

Sermon Notes

2 Corinthians 12:11-21 NRSV | Written by Rev. Dr. Alf Halvorson

This is second to last in our series on Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth. He is winding down his argument against the "super-apostles" who are trying to take the church in a different direction than Paul (and Christ) have been leading them up to this point. Amazingly, Paul must defend not being paid by the church. The rivals are suggesting that it is because Paul doesn't love them or honor them. Paul turns the tables and says basically, "Ideally, parents shouldn't have to take from their children; they give to their children." Paul, in the end, sees himself as a parent to these spiritual children. He loves them and is willing to sacrifice for them so they can be built up in the Lord.

1. No parents are perfect. But, as you grew up, did you know that your parents loved you and had regularly sacrificed for you? If so, how? And if not, in what ways did they "miss the mark" or profoundly let you down?
2. Read 2 Cor. 12:11-12, focusing first on verses 11-13. Why does Paul think he has been a good apostle for them? Why do you think he didn't burden them with having to financially support him, while he let other congregations offer that kind of support (and he was a tent maker, too, who provided much of his own support)?
3. Focus on verses 14-18, especially on verses 14-15, where Paul is exceptionally transparent and vulnerable. What is he trying to convey? Have you ever felt like Paul when you tried to offer your love? That you were rebuffed or rejected, or your love was not returned with the same fervor as it was offered? How did you feel? What did you do?
4. In verses 19-21, Paul says he and his team are there to *build up* not tear down, but building up required that they confront sin in the lives of those under their care. Do you feel comfortable holding others accountable? Have you allowed others to speak into your life about possible blind spots or sins that could shipwreck you? How much trust must be in a relationship for that kind of candor to work positively? What would it look like "to speak the truth in love" to someone you have accountability over and have it work out for the best for the person? How might you avoid the relationship exploding beyond recognition?
5. Are any of the sins from verses 20-21 sins that you need to confess and find forgiveness for through Christ? Read 1 John 1:8-9 and follow through on repentance and God's restoration.

Financial Update as of Feb 1, 2026

2026 Annual Budget	\$ 14,728,728
Actual Income to Date	1,639,150
Needed to Meet 2026 Budget	13,089,578



Sun, Feb 8, 2026

Help Fellow Houstonians!

Please consider donating socks, toilet paper, and feminine hygiene products to benefit clients of The Beacon. The items will be used to assemble and distribute kits during Church in the City. Drop off anytime at the tables around campus.

Also needed are loaves of white or wheat sandwich bread for the CITC Kids' Meals projects! Nothing fancy and no Texas Toast. So it's fresh, please drop off on Feb 15 or later.

Faith in Practice Gathering

Today! 10:45-11:15am | The Nook

Are you—or someone you know—a medical/dental professional interested in serving on a week-long mission trip? Meet MDPC partner Faith in Practice to learn about using your gifts to make a life-changing impact among the poor of Guatemala.

College Prep

Sundays, Feb 8, Mar 1, Apr 12, May 3 | 11:15am

A 4-part series for high school seniors. We'll gather in the Youth area to hear from an amazing guest speaker on one important topic for life in college. Food provided. Feb topic: *Mental Health in College*. Learn more: youth.mdpc.org

Parents of College Students Dinner

Tue, Feb 17 | 6:30-8pm | Los Tios

Connect with other parents navigating the college years. Dinner provided. Guest speaker Amanda Grace Morris discusses healthy boundaries. Learn more: youth.mdpc.org

Ash Wednesday

Wed, Feb 18 | Noon & 7pm

Both service times include the imposition of ashes and communion. Enter with us into this season of reflection, repentance, and hope.

Lenten Bible Study with Pastor Alf

Wed, Feb 25-Apr 1 | 6:30-7:30pm

Led by Pastor Alf, journey through the Lenten season with Scripture and the wisdom of C.S. Lewis as our guides. Learn more: lion.mdpc.org

Senior Adult Lunch and Games Day

Thu, Feb 26 | Lunch at 11am, Games at Noon

Join us in Fellowship Hall for lunch (bring or purchase from MDPC Café) and fun with peers playing bingo, Scrabble, dominoes, board games, cards, mahjong, and more, or bring your favorite game to play! Learn more: seniors.mdpc.org

Taste of Alpha

Sun, Mar 8 | 12:30-2:15pm | Fellowship Hall

A chance for you to see what Alpha is about and get a sense of the "why" behind the way we do things. Perfect for anyone who'd would like to learn more before inviting friends to the Alpha course.

Join a Local Outreach Committee!

Encounter God through the work of our outreach partners while helping steward MDPC's radical generosity. Interested? Contact Julie LaRue (jlarue@mdpc.org).

The image features the MDPC logo (a stylized cross with a circle) and the text "MDPC CHURCH IN THE CITY" in the top left. In the top right, the text "REGISTRATION IS OPEN!" is displayed. Below this, the text "Join your MDPC family for this annual all-church event, when MDPC leaves the pews to serve some of our local outreach partners." and the website "citic.mdpc.org" are shown. A QR code is in the bottom right corner. The background is a dark green color.

Sat & Sun, Feb 21-22, 2026 • An All-Church Weekend of Service

The image features the text "DAD CAMP" in large, yellow, block letters. Below it, the text "SAT-SUN FEB 28-MAR 1" and "4PM-8AM | MDPC FIELD" and the website "DADCAMP.MDPC.ORG" are displayed. A QR code is in the bottom right corner. The background is a dark green color with silhouettes of trees and a campfire.



8:30 BLENDED SERVICE

GATHERING

Call to Worship	Laurien Hook
Worship Songs	<i>How Good It Is</i> <i>Come Now Is the Time to Worship</i>
*Confession & Assurance Prayers of the People	Dan Aikins
Worship Songs	<i>Breathe on Me Breath of God</i>
Offertory	<i>Abide</i>

HEARING THE WORD

Message	Beautifully Spent 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 (NRSV)	Alf Halvorson
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RESPONDING

Song of Response	<i>Oh But God</i>
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SENDING

*Benediction	Alf Halvorson
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9:45 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

GATHERING

*Call to Worship and Scout Sunday Moment	Rachel Poysky
<i>God and Church Award</i>	<i>2025 Eagle Scouts</i>
Thomas Jackson	Kyle T. Cunningham
Cooper Nelson	William C. Koerner
William Allen	Elijah J. Kruppa
Glenn Rosso	Alexander Z. Cheng
Rivers Patout	Zachary C. Dina
Thomas Haidamous	Xander J. Feldt
Jackson Stone	Patrick E. Yong
	Foster Evan
	Tyler Burton

Worship Songs	<i>God I'm Just Grateful</i> <i>How Good It Is</i>	Meliza Gómez
*Moment of Confession & Assurance		
*Worship Songs	<i>God So Loved</i> <i>Who Else</i>	

RESPONDING

Offertory	<i>Abide</i>
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HEARING THE WORD	
Message	Beautifully Spent 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 (NRSV)

Song of Response	<i>Oh But God</i>
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Baptism	Turner Miller Coleman, son of Ross and Katy Coleman	Alf Halvorson
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SENDING

*Benediction	Alf Halvorson
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Musicians in these services: Asher Pudlo, drums | Uvaldo Callejas, bass | Chris Parrott, guitar
Jaime Arroyo, keys | Michael Middleton & Meliza Gómez, worship leaders

*Please stand, if comfortable.

11:15 TRADITIONAL SERVICE

GATHERING

Prelude	<i>It Is Well with My Soul</i>	arr. Rob Landes
Call to Worship		Laurien Hook
Choral Introit	<i>Behold Now Praise the Lord</i>	Everett Titcomb (1884-1968)
*Hymn of Praise	<i>My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less</i> Vs. 1, 2, 4 #379 SOLID ROCK	
*Confession and Assurance of Pardon		Dan Aikins
*Affirmation of Faith from United Church of Canada		
*Congregational Response	<i>Psalm 34 - I'll Bless the Lord from Day to Day</i>	#466 AZMON trans. Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

HEARING THE WORD

Anthem of Preparation	<i>The Lord Is My Shepherd, Alleluia</i>	Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)
Message	Beautifully Spent 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 (NRSV)	Alf Halvorson

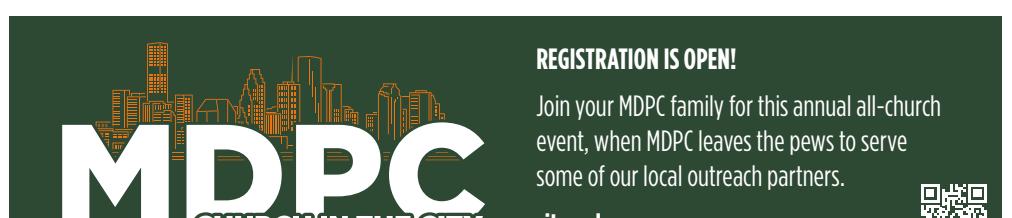
RESPONDING

*Hymn of Response	<i>I Need Thee Every Hour</i>	Vs. 1, 3, 5 #397 NEED
Prayers of the People The Lord's Prayer		Dan Aikins
Offertory	<i>The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation</i>	Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)

SENDING

*Doxology	<i>Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow</i>	#592 OLD 100TH
*Benediction		Alf Halvorson
Postlude	<i>Come, Christians, Join to Sing</i>	arr. Rob Landes

Musicians in this service: Jason Amos, soloist | Sanctuary Choir
Charles Hausmann, Traditional Worship Director | Rob Landes, pianist



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Join your MDPC family for this annual all-church event, when MDPC leaves the pews to serve some of our local outreach partners.

ctc.mdpc.org



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Our pastors are here to help. We'd love to hear from you!



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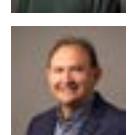
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