

**Sermon Notes of  
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on October 28, 2018:**

**"The Church Sent, Sent where, Sent How?  
Part 4 in a series on the Church (Acts 1:1-8)"**

**[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that through Acts 1, we understand the mission of the church is to be sent to share the good news of God's love to others.]**

**Notes**

Introduction:

- Pastor Craig started a new series the very first Sunday we began our worship services here in Monrovia.
- The series is about, "the church".
- The first message was, "Why This Church?"
- The second one showed that the church is the body of Christ.
- And last week's message showed what the church does – it's here to worship and to witness.
  
- We've discovered that the church isn't designed to be a "feel good club" but for the purpose of being sent, sharing the good news of Jesus, sharing the good news of that family relationship, which is a high calling.
- Since March 17, 2017, pastor Craig has delivered 61 out of a total of 85 sermons given or 72%.
- Over this period, pastor Craig found that most of the time, these messages have come to him just a few days or a week before Sunday and they weren't something that he had planned for ahead of time.

Beverly Hills job experience:

- After graduating from Ambassador College, pastor Craig landed a job in wealth management in Beverly Hills.
- He had a client of Roxbury Drive – she had been a traveler all around the world and had collected many items.
- She had a harpsichord dated back into the 1600's, a roll top desk owned by Douglas Fairbanks, one of the actors from the 1920's and 1930's.
  
- And after she had passed away, pastor Craig and some others were in charge of settling the estate in part by doing an inventory of her collections.
- They walked into her huge walk-in china cabinet where she stored china that had been owned by Marie Antoinette.
- Her initials of MA were on the plates; other plates had paintings of Napoleon and his entourage.
- All of them got this feeling that they were in the place of greatness – historically speaking.
- They took all of these treasures to Christy's and had them auctioned off.

### Church being sent:

- The spiritual analogy of this is: now God is taking us deeper into His china cabinet and as we get deeper with the word, and as we get deeper with who we are as a church being sent as Jesus was sent, it opens up a whole new world to us.
- It's our high calling, not someone else's – we are sent to those who Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the Father are reaching out to.
- In doing so, we are sharing that love and that family that we have been given.
- So when we talk about the church being sent, we need to answer the questions: sent where and sent how?
- But, before we get into Acts chapter 1, pastor Craig read an excerpt from a speech, "In the Arena" given by Theodore Roosevelt in Paris, France on April 23, 1910.
- Now, as we listen to this excerpt, imagine all of us looking into a mirror and then asking a couple of questions,
  - If not you, than who?
  - When history is viewed will my legacy be – the critic or the one in the arena?
  - Will we be the cold and timid soul, or the one who knows both victory and defeat?
  - In the future annals of Grace-Monrovia: if we fail, did we fail while daring greatly?

### "In the Arena" – Theodore Roosevelt:

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds;*

*who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

- So, this message today, as pastor Craig walks us into that china cabinet, brings with it some challenges.
- His job, as lead pastor of this church, was not to put things on maintenance.
- Grace Communion International is not hiring maintenance pastors, but rather renewal pastors.
- Pastor Craig's job is not to be behind us to push and shove, but to be out in front of the church to walk us into that China cabinet and show us how we are going deeper with that message and the blessings of what God is challenging us to do.
- Faith means that we are stirred in our hearts to say, "Yes" in sharing the Gospel, if we are able.

- Pastor Craig realizes that some in our congregation cannot be involved in the prayer walks that we are going to do to reach out in our neighborhoods.
- But, we can always pray and ask the Holy Spirit, “How can I be sent despite the circumstances that I’m in.”
- Now today’s message is not about guilt, or shame, or fear or doubt.
- Pastor Craig is not asking us to do something that the Holy Spirit is not reminding us or guiding us of doing.
- Pastor Craig’s job is to help us remember who we are as a part of the family of God.
- Furthermore, he can’t ask us to do anything that he is not doing or willing to do himself.
- So, we together, are a family – a family sent, which is so important.
- Luke, here in the first 8 verses in the Book of Acts, helps us answer those questions, “Sent where?” and “Sent how?”

**Acts 1:1 (NASB), The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,**

- Right there, we need to stop and take note – Jesus was not just a teacher, Jesus was a doer.
- Jesus was not only sent to save the world from sin, but he was out there, reaching out and bringing others to Him – thus paving the way for His disciples and His church today to do the same.
- Now Biblical scholar Gary Deddo points out “indicatives” and “imperatives.”
- “Indicatives” is a grammatical term for “a statement of fact.”
- So we have indicatives of grace, which are simply a statement of fact of who we are – a beloved child of God and part of God’s family, who we are – reconciled and redeemed for a purpose.
- And with that come many promises – last week we discussed 6 of them.
- But we can’t think that these benefits come to us for no reason – Jesus wasn’t sent for no reason.
- Jesus had a purpose and His church also has an ensuing purpose.
- And so when we talk about “the obedience of faith” that Paul mentioned in Romans 1:5, it comes out of the relationship we have with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- So, obedience is one of the fruits of the Spirit, which is nothing we do on our own.
- In the past, when we tried to do things on our own outside of our relationship with God, it led to nowhere or legalism.
- Pastor Craig’s been talking about, this past year and a half, be sure to get the horse before the cart.
- That horse of faith must be in front of that cart of response, doing, and obedience or things get messed up very quickly.
- As Jim Petty, said in his sermon, we are called to be on a “rescue mission.”
- But, not everyone wants to be rescued.
- And not everyone wants good deeds done to them, because they see that as de-humanizing, because it means that they aren’t capable enough.

- So this message of loving God and loving others is not always going to be warmly received.
- And that's OK, because we saw that happen in Jesus' life time and the early disciples missions.
- Not everyone wants to be saved or rescued, but those who do and who respond to God's calling, that's who we reach.
- Now we don't know ahead of time who they are, but that doesn't stop us from sharing the Good News in word and deed.
- So, Jesus was a doer – and what He did was out of faith and a relationship with the Father.
- Jesus said, "I have not done anything that You, Father, have not given me to do."
- So, what we do, as Christians, must be done out of our relationship with Jesus.
- Because imperatives – meaning commands or directives – always follow indicatives or statements of facts.
- And Gary Deddo is telling us that you won't find any command in Scripture without it first giving the indicative of relationship and promise.
- We are not going out there to share the Good News on our own by ourselves – we're simply participating in the work that Jesus is doing through the Holy Spirit.
- We can all participate through prayer and giving and through assembling together and encouraging one another and being part of God's family.

**2) until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.**

- Jesus gave orders to the apostles and they listened and they responded and participated.
- Scripture today gives us clear direction on who we are and what to do.

**3) To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering,**

- Remember pastor Craig has told us that we enter the kingdom through suffering.
- If Jesus didn't get out of this life-time without suffering and if Paul or Peter didn't get out of this life-time without suffering, then when troubles, problems, trials, and persecutions come our way, can we hold ourselves to a higher standard than Jesus or the apostles did?
- No, we enter the kingdom through suffering, as Jesus did.

**3b) by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. 4) Gathering them together,**

- Once again the church gathered instead of scattered – so the church today is what we do gathered collectively to reach out to our neighborhood.

**4) Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

- Now, notice, this is in the context, as we will soon see, as being sent.
- Now we all want the gifts of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, and peace – and we have that.
- But, we need to realize why God sent the Holy Spirit – was it to create just a “good-feel” club?
- No, God gave power to the apostles through the Holy Spirit, so that they could be sent, so they could reach people around them.

**6) So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”**

- Now remember that we talked about how the church of God here on earth represents the church of God in heaven.
- And we’re all one church and we’re all one body.
- These verses remind us that in our reaching out and extending the church of God to those around us, then we’re in that process of extending the Kingdom of heaven.
- The Jews at the time of Christ had a distorted view of what the Messiah was to do, which is reflected in this question in verse 6.

**7) He (Jesus) said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;**

- So, we don’t have everything spelled out for us as we go along.
- For example, when we got together on May 5<sup>th</sup> with Ted Johnston, we all came to the reality that we needed to find a new neighborhood that we could share the Gospel with.
- At that time, none of us, including pastor Craig, had a clue where that would be.
- But as we began searching and discovered that Monrovia was the central spot of where all our members lived, God began to give us direction.
- The key is that we began dealing with the situation.
- So, whatever capacity or ability or gift that each of us have, is important and that we all work together as one family, as part of the body in doing that.
- No matter what our talents and spiritual giftings are, there is no reason to think that we are less than or inferior to others in whatever we’re serving or reaching out.

**8) but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”**

- So, why was the power sent? – for us to be a witnesses.
- The Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit, in our transformational process that pastor Craig has been speaking about, was not only just to transform us, but also to give witness to others.
- Now in a legal sense, a witness is someone who is called upon in court to share what they saw.
- Now to be a witness doesn’t require us to have a PHD in Gospel, or require us to have a deep understanding of spiritual truths, although we are growing in that understanding.
- But being a witness is both in word and deed.

- When we witness to others, we simply share how God has changed our hearts and how that affects us in what we do and say.
- This past week, pastor Craig was at the monthly board meeting at the Monrovia Y, and placed a “grace ball” (squeeze stress-release ball) by each one of the name tags.
- One of the lady board members wanted to know what our church’s mission was all about.
- Pastor Craig told her it was about “loving God and loving others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt.” That’s what we say and do.
- She thought about that for a moment and said, “I think I can get behind that.”
- Obviously, pastor Craig, will go deeper, when asked, and share his story of why he left banking and why he is pastor of a local Monrovia church.
- Now sent how? Well, it’s through our witness and through relationships and through opportunities.
- Remember, Peter tells us that we should always be ready to give an answer about the hope that lies within us.
- Now, it doesn’t mean that you need to quote Scripture with that. But when your answer comes from our heart, that’s when it’s most impactful.
- The hope that lies with you is about your personal story concerning God in your life.
- So, you know, we have, what we might call a plan – a parish plan (pastor Craig’s name for our plan.)
- Now we know that neighborhoods in New Orleans are organized as parishes – so think of a parish as the surrounding neighborhood where our church meets.
- We going to get to know who our neighbors are in a methodical way by sending them an introductory letter and with door hangers inviting them to our Christmas service and with prayer walks.
- Notice that the disciples started their witnessing in Jerusalem, and then Judea, and then Samaria – and so by way of an analogy, it starts with us right here where we are at.
- It actually starts first in this building, reaching out to the staff and membership and then to our immediate neighborhood, as we just said.
- We can ask them, “If they don’t have a church home, is there anything we can help you with?”
- We can also tell them, “We consider part of our church family by location.”
- Now we know that not everyone is going to respond positively.
- But, as we reach out, our role is simply to be faithful, simply to share, simply to invite, simply to extend that loving family nature that we have.

**8b) and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”**

- We are sent – sent where and sent how?
- But notice, first and foremost, in order to be sent, we first have to be gathered.
- So, it’s important for all of us to be where the body is, to stay in that family nature, consider joining a “Flourishing Group Meeting” if you haven’t done so already, consider becoming a part of a Bible study class that’s available, consider that – these are all ways we come together before we go out to witness.

- We've been given tremendous benefits and blessings and power and a supernatural reality that we could not have gained by ourselves.
  - We have been given the supernatural transforming power of God that comes through His love and His relationship.
  - And let's remember that it's been done for a purpose – it's for gathering together, it's for going out, and it's for building that family in this rescue mission that we're doing, which is a part of the very work that the Father, Son and Spirit are about.
  - We're just simply joining in and participating with the Triune God.
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- To pastor Craig, this last year and a half has given him a supernatural change that he didn't have as a banker.
  - He feels tremendously blessed to be a part of who we are here in Monrovia and he just asks each of us to come along side and get on board with what the Holy Spirit is doing and to be a part of something amazing.
  - And when we look back, and if we did fail, did we fail while daring greatly?
  - That's our role today as we leave it in God's hands to sort it all out.

Closing prayer