

**Sermon Notes of  
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on August 18, 2019:**

**"2019 Vision Update  
(Mark 12:30-31;  
James 2:14-18)"**

**[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman encourages us to step up and to participate more in God's ministry of reconciliation to others in our community.]**

**Notes**

Introduction:

- Our home office has the saying about leadership focus, "I support, I challenge, grace always."
- Sometimes we need some support, sometimes we need some challenge, but we always need grace.
  
- So, today, for our message, we going to do a vision update.
- Dan Rogers, our former head of our denomination's church administration, would say at regional church conferences, "Vision leaks rapidly", which means that a church or organization can talk about its vision, and within 48 hours most have forgotten about it.
  
- Currently our denomination's (GCI) vision is a "Healthy church."
- Now a church can't be healthy without transformation occurring within it – so a healthy transformational church concept goes together.
- And our denomination's three ministry venues or aspects of a healthy church are "faith, hope and love."
  
- So today, pastor Craig is going to tie in faith, hope and love into our congregation's vision statements, which will remind ourselves about why we are here in Monrovia and what we want to accomplish.

2019 Theme for our congregation:

- If we want to go fast in renewal, we go alone; if we want to go far in renewal, we go together.
  - So, we need to ask ourselves, "Are we doing this together?"
  - "Are we in this together or are we kind of doing our own thing?"
  - Scripture is always in the context of community.
  
  - And so the church is not only a community of believers, who enjoy their relationship with God, but it also has its focus on the ministry of reconciliation to others, who do not yet believe.
  - Paul tells us in Romans, Colossians, and Corinthians that through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, all of humanity was reconciled, meaning brought back into a relationship with God, but yet not all know this or believe it.

- Now to have salvation, a person has to choose to believe what God has done for us and then interact with Him.
- So, it's the role of the church to show others, who are not-yet believers, what this is all about.
- And so, as a church, a community of believers, we do this together, we don't do this alone.
- It's always easier to do things on your own, but doing it with a team of people, it will take more effort, but we will accomplish so much more when we do this way.
- It's always important to realize that we are not spiritual hermits on our own, but we're here together as a family

**Mark 12:30 (NIV), “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’**

- We are to love God not just some our soul and with a little bit of our mind, but with ALL of our heart and ALL of our soul and with ALL of our mind and strength.
- God wants our ALL.
- That's who God is – He never goes just part way or with some effort. He puts His ALL into everything He does.

**31) The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”**

- At first, this seems much more difficult.
- But, once we love God with ALL our heart, soul, mind and strength, loving others becomes a natural result.
- So, whatever we do to preserve and maintain our status, we need to do the same to our neighbor.
- These two verses sum up the ministry of reconciliation that God has given us.
- Our role is always to be ready to give an answer when we're asked while the Holy Spirit does His job to open their eyes and understanding.
- It's such a privilege to be a part of God's reconciliation process by involving ourselves with others.
- It's the love of God that changes us and transforms us into a new person to be involved in the reconciliation of others, which is such a beautiful thing.

**James 2:14 (NIV), What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds (or works)? Can such faith save them?**

- Now, are we saved by works? NO. Are we saved by faith? YES. And what is faith? It's the belief and trust in Jesus who saved us and reconciled us and in whom we have a relationship.

**15) Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16) If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

- Faith naturally produces an outcome of reaching out to others in their needs.

**18) But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.**

- So, when we are in this faith relationship with God, we can’t help but to reach out to love and to serve and to help others.
- That’s because that’s how God is and He gives us the desire and the power to love our neighbor as ourselves.
- James is making this point that if we are in this faith relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, we cannot be of service to others.
- Now our church’s vision statements are the things we are going to do to express this faith and this love by reaching out to others and to our community.

The question is:

- Are we as a congregation loving God and loving others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt?
- Am I personally doing this, as well? Am I allowing the Holy spirit to do His thing in my life?

Vision Statement 1 (Faith):

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

Vision Statement 1 – Key Initiatives:

1. Be involved in a Flourishing Care Group (FCG), which we currently have 4 of them.
2. Determine ways to expand our FCGs and make it easier for other members to join (timing, frequency, locations).
3. Determine the best way to reformat FCGs to make them outward focused toward inviting others.

Vision Statement 2 (Hope):

Our family knows this commitment grows by continually engaging relational spiritual practices (abiding in prayer, study, worship, fellowship, giving, etc.) [On our information table we have Personal Prayer Guide and a 52 Week Bible Reading Plan to help.]

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)
2. Prayerful dependence that we can discern the needs of our mission fields/community and ways to effectively engage and serve them.
3. Revitalize our desire to be where the body is on Sunday mornings for worship, fellowship, service, and growth. (This helps us to support and encourage each other.)

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 – it's all about what's in our heart.

#### Vision Statement 3 (Hope):

Our family (those who are able) engage these practices in community through whole-life discipleship committed to Groups, Teams, Classes (aka pathway for new family involvement)

#### Vision Statement 3 – Key Initiatives:

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 (connection cards, follow-up, literature and spiritual formation tools). [Volunteer opportunities are available for our children's church and opportunities will come up at Wild Rose Elementary School here in Monrovia.]
4. Provide training in how to study scripture passages effectively and preaching on those passages.
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 (Love):

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.

#### Vision Statement 4 – Key Initiatives:

1. Determine ways for increasing awareness of our presence at the Y – signage, etc.
2. Develop relationships with Y Board/staff through committees and meetings.
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 event.
11. Partnering with community service projects.
12. Chamber membership and involvement.

13. Booth at the Monrovia Downtown Friday night carnival celebrations.

14. Community Coordinating Council membership and involvement.

Concluding comments:

- Long story short, we've made a lot of progress here at the Monrovia Y.
- And there are a lot more opportunities for us in the future.
- Now, if any of our members are not part of a group or team or have a specific duty here at church, then think about what you could be doing to step up and support the cause.
- That would be very much appreciated.

Closing prayer