

Alright. Well, hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek online. I am so glad you are here with us. Wherever you are in the world, can we just go ahead and just welcome everybody in together? Come on, wherever you are, let's give it up for each other. And I know that may seem silly to do in your house but it reminds us that we are connected together. And just like you just welcomed somebody else in, somebody else somewhere else in the world just welcomed you in.

And whether this is your first time with us, maybe haven't been in a while, maybe you're here with us every single week, it really doesn't matter, I'm so glad you're here with us today because hope is here, everyone is welcome, and Jesus changes everything. And guess what, summer is officially here. Like you survived the end of school.

You made it through a half a semester or home school. We are on the other side of Memorial Day and I'm believing it's going to be a great summer in Jesus' name. And I know it's not the summer that you were thinking, the summer that you were planning for. And yet, I believe God has got some amazing things for all of us this summer. You see, I love this verse, I read this this week, it says, "Give thanks to Him who led His people through the wilderness. His faithful love endures forever."

I love this verse because I think it speaks to so much of where we are, that God has been leading us through the wilderness in this season, that He has been, He will be, and He is good to us right now because His faithful love endures forever. And so I'm believing it's going to be a great summer for you and for us. And I know so many of you with all the news and all the information that's out there, you want to know when are we going to start gathering in person again at our campuses.

Well, our leadership team has spent a lot of time praying and seeking God and trying to put together a plan, and this week we will share our updated plan with you. And so make sure you follow us on social media or check out the website this week. We'll put it all together and we'll share it with you of where we're going and what we believe God is inviting us to do. And I'm excited to give you an update and because I believe that God is really giving us some good clarity for the days ahead, and yet in the meanwhile before we gather in person our summer small group semester, it starts this weekend.

Summer groups and our first step towards gathering together again as many of our groups are now going to start meeting in person and many of them will still be online. And so if you're ready to discover more of Jesus, to find some friendship, to take a next step on your journey with Jesus, let me encourage you to get in a group this summer because let's not be more interested in getting back to the gathering than we are in actually following Jesus.

And one of the ways we follow Jesus is by getting together with other people and discovering more about him together. Come on, it's going to be a great summer in Jesus' name. And what

I want to do today is I want to start a new series with you called 167, Activate Your Faith Where It Matters Most. Now, I think this is a really important series for our church. You see, the last few weeks we've spent a lot of time talking about care, talking about comfort, talking about the coronavirus and the crisis and how to survive and thrive in the midst of all that. And all that's been good and all of that's been important, but it's time now to kind of change the conversation.

It's time to start talking about moving forward, about advancing, about living on mission and following God. And so maybe if you've kind of checked out, maybe if you've started leaning back, this is the series to lean in, to sit up straight, to engage your faith because what I want to say to you in this series has to be said in context of where you are. In fact, this needs to be heard in your home. In fact, even if we could gather this weekend in person I would still wait until we got through this series because I need you to hear about this from your home.

And I know some of you are thinking, 167, like what is that? Well, there's 168 hours in a week. Seven days a week times 24 hours in a day, that's 168 hours. And if you and me are honest, most of us we come to church one hour a week, but then we have 167 other hours where God wants to see our faith be activated.

And if we're honest, a lot of us we come to church for one hour a week and that's the extent of our faith. We come to our campus, we have a nice hour and we kind of leave Jesus there. That's the extent, that's the boundaries, that's the borders of our faith. And then we go back to the 167 of the rest of our life and go where we want and do what we do. And it's time to change that perspective. It's time to activate your faith where it matters most and start bringing God into the 167 of your home, the 167 of your family, the 167 of work and school and where you and I go every single day.

You see, if we're honest, what this coronavirus season has done is it's just revealed what already was.

I've been telling you that all throughout this series. That the coronavirus crisis, it didn't create things, it just revealed what was already there. And things that were bad before the coronavirus are exponentially bad in this season. And things that were good before corona are exponentially good. Like let me give you an example, just take money and relationships for a second. Like let's say your money was in a really good spot before corona.

You didn't have a lot of debt, you had savings, you used your money wisely God's way. Well, guess what, the coronavirus just revealed and made things exponentially good. You haven't been stressed or worried about money through this whole season. But if you've had lots of debt, if you didn't have savings, if you had lots of bills, then money has become exponentially painful in this season.

Or take relationships for a second. Let's say you had -- you had good relationships before coronavirus, you apologized and forgave.

You invested. You spend time. You are intentional about that. Then guess what, in the coronavirus, you love being in quarantine with the people in your life. But if your relationships were bad before the coronavirus season, you didn't apologize, you didn't forgive, you didn't invest, you didn't speak life, then they got exponentially bad during corona.

Okay, well, the same is true with our faith. You see, whatever our faith was before the coronavirus season, it's just been revealed in this season. And for a lot of us, what I think we realize is that our faith was one hour a week. It wasn't alive in the 167. And as this storm has come like Jesus tells, a storm will come and it will reveal your faith, either built on sinking sand or built on a foundation of rock. And for a lot of us, what we've discovered is that we kind of left our faith to one hour a week in a building. But it's time to activate our faith in Jesus' name.

You see, here's what I want to tell you. It is really easy to have an active faith in the one hour gathering. Like come on, man, it's easy. You come to a building that's been prepared for you. You walk in and there are already hundreds of people. There are serve teams to serve you. There are kids teams to take your kids, who prepared all week to invest into them. You walk into a worship center with hundreds of other people who have a big faith to seek God, a worship team that's been preparing all week to lead us into the presence of God, someone who has spent more than 20 hours a week studying to bring you a message from God. Like come on, man, it is easy to have an active faith in our one hour a week gathering.

The question is, do you have an active faith in the 167? Or think about going out to eat, like you can go out to eat, man, and it's easy. You go, a chef prepares everything for you. He's got all the ingredients. He brings it to you. That's easy to eat.

But the real question is this, can you prepare yourself a meal on your own? Can you prepare yourself a spiritual meal on your own? Or how about a championship team? It's really easy to hide in the shadows of a championship team. Like you can be on a championship team and still not be a championship player. Why? Because we know you're a championship player, not what you do when the team is together, but how you practice and how you engage when you're by yourself.

You see, if we're honest, it's really easy to look like a fruitful person when you're around fruitful people. It's really easy to look like you've got a strong faith when you're around people with strong faith. It's really easy to look like you're following Jesus when you're around other people that are following Jesus. But what does it look like when all of a sudden all of that is removed? And what I want for you is to have an active faith in this season, where you can feed yourself, engage on your own and have a championship faith in Jesus' name.

You see, what I need you to understand is that the one hour a week gathering, it is so important. It's supernatural. There's a mystery. It's the power of God. We come together and we preach the word of God and we minister it to each other as the people. We gather around the presence -- it's supernatural. It always has been, it always will be important. But our faith has to go beyond into the one 167 of the rest of our lives. The one hour a week is meant to catalyze your faith, not be a substitute for it.

And so in Jesus' name, in this series, in this time in our life, it's time to take some ownership. It's time to take some intentionality. It's time to take authority over our journey because you can't abdicate your faith, you can't delegate your relationship, and you can't have a mediator in between you and Jesus.

You're called to be a disciple, a learner, a follower of him. Are you with me on that? Come on, I think God's going to do some amazing things in the midst of this series. And if you think about a great example of this would just be Matthew, one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Matthew was a tax collector, probably not the greatest guy. And one day Jesus comes walking along and he sees him, and he calls out to Matthew. And he says, hey Matthew, follow me. And Matthew got up and followed him.

I want you to think about this. Jesus comes to Matthew and says, follow me. Like follow me. Like Matthew, let's have a relationship. Let's walk through life together. Let's go on a journey. Let me invite you into my life and I want you to invite me into your life. And I want to change your thinking and teach you who you are and who I am and what you are created to do. I want to show your identity and relationship and purpose. No way when Matthew was invited by Jesus did he think he was being invited to a one hour a week gathering.

He thought it was all of life. And so the very first thing we see Matthew do is he invites Jesus into his home and then he invites all his coworkers over to a party. In other words, he quickly invites Jesus into the 167 of his family and his work because he realized it wasn't about a gathering, it was about a relationship.

I mean do you remember when you first started following Jesus? It was never about a gathering. It was about this guy who changed everything, the savior of your soul, and you wanted to be around him. And you wanted to walk with him. And you wanted to know him. And then yet, life happens and we forget. This is the time to reactivate the 167 of our life. And I know some of you are probably thinking, okay, an active faith. What does it mean to have an active faith? Well, let me show you these five really simple things that I think define what an active faith looks like.

This is really simple. An active faith is being aware of his presence, receiving his grace, seeking more of him, submitting to his lordship, and engaging in his mission in the 167 of your life.

That's an active faith. It's alive. It's robust. It's moving. It's active. It's being aware of his presence in the realities of your life.

Like just being aware that God is with you and God is for you. That He's there to speak to you. That when you're aware that the presence of God, the Spirit of God dwells inside of you and upon you, all of a sudden, you're not only aware of Him, you're aware of what's He's doing. And you become more Jesus-conscious than you become sin-conscious. And you become more Spirit-focused than self-focused, and kingdom-centric than world-centric. You're just aware of His presence. And then you're just receiving His grace. Receiving His grace is not just about the forgiveness of our sins, it's the transformation of life.

It's when I mess up during the week, receiving His grace to forgive me and restore me, but also to empower me to live a Spirit-filled life with self-control and patience and peace. And then it's seeking more of Him in the 167, like a hunger and thirst for righteousness, a desire to engage His word, a willingness to pray, the heart to worship and to talk and to listen to God.

And then submitting to his lordship which basically just means obeying. Doing the things he's asked us to do even when we don't want to do them. Following even when it feels hard. Submitting and surrendering even when it doesn't make sense. And we all start to figure out somewhere along the way, Jesus is either lord of all or he's lord of none.

And then it's engaging in his mission. Like realizing that you no longer belong to yourself, you've been bought and paid for with a price. You have a purpose and a destiny. You're a movement of hope. You're a hope carrier bringing the kingdom of God.

This is an active faith in the 167 of our life. And this is where we need faith. Come on, you don't need it in the one hour a week. Why? Because you come into a building and everybody else has got faith that day. You need it in the 167. You need it on Monday when you've had enough of everyone and everything, you need to be aware of His presence at the end of the day and just allow His comfort and His compassion to come in. You need it on a Tuesday when you've had enough of your kids or you've had enough of your parents, you need some grace to be patient and kind and have some self-control. You need it on a Wednesday morning when it feels like the world is falling apart and you need to seek more of Him because God, I need you and I need your wisdom and I need your ways.

You need it on a Thursday night, when you want to go do what you want to do, and yet you know God is inviting you to live a different way. And then you need it on a Friday and a Saturday when you think life is all about you to realize, no, no, no, I'm on a divine mission from heaven to bring hope into this world in Jesus' name.

Come on, you need the 167 faith, not the one hour a week faith. And this is why I love what James tells us in James 2, he says, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." This is strong. He says, faith that's not active, faith that's not moving, faith

that doesn't have words or deeds, faith that's not alive in the 167 is dead. It misses the point. It misses the heart. And an inactive faith is a useless faith. And a faith that doesn't work in the 167 of life doesn't work. Like what do you even need that for? This is why Jesus tells us in John, he says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." In other words, if we will walk in his way, we will experience his truth and we will discover his life.

In other words, if Jesus is life. Then if I don't invite him into the 167 of my life, I really have no life. And that's why I'm numb and discontent, and struggling, and striving, and wrestling, and performing. Why? Because I'm doing the 167 without life. So here's my question for you. How's your 167? Like if you're honest right now in this whole -- like how's your faith in the 167? When was the last time you read the Bible? When was the last time you prayed? When was the last time you took a very specific next step or just worshipped on your own, or confessed and repented, or obeyed God when you didn't want to? Come on, when was the last time your faith was active and alive in the 167?

You see, to be real honest with you, it's easy for me too. I'm preaching to myself today to lose sight of God in the 167. And yet when you think about it, He's inviting us to invite Him into our lives in that space. Not for His good, but for ours. Like come on, don't you want His divine wisdom and His supernatural power and His provision and His comfort? Everything you need for the 167 is found in Him.

It's kind of like having a million dollars in your bank account and then walking around and complaining that you're broke. It's like, bro, you got a million dollars in your bank account and all you're complaining about is how broke you are. Go access your money. Go take and withdraw, go pull something out. Okay, that's us. We've got access to the kingdom of God and yet we walk around and talk about how depressed and anxious and fearful and frustrated and discontent and stressed out we are.

Come on, bro. Access the goodness of the kingdom of God in the 167. Not so you can do something for God, but so that you can receive everything He's already done for you. Come on, are you with me on that? You see, what you have to understand is that the Spirit of God gives purpose to the 167 of your life. And when we understand that the Spirit of God is in us and upon us, we become stewards of His presence in a broken and hurting world. You see, the world needs us to bring our faith into the 167. If you just look at just the new cycle of just this week, the racism, the hatred, the complete devaluing of human life, the political just rhetoric and anger, and division, and discourse, the poverty, the virus, the pandemic, all of those they're demonic.

They're from the pit of hell. They belong to the kingdom of darkness. And we have to rise up and realize that in Jesus' name, we are the ones who have been empowered by God to help the world solve these problems. A movement of hope doesn't happen in the one hour a week gathering, no, no. A movement of hope is in the 167 where we realize that we're empowered

like Jesus to do the things that Jesus did, to destroy the works of the devil, to stand up for injustice, to go along the places where -- Jesus did this stuff, man, in the places of life, not in the one hour a week. He did it in the education centers. He did it in the marketplace. He did it in homes. He did it on the road.

And he has empowered us to do the same. And so we're stewards of the presence of God. And we have to remember that we have the presence of God, the purity of God and the power of God within us. And it's time to awaken and arise as hope carriers, as people who bring the kingdom, as people who change the world in Jesus' name. Not only do we need you to activate your faith, the world needs you to activate your faith.

In fact if you even think about our theme for this year, it's called Set Apart. You remember that? Set Apart by grace for the good of others and the glory of God. Yeah. Set apart by God, for God. Set apart from the world, for the world. Set apart to live a holy life of purity where the presence of God defines how we live the 167 of our lives.

And I get. It's like, well, how do I do that? It's one step at a time. It's hard to go from one hour a week to the 167. But you can go from one to two. And then two to three, and three to four. Just like we do here as a church, one next step at a time. And you'd be amazed at how far you would get inviting God into the 167. In fact, Hebrews chapter 12, I love this, it says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfected of our faith."

If we will just turn our eyes to Jesus, he'll pioneer. He'll take new ground. He'll extend and author and write our faith and start moving into the hours of our life that we allow him. And he'll say, come follow me and be my disciple. And step by step by step all of a sudden our faith starts getting activated. It starts getting turned on.

And it starts having a purpose for where it matters most. And so here's what I want to invite you to do this week. I want to invite you to invite God into the 167 of your life. And I know that may feel daunting and you're not sure how to do it, so here's what we're going to do, every day Monday through Friday, if you subscribed to our text thing, and it's going to be here on the screen for you. You can just text VCC to 797979. We will every day Monday through Friday we'll send you one simple text at a totally different time during the day and say wherever you -- in a sense, wherever you are right now, stop, and just invite God into this hour. Not even into the whole day, not even into everything that -- just invite God into this hour right now. And maybe become aware of His presence, or just receive some fresh grace, or take a moment to just seek Him, or submit to what He's asking you to do, or some way engage in His mission.

It's time to activate our faith in a totally different way. Here's what I think is so cool about our church. Of any church I know, we are positioned and prepared for this. Our vision is to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond. We want to spend all of our time raising up a

generation of hope careers, you, to be our outreach strategy, to be the ones who go into this world bringing the hope of heaven to the brokenness and darkness of the kingdom of darkness, that we bring the kingdom of light and change everything in Jesus' name. And so we have to change our narrative and change the perspective. Let's not be so consumed with when are we going to have in-person gatherings that we forget to just follow Jesus where we currently are.

Because if you don't enjoy Jesus where you are, you're not going to enjoy Jesus where you're going. You see, if get through this whole season and your faith doesn't grow, and you don't invite God into the 167 in a new way, and just even if -- even if it's just a step, you kind of miss the point of the season. Remember, resistance either makes you stronger or it makes you quit. Don't let the resistance of this season make you quit, let it make you stronger where your faith gets activated in Jesus' name, in your work, in your school, in your home, in the places that you go, on the mission that we've been empowered to carry by Jesus himself. Come on Valley Creek, we have an amazing one. It's time for an amazing 167.

We as a church have amazing Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving gatherings. And I can't wait until we get back to those together in person. They are supernatural. They are powerful. You and I, we need them. But it's time to have Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving 167s and all the rest of our life.

So you close your eyes with me. And let me just ask you today, I haven't asked you this in a while. What do you think the Holy Spirit is saying to you? Like right now in this moment of your life, what's the Spirit saying to you in your home?

I think His grace is just saying to you, hey, there is so much more that I have for you. This isn't about you doing something for God. This is about you walking in everything that Jesus has done for you. So if you feel comfortable, by faith, maybe this is -- would you just open up your hands with me, wherever you are, come on, sitting in your home or sitting in a car, or in your garage or run or walk, wherever you are, would you just hold out your hands right now and let's just activate our faith.

In fact, right now, can you just even -- and maybe even have the courage to say out loud, Jesus, I invite you into the 167 of my life. Come on, I know you might be embarrassed, sitting by your spouse or your parents or your kids or your friends. But come on, this is your faith, you can't abdicate it, you can't delegate. Come on, say, Jesus, I invite you into the 167 of my life.

And lord, right now we do invite you in. And we thank you that this technology has connected us in this season that we still are gathering. But you're inviting us to go to a new place with you. And so right now Lord, I pray for every person that's listening, every person that's watching, would you activate their faith in Jesus' name? Would you pioneer their faith? Would you take some ground? Would you move forward? And this week, would you open up our



eyes to your presence? Open up our heart to your goodness? Open up our mind to receive your grace? Open up our lives to invite you into the 167? In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name, would you activate our faith where it matters most? We love you, Lord. Thank you for inspiring and challenging and leading us into the future. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Hey, I am so glad that you are here with us today. And if we can pray for you for anything, you could fill out our prayer requests on our website. We would love to pray for you. For those of you that want to give, you can give on our website. Giving in this season, it's trusting God. It's saying, God, I'm keeping you first and foremost in my life. My tithe belongs to you. And I want to give offerings to just show you how much I love. It's obedience and worship. Giving is part of inviting God into the 167 of your life. And this week, I want to encourage you on Instagram and Facebook Live at 7 o'clock every night, Monday through Friday, we will have a five-minute or less little clip to help you invite God into the 167 of your life to own your own journey. But come on, Valley Creek, it's time to activate your faith where it matters most, 167. Before we come back to the in-person gathering, let's put some energy into the 167 in Jesus' name. I love you. We'll see you next week.