

Well, hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek online. I am so glad that you are here with us, wherever you are in the world. And what I want to say to you is hope is here, everyone is welcome and Jesus changes everything. And now I know you hear us say that week after week, and it's not just a cute little phrase that we say, we really believe that.

That hope is here because Jesus is here. That everyone is welcome regardless of where you've been, what you've done or what your life looks like, you are wanted. And you are loved here. And that Jesus changes everything. He doesn't just change our situations and our circumstances, he changes us. And so I am so glad you are here with us today. And last week, we kicked off with the series called 167 Activate Your Faith Where It Matters Most.

And we started talking about how we need to live the additional 167 hours of our weeks outside of the church gathering and activate our faith. And what I want to do today is we're going to take what we were originally going to do today and we're going to bump it to next week. And what I want to do today is actually want to activate our faith where it matters most. You see, this has been a hard week for a lot of us.

There's been a lot of pain and grieving and heartbreak, and in particular for our black brothers and sister, this has been a really hard season. There's been pain and grieving, and brokenness, and weight, and the gravity of it all. And so this weekend, what we're doing is we're creating some space to honor our brothers and sisters, and stand with our brothers and sisters. And we're going to do what we at Valley Creek do. We're going to be Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled and life-giving.

We're going to look to Jesus. We're going to be filled up fresh with the Spirit of the living God and we're going to receive and release His life in our world together. And so what I want to do for the next few moments is I just want to share a few things with you. And then we're going to have an experience together. And we're literally going to activate our faith today.

And so what I want to just ask is that wherever you, whoever you are, will you just open up your heart? And will you listen from your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you today. A couple of simple things that I want to tell you. The first thing is this, racism is evil and rooted in darkness. Racism is evil and rooted in darkness. It is a demonic tool used by Satan and his kingdom to steal, kill and destroy. It has no place in our hearts. It has no place in our homes. It has no place in our society, our church, our businesses, our schools and in our world. It is a demonic tool from Satan to divide. That's always been what Satan has been out to do, to divide us from God and divided us from each other. And that's the tool that he uses in racism.

And it is a sin. It is a sin to judge someone because of the color of their skin. It's to dishonor them. It's to dishonor the image and likeness of God in them. And it dishonors God himself. Racism is a demonic tool. It is evil. And it is rooted in darkness. And what I want to say to you and what I want you to understand is racism is a rejection of the love of God. The Bible tells us

that we love because He first loved us. So racism thereby is a rejection of the love of God for self and the rejection of the love of God for others. Because if I'm not receiving God's love for me I have no love to give to others. So it's a rejection of His love in my own life and in the world around me.

To say it a different way, racism comes from the orphan spirit. The spirit that believes, I don't have a father, that I'm on my own and I need to take care of myself so I will hide, I will hoard, and I will hate. But the spirit of sonship, living as a beloved son and daughter like we talk about all the time in this church is the spirit of adoption, the spirit of love, that we have a good Father who loves us. And because He loves us, we can freely love others.

This is why Jesus tells that blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. The sons of God, the daughters of God have peace with God. Thereby they spend their life making peace with everyone else because they live in and release love to the world around them. But the orphan spirit is all about looking out for self. And so it uses people, and hurts people, and abuses people, and steps on people. This is why the Bible tells us that it is impossible to love God and hate your brother.

And so I don't know how to say it any stronger to you than this. Racism is evil. It is rooted in darkness. It is a demonic tool used by Satan to steal, kill and destroy. And it has no place in our lives and in our world.

The second thing that I want you to see is simply this, the pain is real. The pain of racism and what you're seeing is real. So many of our brothers and sisters in our family, they are hurting this week. They are grieving this week. The body of Christ that we are a part of is hurting. And if one part of the body hurts, the whole body hurts. And what you need to understand is you may not understand it, it may not be your pain, you may not get it, but the pain is real. And it is undeniable. And we stand with our brothers and sisters who are hurting.

And so if you're here and you've been hurt by racism, if you've experienced the judgment, the oppression, the abuse, the shame, the brokenness and the pain, I say to you, I'm sorry. And we are sorry. And what we want you to know is that we see it. We validate it. We acknowledge it. And not only do we see it, and validate, and acknowledge it, more importantly we see you. We validate you, we acknowledge you, we are for you, we love you. You are our brother. You are our sister. We have the same Father. And we are a part of the same family. And in Jesus' name, we thank God for you and we love you. You see, the pain is real.

In fact this week, talking to one of our key leaders, he told me that in the midst of all of this stuff, his son went running into his room and said, "I don't want to be black anymore." That kind of pain is real. And so we as the people of God and as a family, we need to acknowledge that. The Bible tells us, we mourn with those who mourn and we encourage each other when we're down. And we comfort each other when we're hurting. And we bear one another's

burdens. And right now, for some of your brothers and sisters, this is a burden they had to bear their entire life. So we bear it with them. And if you haven't experienced racism in your own life, can I just encourage you with something? Then this is not the time for you opinions and your perspectives.

This is the time to listen, to learn and to love. This is the time to listen to your brothers and sisters and what they've had to experience and what they feel and what the reality of their life is like. This is the time to learn about what they have to say and what they have walked through. And then this is a time to love, to actually meet the needs that they are expressing, and that they are bringing up, not the needs that you want to meet, no, no. The needs that they say are important to them.

It's a time to listen, to learn and to love. And I'm so proud of our church this week. I've heard of countless conversations and small groups, and in serve teams, and in friendship circles, and in groups of people having conversations about this for the first time, listening, learning and loving, and bearing the burden with our brothers and sisters whose pain is real. We love you.

But more importantly God loves you. And He sees, and He knows, and He cares. And He has come to be with you today. Which brings me to this, that Jesus is still our only hope. That even in the midst of that kind of pain, Jesus is still our only hope. You see, we have hope. Against all hope, in hope, we believe hope is here because Jesus is here. And if Jesus is living hope, then hope is still alive and active today regardless of what is going on in the world around us, we have hope. And our only hope is in Him. The Prince of Peace, the Lord our Righteousness, the God of reconciliation. You see, Jesus is the King of the kingdom. And in His kingdom, there is righteousness, peace and joy, justice, mercy and grace, faith, hope and love.

And what I want you to know is there is no hope outside of Jesus and his kingdom. Hope is not found in politics, hope is not found in society, hope is not found in the human heart. Hope is found in Jesus, the King of his kingdom. And he has come to bring hope into our lives. In fact, I love this verse, Luke chapter 4, Jesus talking, he says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me." In other words, he says, I am supernaturally empowered because -- or the Spirit of the Lord is on me because He has anointed me, supernaturally empowered me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. In other words, Jesus is supernaturally empowered to heal, to restore, to reconcile, to bring things back together, to set us free.

There is hope. And he's a person that his name is Jesus. And so today, we take our eyes off of the world and we look to the one who is the living, active hope. And because he is our hope, he empowers us with the same mission that he's been on. In fact, if you remember the story of Moses and the Israelites, after hundreds of years of slavery, hundreds of years of oppression.

God shows up and He says to Moses, "Moses, I've seen the misery of my people. I've heard their cry and I'm concerned of their suffering. So now, go, I am sending you." I think that's a great message for us today, that He has seen the misery of His people, he has heard their cry, he is concerned of their suffering, so He has sent you.

You not only have an opportunity, you have a responsibility to bring the hope of God into this world. And that's why we talk all the time about being hope carriers, about bringing the kingdom, about living a life bigger than ourselves with a sense of urgency. It's what we've been preaching for years. In fact, look at our graphic that we're so familiar with, the kingdom of God is a movement of hope. Jesus and his kingdom, it is a movement of hope. And he is bringing that hope in every area of life.

And he wants to do it through you and me, through the church, the people of God, the family of God, with the Father who wants to bring all children home. And He wants to send us into the areas of life. He wants to raise up moms and dads, and sons and daughters with righteousness, peace and joy and family. He wants educators, teachers and students, and administrators to go with faith, hope and love. He wants healthcare workers, doctors and nurses, and administrators and amazing people to go with justice and mercy and grace.

He wants business owners, and business leaders, and employees, and managers to have faith, hope and love. He wants government officials like police officers and fire departments and mayors and city councils to go with righteousness, peace and joy. Media people who tell the stories, who make art and music and beautiful things, to talk about faith, hope and love. People in sports, to unite us together and bring us together around a common cause. People in technology, to use technology to glorify God and speak the message of faith, hope and love.

And every day, you're in one of these areas. And you have an opportunity and you have a responsibility to steward the hope that God has put in you as a hope carrier. And maybe with the pain of what we've been seeing around us, we can catch the urgency of the 167 and how much it matters in Jesus' name.

And what I love about our church is we have amazing moms and dads, and sons and daughters, and teachers and educators, and healthcare professionals, and business people. We have amazing police officers and mayors and city council members, and people in the media and art and music, and sports people, and technology -- we have amazing people in this space that are going out there bringing faith, hope and love, righteousness, peace and joy, justice, mercy and grace in the name of Jesus.

And so may that inspire you today to rise up to a new place to say, God, we want Your kingdom to come and Your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. In fact, I love this next

verse that says, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

What does God require of you? What has He empowered you? What has He sent you to do? To act justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. And if you have no interest in justice and mercy, you're kind of missing it because that's what God is saying He expects of you and me. And if you're all about justice and mercy, then you have to understand that that only comes if we will walk humbly with our God. If we will allow Him to be the Lord of our lives. If we will obey and submit and surrender. In other words, it's justice and mercy that rests on a foundation of walking with God. Justice and mercy flow from the fountain of humbly walking in relationship with God. If you are all about justice and mercy, you have to understand that if you want to see the kingdom out there, it starts by bringing the kingdom in here because the kingdom always brings more of the kingdom.

And what I want to do now is I want to actually activate our faith together. I wanted to say all that stuff and I wanted you to catch the heart of that. And I want your faith to be activated and to lean in. In fact, in 2 Chronicles, one of the most prayers in all of the Bible, it says, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." And so what I'd like to do right now is invite you to activate your faith. And I would like to invite you to pray through this prayer with me, for your life, for your brothers and sisters who are in pain, for our city, for our nation, and for our world.

So maybe wherever you are, would you maybe close your eyes and just open up your hands as a sign of submission and surrender and just humility before God. And let's just break this down peace by peace. And you can either pray out your own prayer or just agree with me. "If my people who are called by my name." So Father right now, we say to you, we are your sons and daughters, that we have the same Father, a good Father who sent His son Jesus into this world to die, to bring us home, that we may be adopted into your family. And we are called by your name, which means we are made in your image and your likeness. And we carry your identity. And we walk in your purpose and everything that is true of Jesus is now true of us.

And so we are your people called by your name. And you invite us to just humble ourselves. And so today, Lord, we humble ourselves. Can you humble yourself wherever you are right now? Can you tear down the pride, and the arrogance, and the foolishness, and the ignorance, and the selfishness, and the self-seeking and life being about -- can you just humble yourself for a moment before the King of kings, and the Lord of lords?

If we will humble ourselves and seek His face. Lord, we seek you right now. With everything we got, we cry out to you. We need your kingdom to come and your will to be done. We seek you not in this -- just in this moment, but in our lives by reading your word and by praying and

by worshiping and saying, God, we want to know you and we want you more than anything else. So together as a people, we seek you, we cry out.

And you say, if we will seek you and turn from our wicked ways. In other words, if we will confess and repent. So right now, can you confess and repent to the Lord? Can you confess and repent any areas of wickedness in your life? Any areas where racism may have been tolerated in your world or in your -- can you confess and repent? Any place where you've judged others or you've abused others or you've been critical of others. Any area in your life right now that's out of alignment with the kingdom? Can you confess and repent of that? Because if we want to see the kingdom come, we have to start by allowing the kingdom to come in us. To resist the kingdom in one area of life is to resist the kingdom altogether. So Lord, we confess and we repent.

And we believe that right now in Jesus' name, you are hearing us from heaven. That in Jesus' name, we have been forgiven and cleansed and made whole, and that you are healing our land. We ask that your kingdom would come, that your will would be done, that you would bring hope to the despair and light to the darkness, and breakthrough to the obstacles, and healing to the pain, and supernatural to the impossible.

And then I just want to ask you, what does He now want to say to you? Wherever you are, whatever is going on in your -- what does God want to say to you?

And so if you would just stay in that posture with me for a moment, because what we're going to do is we're going to take communion together. And whatever elements you have in your house, no problem, it's okay. It is not about a cracker and grape juice, it is about the spirit of receiving the broken body and the spilled blood of Jesus. You see, the ultimate unification is the finished work of Jesus. That he was broken and torn apart and poured out so that you and I could be put back together so we could have the same father and be children of the living God. In fact, in Acts chapter 2, when the Spirit is poured out right after the resurrected Jesus rises from the grave, do you know what happens? They were all unified. It says, "My Spirit will be poured out on you. Your sons and your daughters, your young and your old," and a whole bunch of people from all kinds of different nations were there.

And in that moment, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, all of a sudden, He unified genders, generations and nations. Because the same Spirit that is in you is in me, and He unites us together by the blood of Jesus as the body of Christ and the family of God. You see, if we're honest, we all have a them, a group of people that we look down upon and think are different than us. And your them might be based on race, your them might be based on a lifestyle, your them might be based on education, a socioeconomic status, where they grew up, what part of town they live, how they live their life, what political party they're a part, we all have a them, somebody that we look down upon and think we're better than.

But can I remind you that the same blood that Jesus poured out for you is poured out for them. In fact, catch this one last verse with me. Revelation, talking about Jesus and his kingdom. It says, "For you, Jesus, were slain, died on the cross for us, and have redeemed us to God, brought us out of the world of darkness, and pain, and destruction, and despair, and sin to God. By His blood, ready? Out of every tribe, and tongue, and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God. See if you can catch this with me.

The finished work of Jesus, the blood of Jesus that was spilled out on the cross for you and me, brought every tribe, every tongue, every people, and every nation into unity under the lordship of Jesus as citizens of his kingdom, as sons and daughters of the Father. And if you've ever wondered why are there different tribes, and tongues, and people, and nations throughout the earth, it's because one tribe, or one tongue, or one people, or one nation cannot fully reflect the glory of God.

When God made Adam and Eve in the garden, He had to make male and female because male nor female was enough to fully reflect the image and likeness of God. The masculine and the feminine brought together better reflected the beauty, and the glory, and the grandeur of God. Okay. That's true of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

God made all the people groups of this earth because one people group could not fully reflect His beauty, His glory, His splendor, His radiance. And so He made every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and brings them all together to say, now, unity in diversity reflects who I am, my nature, my likeness and my glory. Which is why in John 17, Jesus says, "Father, I have given them our glory, that they may be one." When we come together as people, unity in diversity, we radiate the glory of God to the world. And not only that, but He has made us kings and priests.

In Jesus' name, you are a king and you are a priest. His blood has made you a king which means you are royal, honor, you have dignity and worth, and authority, and empowerment. And you are a priest, which means you are holy, righteousness, set apart to God, seated at the right hand of the Father. Every tribe, tongue, people and nation, in the name of Jesus are kings and priests. So the question is, are we treating each other like kings and priests? With honor and dignity? Royalty and worth? Holiness, righteousness, empowerment? Every person regardless of the tribe, the tongue, the people, the nation, the role they fill, the job they have, the place they serve in Jesus' name is a king or a priest, king and a priest. And if they're not currently in Jesus, then guess what, God is inviting them into His family to become a king and a priest.

So the question is, are we treating everyone as either they are kings and priests or God is inviting them to become a king and a priest in Jesus' name? You see, what if we just treated other the way that Jesus treated us? The Bible literally says, when we were hostile, when we were enemies, when we were against God, He did this for us. What if we just gave each other this

kind of grace? This kind of mercy? This kind of love and compassion? In Jesus' name, may we live as sons and daughters with our good Father.

And may we receive and release that love everywhere we go as hope carriers. In a world that is desperate for hope. You see, on the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and he broke it. He gave thanks and he said, "This is my body broken for you." In other words, Jesus was going to be torn apart, so that we could be put back together. So can we just receive the unity in the midst of diversity that is only available in Jesus' name?

And in the same way after the supper, Jesus took the cup and he said, "This is my blood poured out for you." This blood reminds us that we are forgiven, that we are cleansed.

This blood reminds us that we are beloved sons and daughters with the spirit of sonship brought into our Father's family. So can we not only receive forgiveness, but adoption, spirit of sonship into our Father's family because He is good to you?

So Jesus, today we come together as one family from every tribe, and tongue, and nation, and people on this earth. We say You are our Father, we are Your beloved sons and daughters and we cry out for Your kingdom to come, Your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And we thank you for the hope that we have in your name, Jesus.

Lord, I speak healing, I speak hope, I speak blessing and reconciliation and redemption over every person who's listening today I Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hey, I am so glad that you came today because today was an important day for our family. And what we just did together, that's a movement of hope. You want to know what a movement of hope for the city and beyond is? It's what we just did. It's praying, it's worshiping, it's seeking God, it's confessing and repenting, it's allowing His truth to shape our perspective, and setting things down that are of this world and picking up things that are of God and moving forward with faith, hope and love into the world around us. You can do that anytime on your own. And my hope is that this shows you that you don't have to be led by the world's emotionalism, but you can have kingdom thinking about any and every area of life.

We are the beloved sons and daughters. And we have a great family and an amazing Father in Jesus' name.

And so here's what we're going to do, is this is going to be the official end of service. And today, instead of having response questions, our worship team is going to go ahead and they're going to lead through one more song. And if you want to worship, if you want to bring that spirit into your house, you want to linger in the presence of God, that's great. If you're good and you're like, I want to end here, man, that is so okay. We bless you. And what we want to say is if we can pray for you for anything, please go on our website. Let us pray for

"Listen. Learn. Love."

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you, for what's happening in your life or your world. For those of you that want to give, you can give online at valleycreek.org. Part of giving is just saying, God, I want your kingdom in my life that it might be released into the world around me.

But we're going to wrap here for a moment. If you want to be done, you can be done. If you want to worship, there's going to be one more song to worship. But I pray Valley Creek that you go this week knowing that God is good, Jesus has forgiven you, you are loved and everything is possible, He is with you, He is for you, and He is an amazing Father, and we have an amazing family in Jesus' name.