

A LIFE THAT ROCKS - SERMON SERIES

Message #3, Take A Flying Leap

Jim Porterfield • September 7, 2014

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A LIFE THAT ROCKS - SERIES

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Isaiah 40:9b-26
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Isaiah 40:11; 44:2; John 10; Psalm 95:6-7; 139:1ff
3. Take a Flying Leap! – When a Step Isn't Enough
Isaiah 40:31; Matt 17:20; John 10:10
4. Run, Man, Run – Straining Toward the Goal
Isaiah 40:31; Hebrews 12:1
5. Walk the Walk – In His Footsteps
Isaiah 40:31; John 13:12-15
6. Stand Strong – Ready to Fight
1 Cor. 16:13-14; Ephesians 6:10-20; Deuteronomy 20:3-4; Josh 23:3;

SERIES PASSAGES

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John 10:10¹

¹⁰ *A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.*

Isaiah 40:28-31 HCSB

²⁸ *Do you not know? Have you not heard?
Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth.
He never grows faint or weary; there is no limit to His understanding.*

²⁹ *He gives strength to the weary and strengthens the powerless.*

³⁰ *Youths may faint and grow weary, and young men stumble and fall,*

³¹ *but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary;
they will walk and not faint.*

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¹ All passages from Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) unless otherwise specified.

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MESSAGE #3 TAKE A FLYING LEAP

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1. THE FLYING COMES FIRST (ISAIAH 40:31)

Isaiah 40:31 HCSB

³¹ ... *those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary;
they will walk and not faint.*

Flying is the first phase of the Abundant Christian Life – A life that Rocks. It comes before running, before walking, even before crawling. This “Flight of Faith” is the foundation for experiencing life beyond your wildest expectations. It is the starting line for running the race. It is the reassurance to keep walking. It is the power to stand strong in the face of the battle. Flying is the evidence of faith, the breeding ground of faith, the fertile soil of faith, the nutrition for faith, and the test of faith. So what does God mean by this “soaring,” this “flying?”

The flight of faith happens when God takes you out of your own limits and understanding and leads you to do something that seems impossible. He gives you a work to do. You don't have the knowledge, the strength, or the resources, and you're terrified. But He invites you, calls you, pleads with you to do it anyway. At this point, you have two choices: shrink back to the safety of where you've been, or jump. If you shrink back, if you decide to stay where you are, you deny Christ's lordship in your life and you miss out on the abundance He wants for you. If Jesus Christ is really your Lord, when he calls you to do the impossible, you do it. You may be terrified. You may not have the resources you think you need. It may look like certain disaster, like you'll fail miserably, that you'll be a laughing stock, that you will suffer rejection and end up alone. But when God calls you to jump, it is not the time to stick your toe in the water to see if it's comfortably warm or sufficiently safe. That's not even possible. It is all or nothing. When you are certain that God is telling you to do the impossible or the unpopular, it's not time to go ask your friends, acquaintances, employer, even mentor if you should do it. You may have them help you make certain it is God who is calling you out, but if it is God, then you JUMP.

Personal testimony

April 2004. God said, “Jim, unless you leave where you are, I can't take you to where I want you to be.” I knew immediately it meant leaving my job and trusting Him. He didn't tell me where we were going or where the money was coming from to support

my family, and He doesn't have to. When he spoke that sentence to me, I knew instantly of five things he required me to do and not one of them was easy. I had a good paying job, a wife, three kids, a house, two cars, a huge amount of debt that I thought I'd never be able to pay off, and an addiction that I could not kick. And in the middle of all that God called me out. He blew me away. But I was already at the point of no return. I had already decided that I would follow God wherever He chose to take me.

Complete Surrender – Eric Liddell

You may have seen the story of Olympian Eric Liddell in the movie, Chariots of Fire. Eric's life takes a different turn after the close of the movie. After winning the Olympics, Liddell went back to China, where he had been raised, to live out his life as a missionary to the Chinese people. He would end up dying there in a prison a number of years later. His life ambition was total surrender to Christ.

When talking later about his decision to follow God's call, Eric said,

"It was no longer 'all or nothing' – that point had been passed. It was now, simply, 'all.'"

And that's where I was, and by God's grace, still am. I surrender to do whatever He leads me to do, regardless of how outlandish it may seem.

Beth Moore, "Praying God's Word Day by Day"

The giant step in the walk of faith is the one we take when we decide God no longer is a part of our lives—He is our life.

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2. GOD IS OUR FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR (DEUTERONOMY 32:9-11 (NIV))

But God does not ask us to jump and then leave us alone. You've probably heard the old quote:

Anonymous – "Let Go"

When God leads you to the edge of the cliff, trust Him fully and let go. Only one of two things will happen: either He'll catch you when you fall, or He'll teach you how to fly!

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Deuteronomy 32:9-11 (NIV)

For the Lord's portion is his people... In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him;

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he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft.

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In this picture in Deuteronomy, it is God Himself who teaches us to fly. God loves us and wants each one of us to fly. We are exceedingly important to Him and He wants the very best for us. But we get too comfortable in the nest. No matter what our life is like, we get scared when God calls us to do the un-do-able. So He stirs things up, makes us uncomfortable until we are willing to climb out of the nest. Then, like a mother eagle with her eaglet, he takes us on His wings and we feel like we've been on a spiritual high. The next thing we know, we are plummeting through the air...

This applies both to us and individuals and to us corporately as the church. God is asking FBC Lake Dallas to fly...to make a choice to step out beyond our comfort zone...to risk...to fly. And we must do so or die.

Pastor Ron Edwards, "Putting Feet to Your Faith" 10-04-2009
(Pastor of Jonesboro Church of Christ)

"The journey God has planned for us cannot be mapquested. God often goes off-road and demands an unswerving faith in His lead. When He goes off-road the church needs to stay on mission with Him...and just add mud-flaps."

3. THERE WILL BE MULTIPLE FLIGHTS OF FAITH

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When God called me out in 2004 and I chose to obey, it was hard on the family. But they supported me. Interestingly, the greatest amount of rejection came from people in the church. When others heard about my decision, they thought I was crazy or deluded. I was told, "God wouldn't tell you to leave your job without telling you where you were going first." Tell that to **Noah**. Try that with **Abraham**. Did God line out everything he was calling Moses to do from the burning bush? What about **Daniel** who trusted God even though he knew he would end up in the lions' den? Or **Rahab** who risked her life to trust God and hide the Israelite spies?

Abraham

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1. God tells Abraham to leave his home in Haran – Genesis 12

Genesis 12:1-4

¹ *The Lord said to Abram:*

Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ... ⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him... Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

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2. Abraham lets Lot take better land and trusts God to provide – Genesis 18

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3. God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac and he sets out to do it – Genesis 22

Examples of Faith (Hebrews 11)

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Noah – Genesis 6

Build an Ark? What's rain? It was a 100+ year flight of faith!

Moses

Repeatedly Moses is called by God to do the impossible, from the time of the burning bush through the confrontations with Pharaoh and the wilderness wanderings. And Moses trusts God and obeys.

Rahab

Daniel

Barak

Sampson

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Joshua – Crossing Jordan, Jericho, Taking the Promised Land

Joshua 3 - "Cross the Jordan. Put your foot in the water FIRST, then I'll part it," said the Lord

Joshua 6 - "March around the city – that will make the walls fall"

"Those men are giants and there are a lot of them. You won't have any trouble defeating them."

Hebrews 11:32-38

Heroes of Faith

³² And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead—they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, ^[k] they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

4. FLYING IS MANDATORY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

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It's FLY or DIE.

James 2:14-17, 26

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¹⁴ *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can his faith save him? ...*

¹⁷ *In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself. ...*

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²⁶ *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

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Doing what God has asked, invited, called or told you to do is an act of obedience and faith that proves that you've made Him Lord of your life. If you don't believe and therefore don't do what God's called you to do, James says you don't have faith and therefore can't prove that Jesus is your Lord. You may have heard it said that the response, "No, Lord" is an oxymoron – a self-contradictory statement. If Christ asks you to do something and you say "no" then He isn't your Lord – you've just rejected His Lordship. If Christ asks you to do something and He's your Lord, you can't say "no."

5. IS IT A FLIGHT OF FAITH OR A FOOLISH RISK?

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Lee Sipe, "Faith vs. Foolishness" (Pastor of FBC Azle)

"There is a fine line between faith and foolishness"

Jim Porterfield

There is a difference, and it's not in the size of the challenge or the impossibility of the task.

"There is a fine line between faith and foolishness...Faith is jumping off the cliff into the unknown when God has told you to do so. Foolishness is jumping off a cliff when God has not told you to do so or has warned you not to."

Luke 9:23-25

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²³ *Then He said to them all, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

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²⁴ *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it.*

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²⁵ *What is a man benefited if he gains the whole world, yet loses or forfeits himself?*

Gideon – Judges 6-7**Slide 26**

Gideon takes a force of 300 against over 135,000. Original Israelite force was 32,000.
God shrunk it to 300.

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Gideon's fleece - It's okay, and wise, to make sure it is God who's telling you to jump!
God is cool with that. But once Gideon was sure, he headed out to battle. And so must we.

Slide 28**TAKE A FLYING LEAP**

1. The Flying Comes First
2. God Is Our Flight Instructor
3. There Will Be Multiple Flights
4. Flying Is Mandatory
5. Is It a Flight Of Faith or a Foolish Risk?

WILL THIS BE YOUR FIRST FLIGHT?**Slide 29**

The point of all this is:

If you want to live the abundant life that Jesus Promised, you're going to have to fly...

God's going to call you out and you're going to have to do some things that may seem unreasonable or terrifying at first.

The first flight of faith God calls each of us to make is to make Jesus Christ our Lord.

Barry McGuire "Cosmic Cowboy" 1978**Slide 30**

*I met a cosmic cowboy Ridin' A Starry range.
He's a supernatural cowboy, and he's, dressed-up kinda' strange.
And at first, I didn't see him, being out there on the run.
Yeah, but that ol' hat that he's wearing is shining brighter than the sun.
And, when my eyes adjusted to the flashing of his smile,
Hey, I saw his invitation say, come-on Barry, we'll go riding for awhile.*

*We rode along together for more 'n half-a-day,
Riding through the changing weather, sky was all turned gray.
Chilly winds were blowin', Oh, the cold was cuttin' deep;
Yeah, then it started snowin', Trail was getting' steep.
I was just about to turn-around, head back the way we came;
Somehow, without a sound, I heard him call my name.*

And looking up, I saw that we was high upon this ridge;

*And he took me by my arm and led me right over to the edge.
Hey, I was so scared I couldn't find a single word to say,
You know, there's ten-thousand feet of empty air,
And it's, just about an inch away!
But-a, billion miles was out beyond the waving of his hand.
I was looking through his eyes right into another land.*

*He said, this is my father's ranch as far as you can see;
He made it out of nothin', every branch and every tree,
The stars, all the mountains, rivers and streams,
The oceans, the fountains, and, the valley of your dreams.
I know that place you're lookin' for, that place you long to be.
Truth is, I'm the only door, you're going to have to pass through me.*

*Bending back, I tipped my hat to look him in the eye.
But he just smiled, and gave me confidence, said, "go-ahead and try."
It was now-or-never, and I, I knew I had to start;
So, I took that step, and and I went fallin' straight in through his heart.
The first thing that I noticed coming out the other side,
Hey, all my fears had vanished, He taught me how to fly!*

*Ahhh yeah, there's a cosmic cowboy and he rides a starry range.
He's a supernatural cowboy, he is dressed-up kind'a strange.
And to think I, I nearly missed him being out there on the run.
But, that old hat that he's wearing, it's, shining brighter than the sun.
Yeah, and when my eyes adjusted to the flashing of his smile,
I saw his invitation, said, come-on Barry, we'll go riding for awhile
Cowboy of the night, Shooting rainbows through the night.*

THIS IS YOUR INVITATION TO FLY

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