



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 feeling abandoned?” as we read the ending of one of my favorite books in all of Scripture, Habakkuk.

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=OTFUQWJvU21MMmR6bkY5SitpeIR1UT09>

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

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

October 4, 2020

PRELUDE

"His Eye Is on the Sparrow"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Be pleased, O God, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me.
People: Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great."
Leader: But I am poor and needy, hasten to me, O God.
People: You are my help and my deliverer, O Lord, do not delay.

(Psalm 70, NRSV)

HYMN OF PRAISE

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

*What a fellowship, what a joy divine
Leaning on the everlasting arms
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine
Leaning on the everlasting arms
(Refrain)
Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms*

*O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way
Leaning on the everlasting arms
O how bright the path grows from day to day
Leaning on the everlasting arms
(Refrain)*

*What have I to dread, what have I to fear
Leaning on the everlasting arms
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near
Leaning on the everlasting arms
(Refrain)*

INVOCATION

Oh God, it is good to hear the words of the old song, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms. Our minds can get drawn into the worries of daily life; we fret over what if this happens, what if that happens,...? We know the things we fret about may happen but the answer for us

here is that we know God is with us; "What have I to dread, what have I to fear?" because we have, and we are reassured by this communal worship, The everlasting arms to lean on. Amen

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

Caring God, we turn to you in moments of need and celebration alike as our one creator and savior. We turn to you out of hope and worry alike, that you might inspire the former and soothe the latter. We turn to you that these prayers would transform not only others but ourselves. And we turn to you on behalf of the people whom we have named aloud here today in this time of worship, and whom we lift up to you once more now...

SCRIPTURE

Habakkuk 3:17-19

MEDITATION

"The Whatabouts: What About Feeling Abandoned?"
See Insert for Meditation

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*

*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
As to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love*

*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*

SHARING OUR OFFERING WITH GOD

It is time for us to share of our gifts, tithes, and offerings with the Church. Every year, especially this time of year but this year in particular, we may feel put upon by so many people or groups asking for help, all worthy of our gifts. I have never come to terms between

my possessions and how much of my possessions I should share. I will continue to struggle with this. I am sure you struggle with us. It is now time for your today's answer to this struggle about how much to share; you may bring your gifts, tithes, or offerings to the church or mail it to the Church.

**OFFERTORY
PRAYER**

Prayer from Dr. Jim Taylor

**CALL TO
COMMUNION**

May we remember the abandonment Christ felt on the Cross when He cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" even as God was already planning the Resurrection to come.

**COMMUNION
HYMN**

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

(Refrain)

*There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul*

*Sometimes I feel discouraged & think my works in vain
But then the holy spirit revives my soul again
(Refrain)*

*If you can't preach like Peter if you can't pray like Paul
Just tell the love of Jesus and say He died for all
(Refrain)*

*Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend
And if you lack for knowledge, He'll ne'er refuse to lend
(Refrain)*

**COMMUNION
PRAYER**

Let us pray: Just as there is a "Balm in Gilead", we come to that moment in the service when we can once again heal our sin-sick soul, we can make our wounded self whole. We now pray the prayer you taught us as we prepare to partake of the bread and wine,, "Our Father, Who art in heaven, ..."

**HOLY
COMMUNION**

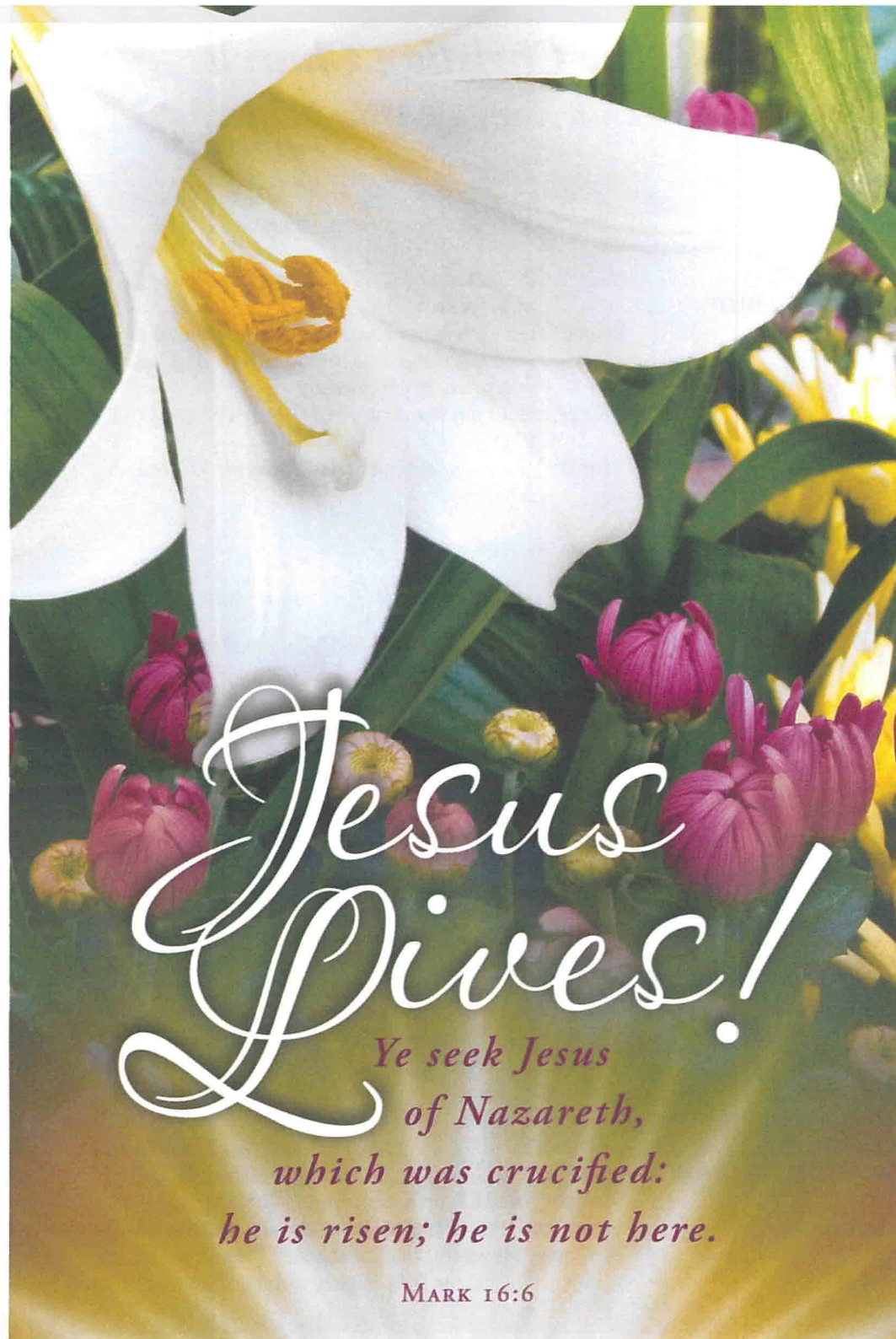
Partake of the holy communion (bread, juice, or whatever is available to you)

**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 blessing of the Lord be with you now and always. Amen.



Jesus
Lives!

*Ye seek Jesus
of Nazareth,
which was crucified:
he is risen; he is not here.*

MARK 16:6

MEDITATION

Sunday, October 4, 2020

“What About Feeling Abandoned?” Habakkuk 3:17-19

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

As a kid, accompanying my dad grocery shopping was a common occurrence, so much so that going grocery shopping remains to this day one of my favorite household chores to perform. Even after I crashed our grocery cart into a pyramid of 12-packs of Bud Light and had my cart-driving license revoked, grocery shopping with my dad was something I enjoyed.

Except when I would get lost in the grocery store and separated from my dad. Of course, he was never far away—sometimes it was just a matter of him being a couple of aisles over. But you can’t see over those aisles, and so I couldn’t see my dad. Fortunately, he had taught me what to do in those situations in an age before cell phones (and yes, I am old enough to recall such a time). I would find a store employee, who would have my dad paged over the store’s public address system, and then the grocery shopping would continue.

I was never abandoned, but in the moment, I still felt alone. I was a small child, and I couldn’t see over aisles to know where my dad was relative to me. I couldn’t hear him, or at least hear anything unique to him, that made him stand out. But he taught me what to do when I did find myself alone, and it minimized that time spent alone.

I think there is something in that image for each of us at some point in our faith journey as we tackle today’s question, “What about feeling abandoned?”

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 equipped to talk to people

(over)

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 question is, “What about feeling abandoned?” And right off the bat, I want to say that this question—like all of the questions we’re talking about—is a valid one to ask. Just because God may be ever-present does not mean that we are always at our best to perceive that divine presence. We each are more sensitive to some things than others—some of us are more sensitive to heat than cold, or vice versa, and sometimes we are more sensitive to it on a given day. The same can be true for our sensitivity to God and to God’s presence.

But that does not mean that God’s own presence or faithfulness has to wax and wane, and navigating those dual realities is at the heart of the conversation the prophet Habakkuk has with God, which encompasses the three chapters of the prophet’s book.

Habakkuk is my personal hidden gem in Scripture—only three chapters long, but it communicates gobs about the plight we as people face when we witness pain and hurt take place and wonder where our creator is. This is how the prophet begins the book, and it spurs this back-and-forth between the prophet and God, which culminates in this vivid, joyous song of praise that the prophet composes to God because, in spite of all other ills around him or that might befall him, the prophet simply cannot help but be loved by God and to love God in return.