

Missionary Kevin Craesmeyer Church

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Preacher: Kevin Craesmeyer

[0 : 00] But I'll let you kind of introduce, you know, what you're doing and more about your family and all that. Thanks, Kevin. Good morning.

It's a pleasure to be here. And if you have a hard sight, I would recommend you come forward because we will share a little bit of what we will be doing in Mexico before we open the Word of God.

Can we turn the audio on this? No. Okay. It's raw. Raw PowerPoint. Anyway, many of you know my parents, Bernardo and Carol.

We have a strong and long relationship with this church. I remember knowing this church since the 2000s when I was about seven years old.

So anyway, we're the Crest Myers number six of seven boys that were all raised in Brazil. And my parents are missionaries in Brazil.

[1 : 11] And we, my parents are missionaries in Brazil, serving there for 40 years already. And now it's our time to journey into the missionary field.

And it's our delight to do so. And we are going to be doing that through Grace Miniatures International. And you already saw the kiddos singing.

And Mateo is on my lap there. And he's in the stroller as well. He can be in two places at the same time. Anyway, we are going to Mexico with GMI.

And I'll just change the slides here. A lot of the desire to serve as a missionary came through my hero, my lifetime hero, my dad.

I always looked up to him, as all of you do, right? Because he's six foot seven. Anyway, I looked up to him for various reasons, not only because of his height.

[2 : 19] But I always enjoyed his outlook of life and how his passion for evangelism really transformed many lives in Brazil.

As a child, you often look up to your parent as a representation of God. And later you learn they sin too. So you have to deal with that as a child.

But, you know, we as parents, we know very well that our kids know our sins better than most people do. So don't ask my kids. But seeing the ministry of my parents in Brazil, that country is very broken in many ways in its society.

And the need for family ministries down there is very great. So that is one of their focuses. And it ended up being a blessing for me because I came to learn many principles of God's word and raising children early on because I was a child.

Right? And then, you know, later in life when I became a dad, I had the opportunity to put those in practice as well. So when I was about 17, I was asked by my dad what I was going to do with my life in the next year or so.

[3 : 50] And I told him that I wanted to come to the U.S. and go to Bible school and prepare myself for ministry. And I told him that because I had heard him many times, him kind of complaining that he didn't have a chance to go to seminary when he was younger or do something more structured like that.

So I thought, well, I'm young. I have the chance to go early. Why shouldn't I? And then he looked at me and he said, you're not going to the U.S. And I was very shocked because I thought, you know, I was being a smarty pants.

Right? And then I said, why not, Dad? And he looked at me and he said, well, it's because you're young and immature and stupid. So you have to grow a little bit before you come to appreciate what you're going to learn in Bible school.

If you go right now, you're just going to blaze through it and you're not really going to enjoy it really well. So he said, I give you counsel that you stick around in Brazil and follow my ministry more intensely and grow your relationship with the Lord.

And through that, after you're done with that, then you can, you know, move on. But then I told him, what am I going to do then? Because that was my plan, right?

[5 : 21] He looked at me, well, is that your problem, not mine? So he recommended me to go into the college. I ended up doing five years of animal science and learning everything one needs to know about how to raise cows and pigs and chicken and all kinds of farm animals and some other animals as well.

And you may ask me, what are you going to use that for? And I asked the Lord the same question, but I'm sure he will go and use it someday. And everybody in this world kind of has a pet. So maybe it's going to be a door opener for sharing the gospel. We never know. But up to this date, I haven't worked in that area.

And at some point I might use it. I don't know. But I decided to do that so I could accompany his ministry.

And that basically meant seven days a week doing various things and also going to college at the same time. So it was a double whammy.

[6 : 33] And the things I learned while I was accompanying him, I couldn't have learned in any seminar in this world. So I'm very grateful for that opportunity.

My wife came to understand her Lord and Savior through a ministry that we have in Brazil. So that's a picture there of what you see from what we affectionately call the land.

There's actually a brother from this church that contributed heavily in purchasing that at Patton. And we're very grateful for that. And she was there at a retreat that we do often.

And she was asked about God. And she said, well, I can see that there is a God. This couldn't have just evolved into something.

And she was asked, what about your sin? And all of those wonderful questions that lead you to salvation. And she finally accepted. After a whole year of hearing this stuff, she finally did.

[7 : 44] It's like, come on, it's about time, right? Anyway, she was just a joy to be around and to see her growth and her desire to learn more and more about Jesus Christ and about her sanctification and her walk in Christ.

And she was inviting all kinds of people to come to retreats and youth group and all kinds of stuff. And I was like, hmm, interesting.

Sounds like a good idea. So anyway, I didn't let her roam around too long. So we decided to get married. And we did fairly young because I always wanted to have a large family.

And I believe that children is a great way to manifest into this world what you believe because they resemble how you live.

And there is always a great way to gain attention from people. And people are always curious about that. If you're confused about the sign, it's because in Brazil we do things logically.

[9 : 01] So first the day, then the month, then the year. Anyway, we've celebrated eight years this year, this past year. And we already have four children.

And we are expecting the Lord to bless us with another six or so we desire. So pray for my wife. She will need that.

But she does great. I'm very thankful for who she is. And honestly, if you talk to her for over than two minutes, you'll see that she's a lot more interesting than I am.

So please take her time. She's a wonderful person and a wonderful servant of God. And we came to the U.S. right after we got married about two months in.

We moved from summer Brazil, which is very cozy and hot, to winter South Dakota. So the definition of wind changed in my dictionary after that experience.

[10 : 11] You must know that I love snow. So this is my kind of weather. I really would. I've already told my wife a couple of times that I wanted to go to Alaska.

Not in the summer. So you can tell how crazy I am about snow. Anyway, a big and very important part of our ministry is preparation.

And that's the reason why we came to the U.S. And while we were here, we decided to be under different ministries to learn how certain pastors did different things in their churches and how God could use that for our future ministries.

And at the same time, we've been doing the Brilliant Bible Institute in Wisconsin as well for more of the book side of things. And the Lord has blessed us with many friends and people that we can call family now because of these different opportunities.

The flip side of it is the word move is kind of like a trauma word. But here we go again. Yay.

Anyway, we are very thankful for the people that have invested in us.

[11 : 35] And we believe that it's a key part of any ministry is preparation. It's very important to take that step. You know, all of you, when you started your first day of work, you didn't just waltz in and become the manager, right?

There is a learning process in that. And the same thing as ministry. Now, most of you work in different jobs that you come up or you don't come up with problems.

They show up, right? But generally speaking, you can solve them, right? If there's a problem in the system, you go there, override it, blah, blah, blah. Ta-da! Fixed. When you're in ministry, we don't have that luxury because when we are in ministry, we're dealing with people.

And people equals problems. And the problems of the people are problems that only God can solve. So as we minister, we show them the word of God and hope that their heart will be soft enough that it will be transformed and allow God to work in them.

But at the end of the day, it's still your problem to deal with and not we as missionaries and pastors can't do anything special about that other than guide you through the word of God.

[12 : 56] If your heart doesn't decide to change, we can't do anything about it. Next week, we'll be hearing about the same problem again. So preparation is very important because we have to have a lot of endurance and training and teaching people and guiding them to understand their identity in Christ.

Now, you may be thinking, how does the preparation of a missionary is different than any other person in ministry?

Well, it can be as different as one can be from another. God always uses what we have learned over time to continue on in ministry.

The only difference is missionaries are crazy enough to leave their home country and go serve somewhere else, right? So we decided to go to Mexico because of several factors.

One of them is the upbringing that we come from. Brazil is a Latino community style where things are very different, very open, very friendly, very huggy, very kissy, very no boundaries, like you just walk in somebody else's house and say, hey, how's it going?

[14 : 21] Anyway, when you grow up in that environment, you kind of like it. So we decided to continue in it. Another reason, it's one of the most important countries in the eyes of the Vatican because it's got a large population of Catholics there.

And that's a lot of the revenue comes through that country and to them. So, and we understand the Catholics to have all the necessary ingredients to come to salvation, but they don't have a recipe. So they know who Jesus Christ is. They know who God is. They know about the cross. They know that they died on the cross. They even know that he died on the cross to pay for their sins, but they don't understand how all of that works.

So it's always a wonderful experience to share the love of Christ and to a Catholic. And Catholics in the Central and South America are a little bit different than the American Catholics, and there's reasons for that.

But anyway, we were very excited to hear about a new ministry that started in Mexico in 2023, and it'll be completing two years now in February.

[15 : 44] And, you know, when we heard about it, it was right around the time we accepted a pastorate in New Jersey. And we were kind of like torn because we wanted to serve as a pastor, but then we heard about this ministry, and things went the way they went in New Jersey, and we just felt more called than called to go and serve in Mexico.

And we were very excited about that. The first time I talked to the missionaries there, he said that, you know, I know you've got to go through deputation and all, but please come yesterday, because they have a lot of work and a lot of people that are what they call a ripe field.

A lot of people are very interested and growing and desiring to partake in ministry down there. So it's very exciting. Our future ministries in Mexico basically encompass in three main areas.

The first and foremost is evangelism. If we go there and we don't talk about Jesus Christ to an unsaved person, we are doing something really wrong.

That's our main purpose is to preach Christ crucified and his love and what it did for the unsaved. We want to preach reconciliation unto this world through Christ.

[17:13] The second area is training of leaders. It's a very important area for ministry and for churches. All missionaries have one common goal in life, and it is to train others so that they can go somewhere else.

It's because they can't stand the people there. No, just kidding. It's just their desire to share the love of Christ is immense, and the quicker you train and establish that church, the sooner you can leave and start a new field.

And the third area, as you may perceive with our desire to have 10 kids, is the area of family. We really have great tools in that area, and we desire to continue to pass on that.

And we're really excited about Mexico in that area because, you know, we all joke that when we rent a house to a Mexican, the next thing you know there's like 15 or 20 in there, right?

And there's a reason they do that. It's because they move generally as families. So if one of them is going, their mom and dad is going, the sisters and brothers and the grandpas and grandmas, so they all move as a clan.

[18:30] So in that, we desire to reach one of the families so they can show us the rest of the families so we can share the news, and we are very excited about the exponentiality of that opportunity.

Where are we going? We're going to Merida, which is a Caribbean-style place, which means it's really hot. It's close to the water.

It's on the Gulf of Mexico, or should I call it Gulf of America? Anyway, it's a city of 1.2 million people, a very large population.

It's very central to that state, and it brings a lot of tourists. It brings a lot of snowbirds. It brings a lot of locals as well.

It's a very attractive area. It's a very uncommon area for Mexico because it's very safe there. It was voted the second safest city in the whole Americas in 2021.

[19:35] So very odd for Mexico. There's somewhat of a population of Canadians that live there, and Americans as well.

So it's somewhat of a sanctuary and safety in Mexico. But we are excited about that. The church there will be celebrating two years in February, and there's about 80 members that come on a weekly basis.

And out of those 80, there's 40 of them that are being trained intensively for ministry. In fact, there's one man that he will be ready to assume as the pastor there next year, I believe.

So they're all excited about that, and we are as well because we can move on to another church in that same region to reach other parts of the city.

These are the missionaries there, Louise and Marcia Cotto. We had the privilege to meet them in October of last year. We spent a whole month traveling with them in the state of Washington and Oregon.

[20:51] And they're great people, loving people, and they have a great vision for ministry as well. The other picture is a picture of their youth group on Friday nights, and that's kind of the drive of the growth of that church.

It's through them that they end up reaching a lot of people. And I like to show the name of the church because that first big word there, they do a play with the words, and it means with unity. And the whole word means community. So it's with unity they're reaching the community of Merida. So that's the church we'll be joining and training.

And here it's where you can participate. So if you can participate with us in prayer, that's a vital part of our ministry. The prayers are very necessary.

We felt that intensively this week. My body is still aching because of those prayers. No, wait. It's because of the other things that happened. Anyway, we had several vehicle problems this week, and we had many warriors that were praying for us and even helping us.

[22:04] So if you can continue praying for us, that would be great. We as the Chris Meyer family now, we're all like the animal that we all love.

Horse. Horse throat. You know. Coughing like seals. And anyway, our health is kind of like on the line. So pray for that.

Also pray for our traveling. We will be traveling to Wisconsin on Monday and back to Michigan next by the weekend. So covering several miles.

And then until the end of the deputation, we will be in New York State. So pray for all of that. Also pray for our kids.

It's kind of hard to be always at a different place every week, seeing different people, seeing new people. And, you know, we often hear the words, when are we going home?

[23 : 03] And we're like, well, we don't have one, so got to wait for Mexico. Also pray for our homeschooling or van schooling, whatever you want to call it.

As we travel, you know, we're always on a field trip. So the privilege in that part. It's like, look, the Grand Canyon. Oh, wait, no.

Anyway. And if you want to support us financially, that would be great. Hopefully you all know the wonderful benefits that we have as saints to support one another in prayers and also financially to do the work of the Lord.

If you're tech savvy, you can point your phone to the Magic Square. Our prayer cards also have that. And the other information, we have some slips on our table as well with that.

And you're all signing up for our prayer letter that should come out this month. So you're going to get a brand new pretty soon in your mailbox if you sign up.

[24 : 12] Anyway, it's our pleasure to share our ministry with you all. Does anybody have a question about anything?

How soon do you expect to go to Mexico? So she asked, how soon do we expect to go to Mexico? So our going to Mexico depends on the raising of our support. And the GMI desires that we reach about 75% to 80% of our monthly support so we are able to minister there.

And we are, we just hit about 30% of our support. And we want to go there in May. So we, yeah, that's how soon.

Anyway, any other questions? Yes? Yes, we grew up.

[25 : 19] Brazil is the only country in South America that speaks Portuguese instead of Spanish. But they have a 75% to 80% crossover similarity.

The structure of the language is identical. The only thing is learning the words and what they mean. Sometimes we mess up, you know.

There was several instances with the Coros where we would say a word that we thought it was a word in Spanish. And they would be like, what? An example is he would, in his presentation, use four chairs.

And the word for chairs in Spanish is cilhas. And the word for chairs in Portuguese is caderas. And caderas in Spanish means hips.

So we're like, go get four chairs. And they're like, four hips? For what? You know. Anyway. So if you want to keep up with all my fiascos as I preach in Mexico, you know, just visit us.

[26 : 29] I'm sure they're going to have plenty of those. Any other questions? Any other questions? Okay.

I'll let all the other burning questions for later. When you talk to us at the table. I invite you to open to Genesis once again. I promise we're not reading the same verses we read this morning.

So, chapter 1 of Genesis, and we're going to read verse 26 and 27.

Genesis 1, 26 says, Then God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness. Let them have the men in over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image, and the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. Here in this verse here, we see the creation of mankind.

[27 : 47] And there's something very interesting about these verses that demonstrate the character of God. In verse 26, the first things that God says is, Let us make.

How is he saying let us make if there's only one God? Here we see the triunity of God at work in the creation.

Weak. They are present in all of the other steps of creation, and we see evidences of that in many passages. But here we see the intentionality of God in creating mankind.

And it's interesting because it comes out of a relationship. Here, God is creating something different than the rest of creation.

You know, you can say that the bees have a relationship with each other, but you can't say they have a relationship with God.

[28 : 58] They can't ponder and pray and worship God, even though they do that by their existence. But they can't have a relationship with God.

Here we see the creation of man that was designed to have a relationship with God. We are even made in the image of God.

Many of our characteristics are in the likeness of God. We are creators just like God is. We are relational just like God is.

And we desire to serve our creator because of that. And all of the things we create are for the purpose of serving us.

Here we see the perfect relationship between the God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and their desire to share that with the creature.

[29 : 59] Did God make seven billion robots? Yeah. Why didn't he do that, right? Would have been just so much easier.

Oh man, praising God, never doing wrong. God made man and free will. And it was through the free will of God that he created mankind.

And mankind has the free will given by God. Does that mean that we have the authority to do whatever we want?

It does. We have the authority to do whatever we want. Does that mean that everything that we will do has no consequences?

No. Every action has a consequence. It's the other side of the free will. It's the responsibility. Free will always is accompanied by responsibility.

[31 : 07] The moment in time when you tell your child, here are the keys of the car. Do whatever is wise in your eyes. You are giving them free will.

Right? They can make the right choices and obey the traffic laws and be wise in their driving. Or they can be maniacs and roll over like many of us have done that.

Right? Because we can exercise our free will. But there's a consequence to that. And there's responsibility. Here God, in his creation, and out of his relationship between himself, he decides to create a creature to enjoy that.

God's purpose in the creation of man is for man to enjoy him perfectly. Isn't that interesting?

Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross? So that we once again could enjoy God perfectly. So that we once again could have a perfect relationship with him.

[32 : 27] Isn't that precious? In chapter 3, in verse 8, we read this verse, oftentimes in the context of the fall of man.

And we generally pay more attention to the end of this verse. It says, They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

We often think of the consequence of sin was leading them to hide from God. I'm very aggravated with Adam because of the first part of this verse.

It says that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. Imagine God coming and spending time with you every evening.

Why did you mess this up, Adam? Come on! What's your problem? But he did. God would come every evening to spend time with Adam and Eve.

[33 : 49] Now, why would God do that? Isn't he the all-knowing God? Doesn't he know Adam and Eve inside out? Doesn't he know that they already sinned? And that they're hiding?

Right? Why was he doing this every evening? You see, a relationship doesn't work on the basis of looks across a room and falling in love magically and all of a sudden you know each other.

Right? Is that how it worked for you guys? No! You have to do what for you to have a relationship? You have to communicate.

You have to spend time with one another. Right? What is God doing here every cool of the day? He's like, Hey guys, I know you inside out, but you don't know me.

Come on. Ask me. Whatever you want. What do you want to know? Thankfully, he gave us this.

[34 : 55] Right? What is this? God's word. What does God's word reveal? In essence, his character.

Throughout the stories of all these characters in the Old Testament, you name it, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Moses, David, all of these, Jeremiah, Isaiah, all of these characters, what are we seeing in these stories?

The character of God. We take, we can take David as an example. You know, the one day he walked out in his balcony and saw this woman bathing and then he did all the atrocities that he did. What was the desire, what was he deserving according to the law of Moses? Stoned to death. Is that what God gave him?

No. We see the character of God there being exhibited. God showed mercy upon David's sin.

[36 : 17] Oftentimes, when we read our Bibles, we, because of our finite mind and our incapacity of understanding God and his concepts, we study out sections and portions of his character separately, right?

We go and study the love of God and then maybe three months later we study about his justice and then later about his grace and later about his mercy and later about his eternity and his infinity and all of these parts of his character.

But we often leave them divided. God is this. God is this. God is this. We often forget that he's all of that the whole time.

how? We've heard this over and over in the world. How can a loving God condemn man for eternity? Well, because he's also just and he's also merciful and he's also eternal and he's also all knowing and all of these things are the character of God.

We often times forget about all of that when we are studying his word. What happens here in Genesis 3 is the most tragic event in the human history because when Adam and Eve disobeyed they were eternally separated from God and worse than that they passed on this curse to the next generation.

[38 : 08] We see that in Genesis chapter 5 in verse 3 Genesis 5 3 says and Adam lived 130 years and begot the son in his own likeness after his image and named him Seth.

Did you see the shift there? Who was Seth begotten the image of? Was he begotten the image of God?

No. He had the image of Adam. What does the image of Adam have? Sin. So from the moment in time where Adam sins and we know this from Romans obviously he passes on the curse of sin to all men and we know that all men are sinners and they are bound naturally through their life to be separated from God.

Let's open in Philippians chapter 2. God didn't desire man to be eternally separated from him.

In fact when he's passing out the curses in Genesis 3 he tells the woman that the serpent shall bruise her seeds heal and he shall bruise her head.

[39 : 47] It was a portrayal of hope for the future where Christ would defeat Satan. But for that to be for that to come into place it was necessary one thing the payment through blood and in Philippians chapter 2 verse 6 says and it's talking well you can read verse 5 it says let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of man and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even the death of the cross at one point in eternity past

God determined and with his foreknowledge he knew that man would sin and he determined in his plan that his son Jesus Christ would have to come to earth as a man imagine that the creator of the whole universe would have to come as a creature imagine you coming to earth as a chair or as a lamp whatever it may be becoming like a creature for the purpose of showing your love for that creature do you know how much humbleness it takes to become a man as the creator of the whole universe he was the one that formed Adam out of dust and blew life into his lungs and now he's coming just like

Adam in flesh if you are God and you have to come into the earth what would be your social status of choice king right I'm God after all I can choose I'll go as king all the honor all the power all the glory all the money is that how Christ came oh he came as a servant if you look at the word in Greek that word means slave he came as a slave does the slave do what he wants to does he wake up in the morning and say where's my croissant and my coffee from Bangladesh is that how it happens no you wake up and you go to work and you shut up because you don't have a voice you have to do what you're told I'm just like a slave

I'm losing my voice anyway Christ came as a servant in the likeness of man and then God said oh by the way you have to die what's your choice of death and you're asleep right maybe a quick and easy heart attack maybe instant accident in the freeway you just slam into a semi end of the road right something quick and easy no pain what was Christ determined way of death you see out of the all the thousands and thousands of ways that the Roman Empire executed prisoners and humiliated them crucifixion was the most horrifying one the most humiliated one but the humiliation of Christ didn't start on the cross it started before that he was rejected by his people indeed it was his people that chose him to die he was classified as a murderer and then he was beaten so bad that his back didn't look like a back anymore and then they mocked him and put the crown of thorns on his head and then made him drag the cross all the way up the hill and after all of that they hung him with three nails on the cross and put a sign on top of him saying the king of the Jews and then he had to hear his own people come by and say aren't you the Messiah aren't you the God why don't you come down from the cross and prove it did he have the power to do that absolutely but it wasn't the three nails that held Christ to the cross it was his love for us it was his love for his creation and we see that in the next three hours the earth becomes dark because the father is looking away the father can't look at his son because his son has all of the sins of the world upon his shoulders we see that let's turn there in 2nd

[46 : 04] Corinthians chapter 5 the last verse says for God the father made him Jesus Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us Jesus Christ was identified with sin he was made in the image of sin he bared the sin on him 5 21 for the purpose what does it say that we might become the righteousness of God in him he equaled himself with sin so that we could equal himself we could equal ourselves to him righteousness God the father went through this process and he offered his wonderful son that was perfect upon the cross so that we could have reconciliation now where does that leave us does God command us demand us to preach the gospel are we supposed to preach the gospel or else no our service to our lord and savior is out of his gratitude of what he did for us we are called to share into the world we see that in verse 18 through 20 how

God reconciled the world into himself we are called to share that as ambassadors of him but we don't have the obligation to do so we have the privilege to do so we have the privilege to share into this world what God did for them this is what moves our heart to serve in Mexico it's because of the reconciliation process that God went through to give us the ability to have fellowship with him again we can preach and teach about Christ because of what he did for us the power of the cross the gospel transforms lives and we are delighted to share with others that message forgive me I've already gone through time and my voice so we should close we are very thankful for the opportunity to be here and we're very thankful for what Christ did for us on that cross and how we can share this wonderful news of salvation unto this world please let's close in prayer dear Lord and Savior how wonderful you are in all of your character you have decided to create us and to save us after we disobeyed your word we do not deserve salvation in any shape or form you indeed did it all you took care of us you brought the most precious thing into this world and you shed your precious blood for us on that cross you declared us righteous in you and all of this was done through your grace and through believing in what you have done on that cross of your death your burial and your resurrection we joyfully reside in the idea of being with you forever and we desire that you come as soon as possible but Lord while you don't come let us be found faithful in serving you out of the gratitude of the manifestation of your love upon the cross in all of these things we praise and thank you amen