

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on January 20, 2019:**

**"A Vision for 2019: Part 2
(2 Peter 1:1-11) –
Knowing and Growing in Jesus"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that when we first engage in a relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, then amazing things happen in our relationship with others as we become instruments of God to shine His light on them.]

Notes

Introduction:

This is part 2 and our conclusion of looking into 2019 and beyond.
As we mentioned last week, we changed our theme Scripture for this year.

2019 Theme Scripture:

- 2 Peter 1:1-11 – Knowing and Growing in Jesus

2019 Theme:

- “If we want to go fast in renewal, we go alone; if we want to go far in renewal, we go together.”
- How many of us like this theme?
- Pastor Craig feels that there are some of us who would like to go fast.
- Now, sometimes there is a time to go fast, a time to go alone, but not as a family. We go together as a church family, and as a result, we'll go far.
- The church is here to be engaged in renewal.
- The church is here to be conformed to the very heart and mind of Jesus Christ, which is the transformational process that's going on.
- And because of this transformation, we reach out into the community to build and grow our family.
- Our theme Scripture is very appropriate to this.
- For our Flourishing Care Groups, pastor Craig has prepared a 20 page study on our theme Scripture.
- If there is a memory verse or passage you want to commit to memory, this certainly be one.

2 Peter 1:1 (NASB), Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

- Now Peter and Paul and others referred to themselves as bond-servants or slaves of Jesus.

- Now, we know in the Gospels, Jesus tells us that He no longer calls us servants but friends.
- Yes, there is an intimate relationship with Jesus, but here Peter was referring to how he saw himself and how he viewed his life – and he realized that his life wasn't his own.
- Peter committed his life to serving the Father, Son and Spirit as Paul did.
- So, this is a key statement.

1b) To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

**2) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
3) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

- Now, there is a principle in Scripture that Dr. Gary Deddo refers to as: “indicatives” and “imperatives,” which are grammatical terms.
- Pastor Craig would like to refer to it as “relationship before rules.”
- In Scripture, we find that we are first connected to the relationship that we have with the Father, Son and Spirit, before God asks us to do something – the rule – the imperative.
- Our growth process, growing in Jesus, won't happen by our own doing, but rather it's a result of our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- So, when certain verses command us or direct us to do certain things – grow in this way or grow in that way – please note that it's not something we can do physically on our own, because this is a supernatural process.
- And the supernatural process comes out of the supernatural access through prayer, meditation, study, coming together in worship, coming together in fellowship, and bringing our gifts and offerings.
- And when we're first engaged in that relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, spiritual things will automatically flow out of us.
- Pastor Craig mentioned briefly last week about his uncle who was a professional baseball pitcher.
- In his college days, he didn't walk out on to the mound and pitch a no-hitter in Selma, Alabama, because he just got up that morning and let things flow naturally.
- His mom told us that in his high school days, every day as soon as he got home, he went out to the red barn, pitching the ball. And he would do that until it got dark.
- And by doing that he wore the barn door surface clean.
- Renewal comes through constant access of prayer and study and meditation.
- And, if we are doing these things and walk on to the field of life, we then naturally let God do what He does.
- We can't work any of this up on our own.
- Pastor Craig can't tell us to do these things, all he can do is show us the way, show us the access of prayer and study and meditation – drawing close to God through spiritual disciplines and practices.

- Then, when we walk on to the field of life, when we interact with those we come in contact with out in the market place, at work, at school, on the freeway, etc., when we have been engaged in that relationship, abiding in the Vine, God and His ways can't just help flow out of us.
- And when pastor Craig feels this way, he wants to be around people in a way that has God's love just flowing out of him.
- We can only do this indirectly, indirectly through that spiritual relationship, that abiding in the vine.
- So, in our spiritual life, we throw the pitches and as Karl Malden has said about the American Express Card, "Don't leave home without it."
- We simply can't love others on our own, if we don't first let the Holy Spirit just flow out of us.

4) For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,

- How do we become partakers of the divine nature? Is there a part or a role for us to play in that?
- It's through spiritual disciplines of prayer, study, meditation, fellowship.
- That's the practice that leads us out on the field and we pitch that spiritual no-hitter, so to speak.
- But if we jump into the game without the spiritual preparation and try to act like a Christian, it doesn't work.
- When we're not engaged in that on-going relationship with God, we then act out of our humanity.
- And when we act out of our humanity, we do what's kind of natural, and when we do that, people will think that's not what a Christian should do or be.
- Pastor Craig admitted that he can be snarky at times, but he's finding that he's catching that more and more.
- When he's writing a critical e-mail and finds himself just pounding the keys, the thought comes to him, "Craig, let it go, back off. Don't act out of your unbelief, act out of your belief."
- Pastor Craig finds that the more he stays close to God in that loving relationship, the more he catches himself.
- When he catches himself, the "old man" is coming out of him less and less and the "new man" is coming out of him more and more, as pastor Craig is acting out of God's love more and more and not out of his own thoughts.
- The key to all of this is staying in that loving relationship with God.
- It's taken pastor Craig about 40 years to figure this out, but at least he knows it now.

4b) so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,

- The role of the New Testament church was to just love others and to let God's love be such a shining light that the darkness is consumed by His love.
- God's love just doesn't flow out of a Christian; it flows out of a Christian's relationship with God.

4c) having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence,

- So, here we get a clue from Peter, that this just happen naturally, but supernaturally.
- And it only happen supernaturally, when we are engaged in those supernatural practices.
- Now, let's remember the sayings: "relationship before rules," "indicatives before imperatives."
- Peter tells us, "applying all diligence" which means there's a process and a role for us to play.
- When pastor Craig's uncle Jerry walked out onto the mound and pitched that no-hitter in Selma, he had been diligent since his high school days in tossing that ball over and over and over.
- And when we're engaged in those spiritual practices, prayer and study and meditation and service, then God's love can't help flow out of us

5b) in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

7) and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

8) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Our theme Scripture from last year, "Abide in the vine" – what Jesus said through John's words was that the way we bear fruit is abiding in the vine, abiding in that relationship with Him.
- So, if we truly want to be a light and to show our love to others around us, then we'll be engaged in loving God first – that's how it works.
- It's not always that easy to get up early enough in the morning to engage in prayer, to engage in study to draw close to God that day.
- Pastor Craig isn't being critical in saying this, but his job is to show all of us the spiritual pathway and to help us get on that spiritual pathway together as a family.
- Now when we "Abide in the vine", then things change, our lives become different, we attain something that is supernatural.
- God is continually bringing us to a new level because He is conforming and changing our minds into the very heart of Christ, which is obviously a supernatural process.
- And what so interesting is that we have a role to play – we're not to sit back as passive observers, but to work on that relationship with God.
- The Holy Spirit can't help from flowing out of you when we are in love with the Father, Son and Spirit. That's it!
- And when this happens our response to others will be supernatural and truly amazing and not like those who operate out of their unbelief.

9) For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

- So, if these spiritual qualities aren't flowing out of us, it's because we failed to engage in that relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- When our actions show our unbelief, we need to recognize this and start tapping into the source – which is Jesus Christ by having a relationship with Him.
- And through our relationship with Jesus, our love for others just comes out naturally; we don't have to "work" it up.
- When we love God, then loving others happens naturally with no fear, shame, guilt or doubt – that is our transformation process that the Father, Son and Spirit is working out in His church today.
- Now if we don't do that, God doesn't love us any less.
- God always desires for us to be relationship with Him, but He doesn't force this on us.
- When Christians act out of their unbelief, it's not that they don't have relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, but it happens because they're not tapping into the spiritual source.
- So, when the pressures of life come along, our human nature starts to flow out.
- Pastor Craig then told the story of his personal struggles in dealing with his accountant via e-mails.
- The Holy Spirit worked with him so that he didn't say in his back-and-forth e-mails what he really wanted to say.
- Pastor Craig said that he is just as human as everyone else is.
- One doesn't get a "pass" in being a pastor.

10) Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble

- Did you catch the phrase "as you practice these things"?
- The "practice" is not doing godliness or moral excellence; the "practice" is pitching those balls of prayer and study and meditation and building on our relationship of loving God.

11) for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Vision Statement 1:

Our family expresses love with a commitment to transformation by growing deeper in a flourishing relationship with Jesus.

- Now how do we do that?
- Hopefully, we have it down by now – prayer, study, meditation, worship, fellowship, coming together for services.
- That's how we are building a flourishing relationship with Jesus.
- And when we are flourishing with Him, our love toward others becomes a natural thing, or a supernatural thing. It's a natural thing because we can't help it as the supernatural love of God just naturally flows out of us.
- We will be amazed at ourselves, what we say and do, because these things don't naturally come from us.

Recall:

- “If we always do what we always did, we’ll always get what we always got.”
- So, how do you change the future – by mixing it up and doing things differently.

Vision Statement 1 – Key Initiatives to carry it out:

1. Be involved in a Flourishing Care Group (FCG).
2. Determine ways to expand our FCGs and make it easier to join (timing, frequency, locations).
 - Right now we tracking just less than half of our members in these groups.
3. Determine the best way to reformat FCGs to make them outward focused toward inviting others.
 - By the way, all these points were pulled from our TCAP meeting that we all agreed to last May.

Vision Statement 2:

Our family knows this commitment grows by continually engaging relational spiritual practices (abiding in prayer, study, worship, fellowship, giving, etc.)

Vision Statement 2 – Key Initiatives:

1. Engage in prayerful dependence with an outward focus toward our 5 mission fields:
 - a) Y Board/staff;
 - b) Y members;
 - c) Y parish;
 - d) City of Monrovia;
 - e) Our personal mission field of influence.
 - We should be engaging and praying for all of these things to happen.
2. Prayerful dependence that we can discern the needs of our mission fields and community and ways to effectively engage and serve them.
 - Through prayer, the Holy Spirit will guide us to discern those needs.
3. Revitalize our desire is to be where the body is on Sunday mornings for worship, fellowship, service, and growth.
4. Prayerful dependence - financial giving through the four pathways:
 - a) Become a first-time giver;
 - b) Be a consistent giver;
 - c) Become a percentage giver;
 - d) Increase % as God blesses.

Vision Statement 3:

Our family, those who are able, engage these practices in community through whole-life discipleship committed to Groups, Teams, Classes also known as a pathway for new family involvement.

Vision Statement 3 – Key Initiatives to do this:

1. Refine our assimilation process for visitors.
2. Provide leadership development for ministry teams by mentoring apprentices.
3. Further develop and refine our welcoming and hospitality teams through connection cards, follow-up, literature and spiritual formation tools.
4. Provide training in how to study scripture passages or texts effectively and preaching on those passages or texts.
 - o Pastor Craig has put together a 250 page resource on how we study Scripture and how we preach.
5. Determine interest in and provide practical Christian living Bible Classes (Financial Balance; Spiritual Formation, etc.).
6. Utilize assessment tool for Finding your PLACE in Life and Ministry (Combining Spiritual Gifts with 4 DISC Personality Types, Abilities, Passions and Life Experiences).

Vision Statement 4:

Our family expresses/shares this love by living mission-minded (Y staff/Board, members, surrounding parish; city, friends, family, circles of influence), and are open to inviting others as the Holy Spirit draws. [These opportunities will just naturally happen when we are in a flourishing relationship with Jesus.]

Vision Statement 4 – Key Initiatives:

1. Determine ways for increasing awareness of our presence at the Y through signage, etc.
2. Develop relationships with Y Board and staff through committees and meetings.
 - o Pastor is already a board member of the Y and has asked to be a vice-chair.
3. Develop relationships with staff and members by hanging out at the Y through participation in classes, exercise facilities, etc.
4. Partner the church and its leadership through support of the annual Y Fall Gala.
5. Partner and support the Y youth church camp.
6. Offer classes through the Y Christian emphasis committee to staff and members (financial balance; public speaking, spiritual formation, etc.).
7. Create awareness/invite the parish to our Easter, combined church picnic in Recreation park, and Christmas celebrations.
8. Determine creative ways to reach, engage, and build relationships with surrounding parish, including outside the walls carnival in Recreation Park.
9. Continue 8 question community assessment surveys with key community leaders.
10. Engage and build relationships through Rotary meetings and events.

11. Partnering with community service projects.
12. Chamber membership and involvement.
13. Setting up a booth at the Monrovia Downtown Friday night carnival celebrations.
14. Community Coordinating Council membership and involvement.

Concluding comments:

- We have to figure on a way to focus on these vision statements and key initiatives and not do it alone but do it together after we have engaged our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit because when we love God we can't help love others.
- In order for practical things to bear fruit, the love of God has to be involved.

- We need to realize that God didn't call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful.
- And if we're going to grow as a family, then it will be the Holy Spirit who does that.
- All we can do is place ourselves on the pathway, discern God's wisdom, discern His care, and then let God do what He does.

- And when the Holy Spirit flows, we can't help but just get out of the way and let Him do what He does.
- So, let's go along together, and if we do, we might just see some amazing things happening.
- Pastor Craig loves us all and is looking forward to a fabulous 2019 as we get out of the way and watch the Holy Spirit do what He does.

Closing prayer