

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on April 22, 2018:**

**"Developing a Servant's Heart –
Am I Willing?
(2 Chronicles 29:30-32; Exodus 35:5)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows how we need to respond to the Holy Spirit to develop a willing, servant's heart.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Some things for this sermon came together this week in an unusual way for pastor Craig.
- For example, Carol mentioned last Sunday in our Flourishing Care Group meeting that she appreciated the fact that pastor Craig is only nudging us along and not twisting arms or making it burdensome or overbearing.
- After her comment, pastor Craig felt this flush from the Holy Spirit, like an electrical charge flowing down his spine.
- And the thought that just hit him, right then, was that what he preaches from the pulpit is not necessarily meant for everyone.

- While there are things that pastor Craig says that are good and appropriate for our church as a whole to hear and to feel and to move forward with, but unless we feel that confirmation personally, we can't necessarily assume the message is for us in this moment in our spiritual journey.
- Now each of us is on the path of grace and moving forward.
- But each of us is not at the same space and place on that path of grace.
- We need to realize that the Holy Spirit speaks to each one of us individually and that He loves us individually as well as collectively.

- One member has commented that in the past, we did things to avoid being judged by others.
- So they did things that were a little artificial or forced and perhaps not from the heart.
- Now, from this message today, we will see that God works with us individually and encourages us from the heart.
- But do you know what? – if you're not sensing that and you're not feeling that, that's OK, too.
- This is not a matter of love or not love. God love us individually and moves us in a way that's right for each one of us.

- For example, we know that God has the right timing in calling the not-yet-believers.
- Once called, we are moving at the pace of the Holy Spirit, who, many times, works slowly through nudges.

- And sometimes, it takes us a little bit of time to have our heart prepared to receive things, that perhaps a year or two ago, it would have been impossible for us to comprehend.
- We need to remember that we are all on the path of grace but at different points along the way and that God is reaching us individually and collectively in unique ways.
- And God will speak to us at the right time, at the right moment.
- Now if we do something because someone else told us to do it and it's not of faith and it is not of the heart, then there's a good chance that it probably won't bear spiritual fruit.
- But when we respond because we felt the Spirit moving us internally and we answer that nudge from the inside out, and we address that question, "Am I willing?", then we can have faith and trust that spiritual fruit will be born.
- We are not doing our own work here – this is Jesus' work, this is the work of the Holy Spirit – and He invites us to respond and participate.
- And if the Holy Spirit is not leading you individually right now, it doesn't mean that He won't lead you at the right time.
- Now, if you hear His voice and you feel motivated and you feel that now it's time for you to step up and reach out, then please act.
- But we need to remember what it isn't of faith is sin as Scripture tells us and our obedience and obligations flow out of that faith.
- Doesn't this make sense?
- So the title of the message today is, "Developing a Servant's Heart – Am I Willing?"
- That's a question that pastor Craig would like each of us to ask ourselves personally.
- Today, we're going to find out what "willing" means.
- These verses in 2 Chronicles impacted pastor Craig.
- The context here is about King Hezekiah rebuilding the Temple.

2 Chronicles 29:30, Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped.

31) Then Hezekiah said, "Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the Lord." And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all those who were willing brought burnt offerings.

32) The number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the Lord.

- Now let's look at the phrase, "and all those who were willing brought burnt offerings."
- Notice that there is no guilt there, there's no shame or fear there.
- There's nothing said or implied that these people were better than those people who brought their doves or their grain offerings.
- This isn't a matter of God loving those people who brought burnt offerings more than He did the others.

- But notice the distinction, “those who were willing” – “willing” comes from a Hebrew phrase that means “a willing heart.”
- A “willing heart” comes from God; it comes from the Holy Spirit.
- As we’ll see, “willingness” deals with a number of issues in our life, in our spiritual walk.
- Pastor Craig loves the phrase, “All those who were willing” because it stood out to him in that this phrase is used in our two vision statements

New Hope’s vision statements:

1. Every member that is willing and able is connected to and engaged in a small group care community and involved in some service capacity in their neighboring location with a desire and capacity to reach others in the ministry of redemption.
2. Every member that is willing has a solid theological foundation and can communicate their understanding of salvation to those who ask, and engaged in spiritual formation (spiritual habits) by abiding in the vine and growing in a flourishing relationship with Jesus Christ and experiencing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
 - The Holy Spirit works with us when we have we have a prepared and willing heart.
 - Now this doesn’t mean that the Holy Spirit loves any less, those that perhaps, for whatever reason, aren’t at that stage of willingness.
 - So, when a person hears something from pastor Craig from the pulpit, please know that if you’re at a stage in life where you are not able to respond or to participate, then the Holy Spirit will not call you to do that.
 - Now we can still support things with prayer, we can still support, perhaps, financially, if we’re able.
 - We can do things that don’t require us to step outside our doorstep.
 - But if we’re willing, and if we’re able, and if God lays it on our heart to engage, then He says, “Come.”
 - There is no shame, no fear, no guilt or no doubt in this passage from Chronicles.
 - It’s just a statement that says when God gives us a task, He provides the resources.
 - These resources are provided in a way through various people to get God’s job done.

Exodus 35:5, ‘Take from among you a contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the Lord’s contribution: gold, silver, and bronze,

- What does this verse tell us? First, it tells us that it’s not everyone.
- Not everyone is able, or is at that stage in life, where they can respond to God’s call.
- Now we all respond to God’s call, but within our own context, within the background and the life that God has given us.
- Now please note that if you’re going through something specific that keeps you from responding, then the Holy Spirit is not speaking to you at that moment or at that point in time.
- And it’s OK, because the Holy Spirit never ever gives us fear, same. Guilt or doubt.

Exodus 35:5, 'Take from among you a contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the Lord's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze,

- It's interesting that when we read the accounts about the temple offerings or offerings to other projects, often times there was so much abundance that was offered that the priesthood had to tell the people to stop.
- Those who were willing and able to do so, which wasn't everyone, provided an abundance.
- That's a principle we have to remind ourselves of.
- How can we ever, ever, ever judge our brother or sister, because of something they either did or didn't do? This shouldn't be a part of our DNA.
- Now, we can honor and thank those whom God has provided resources to and a willing heart to do God's work.
- But not all of us are able to do what someone else does.
- We've got to let go of the feeling that we will be judged by our brother or sister because of what we do or don't do.
- Since the Holy Spirit, God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son, who has done everything for us, doesn't judge us or condemn us in that way, how or why should we?
- So please know that not every message is specifically meant for you.
- But please also know that if a message does resonate, then you can count on the fact that you have received that nudge from the Holy Spirit.
- And more over, God has prepared you to move forward, because He wouldn't ask you without providing the resources.
- And that's a principle we should be comfortable with.
- Now let's look at some areas of willingness. These are things to think about.
- And if there's not a willingness there, we might stop and ask ourselves, "Why not?"
- First, consider whether you are at a stage in your life where the Holy Spirit is not calling you. If that's the case, it's OK.
- But if it's a matter of being kind of self-content, then there might be a nudge, there might be a challenge by the Holy Spirit.

Am I willing ...

- Am I willing to consider myself a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Am I willing to embrace a culture of discipleship?
- Am I willing to engage and develop a flourishing relationship with Jesus?
- Am I willing to be formed by the Holy Spirit through the indirection of spiritual practices – prayer, Bible reading, study, meditation, fellowship, corporate worship, etc. on a Monday through Sunday basis?

- Am I willing to consider being part of a flourishing care group?
 - Now we talked yesterday at the Advisory Council meeting about our large class we have going concerning flourishing care groups.
 - We need to get each group to have 8-10 people in various homes.
 - If we do it in a way that the Holy Spirit leads small groups, it will be in a setting that will expand as we bring friends into each group.
 - That's where we're headed – to be able to reach out to others with the love of God and invite them to join in with us in our care groups.

- Am I willing to embrace and move forward with a Transformational Church?

Final comments:

- Here's an interesting quote: "A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for."
- This is pastor Craig's corollary to this: "A disciple is safe at home, but that's not what disciples are for. Disciples are sent"
- Am I Willing?

Closing Prayer