

make time for the things that you value. So all you have to do is look at your time and say how am I spending it, that's what I really value.

And so the question at the end of this series is, how active is your faith? And not do you have a full grasp of the 167, but which direction are you moving? Are you moving in the direction of an active or are you moving in the direction where your faith is becoming inactive the longer this coronavirus season goes on? You see, the really interesting paradox to me of this whole thing is you would never read the Bible and come to the conclusion that God only wants you to have a faith active one hour a week. If you just sat down and read the Bible, you would never come to the conclusion that my faith is only supposed to be in one hour a week. If you just read the Bible, you will come to the conclusion that He's inviting you to follow Him, to be a disciple, to love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. In fact, look at this next verse, Jesus, then he called to him along with his disciples and said -- Jesus is always inviting people to move from the crowd to be a disciple, to move from the fringe to the center.

Here's what he says, "If anyone would come after me, follow me, be my disciple, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul?" Here's the question, what do you do with that verse? I don't even really want to give you a bunch of commentary on it and try to break it down for you. I just want to ask you, what do you do with that verse? Because it's impossible to read this verse and come to the conclusion that I'm supposed to have faith active one hour a week, come to a church service and then go live the 167 on my own. In fact, I would challenge you, take this verse this week, meditate on it, talk to God about it and say, "God, what does this mean for my life?"

And it will probably make you uncomfortable. And that's okay because sometimes God allows his grace to make us uncomfortable so we'll move forward in life. And yet the paradox is we can even read this and yet still come to the conclusion that we think our faith is one hour a week in the gathering. And maybe the weirdest part of that whole thought process for me is this, if we really believe the extent of our faith was one hour a week, you would think, then we would make gathering as the church the number one priority of our life. And yet, see if you can track with me on this. They say according to all kinds of statistics that the average American Christian goes to church, goes to the gathering less than two times a month. The average American Christian goes to the gathering of the people of God less than two times a month, okay? We're going to round up here to give the benefit of the doubt, okay?

Because you're Valley Creekers, so we're going up. We're giving you the benefit of the doubt, so let's say you come to church two times a month. Two times a month in a year is 26 times, right? Fifty-two weeks in a year, two times a month, it's 26 out of 52 weeks, our gatherings are an hour long. So see if you can just track with me on this. If you come every other week for an entire year, that's 26 hours a year where your faith is active.

Now, let's say from the age of 20 to 80 you did that every single year, every other week based on all of your life and your busyness and vacations and work and stress and kids, and all -- from 20 to 80 years old, 26 times a year for 60 years, 20 to 80, that's 1,560 hours where your faith is active. 20 to 80, 26 hours a year, 1,560 hours.

Now, divide that by 24 hours a day, that's 65 days in your entire adult where your faith is active, 65 days divided 7 days a week equals nine weeks of your entire adult life where your faith is active. That is incredibly sobering. I mean do the math. This does not work. We wonder why is the world in chaos, we wonder where is the church to rise up and do something, we wonder where is the power and the signs and wonders and the supernatural hope carriers -- I'm just telling you, you can't do anything in your entire adult life in nine weeks. How are you going to have a good marriage if all you did was have it active for nine weeks in 60 years? How are you going to do your job if you do your job nine weeks out of 60 years?

You can't even do a good hobby nine weeks out of 60 years of your adult life. What I'm trying to tell you is do the math, it does not work. And parents, if you want to break it down even one more. Take your 0 to 18-year-old, you run this rhythm on them, it's less than three weeks of an active faith by the time they go to college. And then we wonder why this next generation has no bearing, no direction, and doesn't grasp the truth of the kingdom. Do the math guys. It doesn't work.

And so many of us, all we want to keep saying is we just want to go back to normal. We want corona to be over so we can go back to normal. Listen to me, normal does not work. This is not about going back to normal, it's about going to a new dimension of abundant life in Jesus' name. You are never going to get to the end of your life and think to yourself, man, I wish I would have watched more Netflix.

You're never going to get to your end of your life and think, man, I wish I would have spent more time on my phone, I wish I would have spent more time sitting around, I wished I would have spent more time watching the news. No, you're going to get to the end of your life and think, man, I wish I would have activated my faith in the 167 of life.

In fact, maybe even let me show it to you on a different graph here. This is the 525,000 hours of your adult life. And here's the 1,560 hours of active faith. It doesn't work. And if we will trust Jesus with the salvation of our souls, why would we not trust him with the 167 of our life? If we want Jesus to invite us into heaven someday, why don't we want to invite heaven into our life today? We got to activate our faith in the 167. The American Christian definition of following Jesus does not work.

Are you with me? I know some of you are like, God, got it bro, move on. But somebody else is just getting it. I need you to grasp this because the math shows us, what are you going to do? This is why some of us are so rocked when coronavirus shows up, or we have a marriage

struggle, or a health issue, or a sickness, or a job change, because we don't have the faith to thrive in the midst of it. So it's time to move forward in Jesus' name and start activating our faith in these hours.

And because you're a Valley Creeker, I know that's in your heart. So how do we do it? Really simple. Let me give you these really simple next steps that you can start. First thing is just invite God into your life. You're like, revolutionary. I know. Just invite God into your life. Humility, where you just simply say, God, I need you. God, I invite you into work today. God, I invite you into my home today.

God, I'm in this argument right now with my spouse, it's not going so well, I'm going to invite you into it. God, I'm really lonely because my friends -- I don't even know where they are or what's going on, so I'm going to invite you into this moment. God, I'm driving in the car, I'm just going to invite you into the car. God, I'm cutting the grass, I'm going to invite you into -- I mean just keep inviting God into your life. Every time you see a Valley Creek logo, every time you put on a Valley Creek shirt, every time you think of Jesus, use that as a moment to say, God, I'm inviting you into this hour of my life today.

The second thing is simply this, listen to worship music. Literally the best thing I can say for some of you is just play worship music in your life. Our worship team has just released a bunch of new songs. A few more are coming in the next weeks. Build a little playlist and just play it. You would be amazed at how it starts to change the atmosphere. Turn off the talkRADIO, turn off the news, turn off the music of the world that celebrates darkness, and just let worship music play. You don't have to sing, you don't have to worship.

But just the atmosphere of your heart and your life, by lifting up the name of Jesus will start shifting your faith in the 167. Just let it wash over you. Subconsciously even.

Third thing is simply, read the daily Bible chapter. Every day on our website, we have a daily chapter that we as a church are reading through. Every day, grab one chapter. You will do it in 10 minutes or less, knowing thousands of other people are doing it because God's word is living and active. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. So when I put the word of God into my life, my faith gets activated. It begins to grow. And we don't work on the Scriptures, the Scriptures work on us. So you put them inside of you and they start to change you from the inside out. Every day you can do that, it's really simple.

Fourth thing is simply get in a group. Listen, can I just tell you, most of the people that I know that are thriving in this season, they're in a group. They're in a group. They're on a team.

They have other godly relationships with that do what? They anchor you, they activate your faith outside of the one hour a week gathering. It becomes bigger than just this moment. I'm going to be pushing all of us in this next season to get in a group because this coronavirus

season has revealed those without godly relationships have really struggled. Those with them have thrived in Jesus' name.

And then the last thing is simply this, value the one. Value the one. The one hour a week gathering and the 167, they work together. And if you engaged the one, you'll go out with faith in the 167. And if you activate your faith in the 167, you can't wait to come back to the one. How you gather determines how you scatter, how you scatter determines how you gather. And I know the world thinks the one hour a week gathering is irrelevant. Obviously, many American Christians think it's irrelevant.

But do you know who thinks it's relevant? Jesus. He says, "God inhabits the praises of His people." Jesus says, "I will build my church." Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered, there I am also." The Bible says, "Do not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing." "Be devoted to one another." You would never read the Bible and come to the conclusion that you don't need the one hour a week gathering. You would never read it and think that all I need is one hour of gathering, and you would never read it and think I don't need it. No, no, no, the one and the 167 work together. It's incredibly relevant. And these are so simple, they are little baby next steps that start activating your faith in the 167 of your life. Come on, are you with me on this?

In fact, can I even just -- can I just push it on something we were saying, just kind of even like lighthearted, like if you come every other week, right? And then you come 15 minutes late every time that you come, okay, well, you just took 25% out of your nine weeks. So you're really -- you're kind of like down to like six or seven weeks over the course of your life just by that 15 minutes of being late. Like we got to value the one, work it together.

In fact, I love -- go to this next verse. The 1st Century Christians, the disciples of Jesus in the Book of Acts, they were called followers of The Way. They weren't called Christians. They're called followers of The Way. They were known by how they lived in the 167 of their life. It's not about going to church, it's not about saying a prayer, it's not about identifying as a certain, you know, religious type on a survey that you've -- it's how you live your life. And it should be integrated in every hour of every day.

In fact, look at this next verse, "Today is the day of salvation." Today is the day of salvation. Not a ticket to heaven someday, save, heal, make whole and deliver. Salvation is wholeness. It integrates our life. Today is the day for integrity. For you to have the same faith in the one hour a week gathering that you do in work, that you do in family, that you do in the road, that you do in school, that you do in your hobby. Integrity doesn't mean you do the right thing when no one is watching. Integrity means you have the same level of faith no matter where you are in life and you're on this journey of activating your faith and walking with Him as a follower of Jesus. This whole series, and you can catch the passion that I have in it because this

is a defining moment of your life and mine. The whole point of this series is about moving from good church to active faith.

To being a disciple. To being a follower. To being someone who becomes like Jesus, who has a life of integrity that does it in every area. And yes, you can't go from one to 167. But you can go from one to two, and two to three, and three to four, and four to five. And you start pulling Jesus in closer and closer to the center. And I know some of you in this season, Jesus has been moving out of the center. It's time to stop the drift and say, no, no, no, no, no, Jesus, I'm inviting you back into the center of my life, because a movement of hope for the city and beyond can't happen one hour a week. A movement of hope for the city and beyond happens in the 167 of life.

John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." If we want life in our work, in our homes, in our families, in our finances, in school, in our future, in the chaos, he is the only way and he is the only truth.

And he offers us a great life in Jesus' name. Activating your faith in the 167 is not about you doing something for God. It's about you discover everything God has already done for you. And so really, it's not about 167, it's 168. Activating our faith in the 168 of life where we gather, whether physically or online, as the people of God, to have the fire of our soul stoked and burning bright, and then going back out into the 167 of everywhere else we go and sharing that fire, sharing the hope of Jesus to a lost, dying, and broken world.

A faith that doesn't work in the 167 doesn't work. And we have a great Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving one. It's time for a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving 167. It's time for you and me to have a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving 168 in Jesus' name. Come on. It's time to awake, it's time to arise, it's time to look at the brokenness of this world around us, it's time to realize that even in the quarantine and the chaos of this season, it's a gift of God to allow us to recalibrate our life and say, no more does my faith stay at the building. My faith is now with me in the 168 of my life.

So wherever you are, would you just stand up with me and maybe just open up your hands and just put them out stretched as a sign of faith like this? And I just want to pray over you to activate your faith in Jesus' name. Just maybe in your own way, just kind of position yourself and maybe you can just even start by saying, God, I just invite you in. I invite you into my heart. I invite you into my life.

If you've never put your faith in Jesus, today is the day to say, Jesus, I believe in you. I receive the forgiveness of my sins and I want to follow you and be your disciple and walk with you in eternal life. And then for all of us right now, I just want to pray over this active faith things that we've been talking about, and you just by faith grab a hold of them. This is your faith being active. You grab it. Don't be passive, be active and grab it.



So in Jesus' name, I just pray that you would become aware of his presence. That wherever you go in work, in school, in life, in home, that you would become aware that the Spirit of the living God is in you and upon you and with you, that He is above you and below you. I pray that you would be Jesus-focused, Spirit-focused, kingdom-focused, that you would learn to hear the voice of God wherever you are. I pray right now that your faith would be activated and that you would receive His grace, a daily fresh grace for your failings and your flaws, for your struggles and your battles, for strength and for comfort and for victory and empowerment, the grace of Jesus may it fill and flood your life. And I pray that your faith would be activated, and that you would have a desire to seek more of him. That you would take a step in Jesus' name to engage the Scriptures, to start praying and conversing with God, to confess and repent, and worship, and just say, God, I want more of you in my life.

Stir that up in Jesus' name. Say, come on, Lord, I want to seek more of you. And then I pray that your faith would be active as you submit to his lordship. That you would start to obey and submit and surrender. That thing that you want to do right now and go on your own direction, in Jesus' name, I believe that his grace is going to give you the strength to go in his direction. I pray that your faith would be activated and you would say that Psalm, it says, "Show me your ways, God. Teach me your paths." May you be Lord over every area of my life. And then I pray that your faith would be activated as you engage his mission, that you would see a life bigger than making money, and having a hobby and gaining possessions. But that would believe you are created by God as a hope carrier, to take His message of faith, hope, and love, to a lost and dying world.

So Lord Jesus, I just pray right now that you would activate the faith of this family called Valley Creek Church. Holy Spirit, would you stir it up within each one of us? That we wouldn't leave our faith in the building, but that our faith would grow, it would be strong. We would go to a next level. We would move in this direction. I pray for those that are one, they go one to two, and those that are two, they go two to three, and those that are at 15 would go 15 to 16. And those that are 101 would go to 102. And those that are 158 would go to 159. I pray Lord that we would just invite you into the fullness of our life, and that this would be a defining moment to say, we are 168 people in a lost, broken and dying world.

May we rise up in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hey, I am so glad you are here with us today. And for those of you that have been tracking with us in this series, I'm so glad you've been in this series. It's a big series, and I pray if you've been missed any of the weeks, go back, grab them online. Fill it up in your heart and in your soul, and let's keep following Jesus together. The best days are ahead of us.

For those of you that need prayer for anything, you can fill our prayer request on our website. We would love to pray for you. For those of you that want to give, you can give on our

website. Your giving is helping bless and serve so many hurting and broken people in this season. We're going to have some response questions here for you. You can hang out and either process them yourself or with those that you are with. But listen, may the love of God displace any fear in your life this week. I love you. We'll see you next week.