

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on October 7, 2018:**

**"Why this Church?
(Colossians 1:13-23)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that we have moved to the Monrovia YMCA to be able to reach out others to share the Good News that all are truly the beloved children of God.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Pastor Craig wholehearted thanked everyone for making this move to Monrovia possible.
- God bless you all for joining us.
- Pastor Craig posed a question: Why this church? And why are we here in this building?

- It begins with one fundamental grounding point of view – each and every one of us are beloved Children of God, and that includes all humanity, including believers and not-yet-believers.
- And this is a fundamental tenant of what we believe in.
- And we believe that without fear, guilt, shame or doubt.

Family:

- And because of that, we refer to ourselves as family – so we're not just disconnected folks here.
- The key thing about families is that even when we have our differences, we still come together, we still love each other, and we still welcome each other.

Response to God:

- Now all of us in the past have come up with a way to summarize Scripture or the Bible in just two words – belief and response.
- That belief requires response.
- And when we respond, that changes everything.

- And then with belief comes in one word – salvation.
- And we define salvation as in the one word, it's relationship.
- Now belief that there is a God and belief that our God saved us is not just like a form of fire insurance, which will be paid off in the future – but the benefits happen right now.
- And so salvation is how we live out that belief.
- And so, when we respond to that belief, that has a transforming affect.

- And so, when we talk about church, we talk about the fact that we are a family, we talk about the fact that we are grounded in relationships.

- Now, this leads us, as we said before, to transformation by living the transformed life.
- This relationship isn't just about the future, but what is happening right now, day by day, not just what happens on Sunday but also what happens Monday through Saturday.
- And when we live the transformed life, not only do we get better at life, but life gets better.

An abundant life:

- Now, you'll never hear us talk about the popular "Health and Wealth Gospel."
- That's because we don't believe that by becoming a Christian believer, by holding on to that relationship that God promises us the world.
- In fact Scripture promises us that we enter into the Kingdom through suffering.
- But when that suffering that we go through is with that relationship with God and with a God-centered view of the world, then that suffering becomes easier.
- And so, when Jesus came and promised an abundant life, it wasn't just about social-economic benefits, or educational benefits, or the kind of car we drive, or the size of bank account that we have, but that when we go through suffering, that He will be there with us.
- And that peace that He gives is a life changer, which makes all the difference.

Member example:

- Pastor Craig has been helping one of church members with her overwhelming financial issues, because she has just recently lost her husband.
- And he's been so impressed because every day this lady turns over her problems over to her Father in heaven.
- So, in her suffering and in her overwhelmed state, she has found peace, which comes from that relationship we've just talked about.
- God hasn't promised to take our suffering away, but He has promised to always be there with us to comfort us.
- As family members, we don't circle the wagons in a defensive way, but in a way to help support each other.

Why this Church?

- When the apostle Paul was speaking to the church at Colossi, he was writing to them about the reasons for the existence of the church.

Colossians 1:13 (NASB), For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- Now, as we said earlier, we believe that all of humanity has been forgiven, has been reconciled to God, and has been redeemed.
- But, the unfortunate thing is that not all of humanity knows that, understands that or believes that.
- In order to expire this, you have to believe and understand that what Jesus did on the cross was truly amazing.
- And when we come to that understanding, we realize that sin is no longer an issue.

- Scripture tells us that we have been forgiven of past, present and future sins.
- And now we begin to live our new life out.
- Because of that forgiveness, we are free, then, to grow in God's family relationship.

14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

16) For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- Why is Paul writing all of this?
- Essentially, he is saying that there is nothing we can think of that has been created that Jesus does not hold together.
- When Paul talks about “all” in this context, he is showing us that “all” means all.

18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

- So, when we talk about all, there is no one thing left in God's creation that isn't reconciled and redeemed.

22) yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach – 23) if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast,

- So, when Paul spoke about “all”, he was referring to all of us now, all of those who came before us and all of those who will follow us.
- That's because Jesus has taken away every barrier and every road block to prevent us from having a relationship with Him.
- So, there is nothing to prevent us from living that transformed new life -- no social economic barriers, no educational barriers, or whatever excuse people can come up with to say that “this doesn't apply to me”, or that “God loves others but not me.”
- Dear friends, there are no exceptions.
- We achieve our identity by the fact that each of us is a beloved child of God, who is reconciled, redeemed, forgiven.
- And that's what church is about – coming together in fellowship as the children of God.
- We're here together as family and those who love each other.
- We also realize that this love for each other can't truly happen unless we first love God, because out of loving God that He then gives us the ability to love others.
- And when we are loving God and others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt – when God's love flows through us to others, that is truly transformational.
- And our role is to expand that family and when we do that, it looks like we will have a space issue here right away. We're already shoulder to shoulder.

- And so when Jesus talks about “all” being reconciled, He’s not just talking about “some”.
- So when Jesus promises “all”, He means “all.”
- So, our role here at the Y, is to continue to grow in God’s love and continue to be transformed.
- And as we are being transformed, it not only changes us, but it also changes those around us.

23) if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard,

- The hope of the gospel – the hope of the Good News is that ALL are reconciled and redeemed.
- We need to respond, accept and to trust to this Good News.

23b) which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

- We have tremendous Good News.
- We have a Creator who someday will be our Judge.
- Now the word judge can sound kind of scary.
- But the fact is that Jesus came to save the world – that was His mission.
- Jesus came to forgive all sins.
- And so when we face that Judge, who is Jesus, it shouldn’t be with fear.
- Jesus loves all of us more than we can ever imagine.
- Jesus is there waiting for us to have a relationship with Him.
- And when we go through problems and aches and pain and heartaches, Jesus promises to take us through it.
- And when He does that, it’s quite different than when we go through bad times alone.
- This is the Good News that we share.
- That’s what grace is all about.
- And that’s the new life we are welcomed into.
- And that is what this church is all about.

Conclusion:

- An invitation.
 - If you don’t have a church home and you’re looking for a family that believes in a loving God and would like to enter into a transformed life through Him, then we invite you back again next week.
 - We would love to have you as part of our family.

Closing prayer