

**Sermon Notes of  
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on March 7, 2021:**

**"The God of All Comfort"  
(2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11)"**

**[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman on Zoom shows us that despite of all the trials and difficulties we experience in this life, God gives us comfort through them.]**

Introduction:

- Of all the things in this lifetime that we could accomplish, what is most important and most precious?
- And that is simply becoming a believer, receiving the Holy Spirit, knowing that God loves us, knowing God is there for us and provides for us.
- Just to know all of this is everything.
  
- And because of our relationship with God, we have a comfort about the future.
- Paul alludes to the fact that we will judge angels and not-yet-believers.
- Our judgment has past and we have nothing to fear.
- And that judgment will show Christ's loving concern for everyone who will then invite them into that relationship with Himself, the Father and the Holy Spirit.
  
- Now, not everyone will accept Jesus' invitation.
- We can't take Jesus' offer of a relationship with God lightly or take it for granted.
- We cannot let the busyness of life or the problems of life interfere with that relationship.
  
- Now, secondly, after we come to believe, what is the next primary activity of a believer?
- We'll find out in reading this upcoming verse in 2 Corinthians.
- During Pastor Craig's daily Bible reading, which is now in 2 Corinthians, he thought he would share a couple of scriptures with us.

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18) And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.**

- That's where we are now – we're in this lifetime process of being transformed, which is our primary activity.
- So, as we study the book of Acts, we're looking at the transformational process the disciples, the apostles, and the early church went through.
- We can see that in this transformational process, Paul's life was not an easy one.
  
- Now pastor Craig prays, on a daily basis in the morning, for those in our congregation who have challenges and ongoing struggles, whatever they may be.
- He asks God to intervene in each of our lives with the challenges we face.
- Pastor Craig also prays for other church members such as Barbara Rogers and Glen Weber, and others who are going through severe health issues.

- In doing this, pastor Craig is reminded that God is with each one of us.
- And he also knows that God didn't promise to take our suffering away.
- In this next passage, Paul reminds the Corinthians of this.
- This section is marked as "The God of all comfort in our tribulation."
- As we'll see, God didn't promise to take us out of our suffering, which pastor Craig doesn't know why.
- And God, in His grand design, hasn't healed us consistently.
- But, God does promise to provide us with comfort, as Paul will tell us.
- And when we are comforted in what we are going through, and the Holy Spirit is transforming us through that trial, then with God's peace, it's the same as if it weren't there.
- In Luke 4, we read that Jesus was taken out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and when Satan offered Him all the power in the world, Jesus declined it.
- That account supports the fact that our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit is so priceless.
- We need to reflect more this wonderful relationship we have with God.
- Can let this privilege of having an intimate relationship with God take hold of us and remind us of what we truly have?
- Thus, we should have the desire to share this with others and invite them into that wonderful relationship.

**2 Corinthians 1:3, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4) who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5) For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6) If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7) And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.**

- So, Paul is describing some of the sufferings that he's going through along with the sufferings others are going through.
- And, Paul shows that God comforts all of us, not just the apostles.
- God doesn't necessarily take away that stress, but He gives us comfort and strength to go through it, as we're transformed in that situation.

**8) We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.**

- The stress Paul was under was like that he was facing death itself.
- Paul tells the Corinthians that the stress he faced was not removed by God, but rather he was comforted through it.
- And Paul was transformed by the ordeals he faced.
- And, as we face those things we suffer, the Spirit will encourage us and comfort us.

- So, we know that God loves us and has invited us into that relationship with Him and that we have nothing to fear about the future.

**9) Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.**

- So, when we face death, do we rely on ourselves, or do we rely on God?
- When we suffer, we need to place ourselves in the arms of God.

**10) He has delivered us from such a deadly peril,**

- We now have presently been given eternal life, which means we will pass from death to eternal life, however that difficult that might be.
- God will comfort us through death.

**10b) and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11) as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.**

- Pastor Craig prays for God's comfort and peace for all our members who are going through health trials.
- When he prays for us, he, himself, feels the pain and suffering our members are going through.
- Pastor Craig wants to encourage us to please don't let our relationship with God leave us during our health trials.
- We have more in this life when we have that relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- Now we are going through our spiritual transformation being changed into the very image and glory of Jesus Christ.
- We have eternal life for eternity.
- So, please dear brothers and sisters, pastor Craig encourages us to grab a hold of that intimate conversation with God, the reading of the scriptures and meditating on them.
- It's the truth of God's being, His ontology, and the truth of our being as who we are in Him, is transforming the way of our being.
- So, the truth of who we are is shaping our character and how we respond and show love to others.
- This is a constant process and scripture tells us that we are renewed daily.
- As we approach the Easter season, let's make that a time for renewal by deeply thinking about our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- Jesus made this possible through the resurrection.
- And through this relationship with God comes comfort and peace.

Monrovia YMCA update:

- Pastor Craig met with Carol, who's our interim director, and with Josh berg, who is the operation director.

- Last December, they removed the exercise facilities, like the treadmills and such, from the Y, so they could get some money back on the lease.
- Pastor Craig told them that if they were going to go out into the community and raise funds, the question people will ask, “When will your reopen?”
- The LA Metro could no longer subsidize our Y and others, so they needed to come up with a business plan to secure funding.
- They now feel that they will reopen the facility on January 1, 2022.
- But, we, as a church, will be able to get back there sooner once COVID threat declines and we abide by social distancing and other safety protocols and once all of us feel comfortable joining together as a church.
- As the Y board president, pastor Craig has to put together a team of other board members to go after our donors and to reach out into the community for donations.
- The Y membership has gone down from 6,300 to 215 paying members.
- If this renewal doesn’t happen, then the Y will stay closed forever.
- Pastor Craig would appreciate our prayers that he will be successful in working with the other Y board members and that this project to reopen will get going.
- So, as a church, we want to go and share the gospel in Monrovia working with the Y, when it reopens.

Concluding comments:

- It’s a great privilege to have that relationship with God that we talked about earlier.
- And, too often, we just take it for granted.
- We need to continue to think about that relationship and appreciate it because God loves us so much.
- We need to take that relationship we have and share it with others who are going through trials and health issues but don’t feel God’s comfort.
- Pastor Craig hopes that today’s message will help us connect with the early church, which took the gospel and shared it with so many others.
- Hopefully, we will be able to do that with the people of Monrovia.

Communion: Assistant Pastor Fred Stevens:

- When we take communion with the bread and the wine according to Jesus’ instruction, we learn many new things.
- Now, Jesus is the bread – it’s His body. So there is an analogy and connection there.
- Jesus is gift of manna who came from heaven to nourish us every day.
- It’s interesting to look back at John chapter 6, when Jesus told a crowd of people that He was the bread of life.
- And Jesus said that after he had fed the 5000 and then they came looking for Him..

**John 6:26, Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27) Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”**

**28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” 29) Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

**30) So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31) Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”**

**32) Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33) For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34) “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”**

**35) Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36) But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37) All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38) For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40) For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”**

- The lesson that Fred sees here from this passage is that Jesus never forgets us, never loses track of us, and never drops us.
- So we take this communion bread both remembering Him and thanking Him.
- Prayer
  
- Taking of the bread.
- Now the wine represents Jesus’ blood shed for all of us and for the entire world.
- It was a tremendous outpouring of restitution, of recovery and of redemption.
- Taking of the wine.
  
- Let us be filled with joy, which comes from a source that can be experienced and shared.