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Good morning. Happy Thanksgiving Sunday. We are going to begin this time as as is the Quaker tradition in a time of open worship and I encourage you to spend this time searching your heart thinking about all of the blessings God has given you and offering him thanks for the wonderful things that he has done in our lives. I am also going to encourage you that if you have something you're particularly thankful for that you'd like to share please stand up and share or come use the microphone or just project real nice and loud and let's let's spend this time with a heart of thanksgiving towards our Heavenly Father. [Silence] Has everyone had a chance to speak what's on their heart? I wanted to say that I'm very thankful for the incredible love and support that I've received since I came back here. There's just been so many people encouraging me to grow and to step out in faith and to just really dig into God and to figure out what he's calling me to and it has been fantastic just the love and the encouragement. The freshers have been my surrogate family as I'm out here away from my immediate family and they've just been such a blessing to me and yeah it's I love this church and I love these people and I'm very thankful for each and every one of you. I'm thankful for the people who put up with me when I was a stupid little kid. I know you all have your rose-colored glasses but I remember what I was and so let's open with a word of prayer. Heavenly Father we are so thankful for every wonderful beautiful thing in our lives because we acknowledge that we don't deserve a single thing and that every good and perfect gift comes down from you and that you have given us blessing after blessing and every single one of them was undeserved and we are so grateful and so thankful for what you've done and so we just want to honor you this day and give glory to your name for all the wonderful blessings in our lives which all come from you. I'm praying in Jesus name amen. Well today I never think about naming my sermons but then when Gail's putting together the program she asks for the name of it and it always causes me to lose my train of thought but I told her I said let's call it stepping out and and as you may have guessed that if you have a sermon called stepping out you need to read the verse about Peter stepping out onto the water so we're gonna start with Matthew chapter 14 verses 25 to 29 and I apologize we had a technical glitch so there won't be any verses up there so if you want to if you want to see the verses you're gonna have to actually flip through your Bible Matthew 14 starting at verse 25 now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them walking on the sea and when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were troubled saying it is a ghost and they cried out for fear but immediately Jesus spoke to them saying be of good cheer it is I do not be afraid and Peter answered him and said Lord if it is you command me to come to you on the water so he said come and when Peter had come down out of the boat he walked on the water to go to Jesus so for a lot of us and for I know for me and I hope for you this is the model of how we often act out in faith we we say Jesus where it wherever you call me I will go God you know just is this we pray is this where you want me and God says yes this is where I want you and we step out in faith and this is this has been how I've been living my life for a while now and I think the best example of that is a couple years ago it was New Year's Eve and I had a friend in Japan and he was a missionary and he's like he said he told me Matthew on New Year's Eve you need to be in prayer and fasting for the new year is a great tradition so I had started doing that and a couple years ago I was in Phoenix praying fasting on New Year's Eve and I had just lost my job and I had a friend down there who wanted me to stay in Phoenix with him working on our company together but I would have had to I would have been like making software that would have made money in the future but we wouldn't have money right then so I would have to live in his house and lose my apartment and then I had other people saying well you should come work at my company I was really confused so most of my prayer that evening was God what is the future for me where do you want me to go and I was praying and praying and then all of a sudden I the verse ask and it will be given to you seeking you will find knock and the door will be open unto you it just popped into my head and it came with this very solid kernel of faith and I knew in my heart for no logical reason except that it was in me that if I went over and I knocked on the wall that I would unlock whatever was was blocking the Word of the Lord and and so I went over and I just knocked on the wall and I just had this piece come over me and I went to bed and I knew that by morning it was all going to be taken care of and so I woke up in the morning I flipped on my computer flipped on my cell phone and there on my phone apparently my mom had called in the middle of the night and she she had left a message and it wasn't Matthew we think you know it was Matthew we're coming down to pick you up and we're bringing you home and I wasn't surprised I was I was I kind of had goosebumps but I knew because God had put that little kernel of faith in me that that that it was it was taken care of and I slept great that night and I knew the next morning it was going to be resolved and it was resolved and that was definitely the right step so that has how for a long time I've been working I've been praying about stuff and I've been waiting for God to say yes go now recently our our senior pastor left and when that happened I I felt a heart to play some sort of leadership role in this church and so I started praying okay God I mean I don't I don't have any kind of training I can't imagine you want me to be a pastor here but I have this heart I want to do something do you want to be a pastor do you want me to be associate pastor you want me interim pastor and I started praying like that and I didn't get anything I didn't get a yes I didn't get a no and it was really confusing because like I said up till now I I would pray and I would get a leading and I would follow that leading but this time it was nothing and it was starting to frustrate and confuse me I had other people praying for me and they weren't getting anything so during this time this couple months I I started getting little bits of messages from you know this sermon or that preacher or this spiritual friend and all these little bits of message all added up to this one this was one truth that I really believe God was trying to get me to understand and that is step out in faith and don't stop waiting for me to tell you what to do and so and that takes a lot of faith because that's not easy to do I'm gonna flip over to Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6 I'm sure you've heard it before trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths and if you've never done it you need to take a half an hour and just sit there and meditate on this verse because there's so much truth if you just read it word by word that you can pull out it says trust in the Lord not in anything else trust in the Lord with all your heart not some of your heart lean not on your own understanding doesn't mean it means God's maybe not gonna explain it to you just gotta trust him in all your ways not some of your ways acknowledge him he shall direct your paths and it doesn't say he's going to move your feet forward but as you move your own feet forward he will direct you so you should spend some time really digging into that verse you could easily blow half an hour just pulling truth out of that but I think the best exemplification of if that's a real word of that verse is 1st Samuel chapter 14 starting at verse 6 this is the story of Jonathan the son of Saul then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor come let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised it may be that the Lord will work for us for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few so his armor bearer said to him do all that is in your heart go then here I am with you according to your heart then Jonathan Jonathan said very well let us cross over to these men and we will show ourselves to them if they say to us wait until we come to you then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them but if they say thus come up to us then we will go up for the Lord has delivered them into our hand and this will be assigned to us so both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines and the Philistine said look the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor bearer and said come up to us and we will show you something Jonathan said to his armor bearer come up after me for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel and Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after him and they meaning the Philistines fell before Jonathan and as he came after him his armor bearer killed them that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about 20 men within about half an acre of land and there was trembling in the camp in the field and among the people the garrison and the raiders also trembled and the earth quaked so that it was very great trembling so Jonathan saw a need he saw that there's these Philistines and they needed to be defeated that was God's will and he had heart to see God's will accomplished and so what did he do he did not first thing he did was not you know sit down and start praying about it he just went and he stepped out in faith he's like this is something that needs to be done and it's on my heart to do it so I'm gonna do it he stepped out and he trusted God and he put out a little a little test just to give God the opportunity to to to remind him that he was on his side and and God fulfilled his his little litmus test so I some of you those of you who were at the last monthly meeting you know that I have been considering I have I'm in the works I'm in talking with MNC about becoming the interim pastor and so I had been praying about God what should I do and we were at two weeks ago on a Thursday night we were at a Soho coffee house and I was sitting in on the MNC meeting and they mentioned how you know we really need to find an interim pastor because you know some people are getting tired of just the constant revolving preachers different different speaker every Sunday and earlier that week I don't know if you guys have ever seen the movie Contact with Jodie Foster but it's all about sci-fi and and and aliens but it's also about faith it's a really good movie I if you haven't seen it you should watch it but there's one part where Jodie Foster is in this spaceship and she is when they built the spaceship the plans didn't have any any there was no plans for a chair but they didn't want her flopping around so they installed a chair and and she's traveling the spaceship and the chair is just shaking and rattling and she's just getting her brain scrambled and so suddenly as all this is going on she looks up and she sees I think it's her dog tag or something and it's just floating there's weightless gravity in the rest of the room and it's just peacefully floating there and earlier in that week I I was at my job and it was really stressing me out and the idea popped into my head that man this job is like this it's like the chair from that movie and I'm my life is just scrambled and so as we were at that meeting when when they brought up the part about we really need to find an interim pastor it clicked in my head that to me pursuing the interim pastor thing it would be getting out of that chair and getting into the weightlessness and it would be shedding off the chaos of being somewhere with where I shouldn't be so I told him I said I said all right I'll do it and I said I've been praying about it and I said let's spend this weekend you guys pray about it I'll pray about it the youth group will pray about it because that was the week we were at our retreat at camp and so we all started praying about it and I said if nobody gets a no I said up to this point God's not given anybody a yes so I'm not gonna wait for a yes but if nobody gets a no I'm just gonna step forward in faith and I'm gonna do it no one got a no so Monday morning I went into my job I gave my two weeks notice and and some of you think that that's just the craziest thing you ever heard and I understand it is very crazy because no one had promised me any kind of job in fact that I still I still have not been approved or anything they're they're praying about it they're talking about it but nothing has been approved and like I said this was two weeks ago which means my job just ended Friday but I I knew in my heart that I knew that God had put on my heart to to step into something and this was seemed to be an open door so I just I'm stepping out in faith and you know my parents which I don't bring it up I mean they know but we just don't talk about it it's Thanksgiving so so yeah I stepped out but some of you I'm sure are thinking wow that's risky what happens if you what what if you make a mistake what if you're doing the wrong thing so for to answer that question I think a great example is in Acts chapter 16 starting in verse 6 this is Paul and Silas and Timothy they are brand new apostles working to spread the new Church of Jesus Christ to the world and it says starting in verse 6 now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia after they had come to miss you that they tried to go into the fifth Enea but the spirit did not permit them so passing by miss you they came down to throw us and a vision appeared to Paul in the night a man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him saying come over to Macedonia and help us now after he had seen the vision immediately we sought to go to Macedonia concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them so Paul was just so excited about the job he had been given by God and he had so much faith in God that he was just like a little kid who'd been released in Disney World he just started going and and like any good parent his heavenly father stopped him and turned him away from the areas where he shouldn't be headed and we need to learn how to trust our heavenly father like that because if if we're honest with ourselves we are just like foolish little children who often wander into dangerous situations but rather than being afraid of that we need to have faith and head into trust in God that he is going to lead us and he's going to protect us from whatever dangers or calamities that we're gonna run headlong into I mean we all assume that he's doing it anyways on any given day he he protects us from the accident that we don't see or the the the place that would have been robbed if we had been there 10 minutes earlier whatever we we always assume that he's going to save us from other people's accidents but we have a hard time believing that he's going to save us from our own accidents but we need to step out in faith we need to find what heart what heart he's given us we what heart he's given us I truly believe that everyone has a kingdom mission in their heart somewhere there's there there are people in this world who need God's love and to need the talents that that God has given you and and you have a heart for something and you may not have thought about it or you may think oh I have a heart for this but I don't see how just pray about it because God is giving you that heart for a reason and seek that out because because I really believe that that there's a verse in the Bible that says God will give us the desires of our heart and I sometimes suspect that that doesn't mean that he gives us the things we desire I sometimes suspect that means he gives us what we are desiring I had a heart to come back to this church and to work with the youth group I had a heart to involve myself on the search committee and it seems you know any I've heard plenty of people tell me stories about you know that all of the work and stuff that goes into the search committee and and and why you know they say oh thank you for you doing it because I don't want to do it and and yet God gave me a heart to do that and I think that he's given all of us a heart to do something and we need to press into what he's given us a heart to do so if God wants certain things done if he wants me to be an interim pastor if he wants you to do whatever he's calling you to why doesn't he just come out and say it that's my next point we're gonna flip to Hebrews chapter 11 and read verse 35 this this is a there's a big part in Hebrews where he's talking about faith and people who did great things by faith and who and how faith is is the power that allows a Christian to become everything God wants them to be so women says 1135 women received their dead raised to life again others were tortured but not not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection now it's real quick flip over to Matthew 6 verse 20 you probably haven't memorized I'm gonna read it anyway but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal so what these two verses hint at which is something I haven't heard a lot of preaching on but they hint at the fact that our my heaven is going to be a little bit different than your heaven there will be treasures and rewards and responsibilities handed out when we get to heaven and I mean it's it's you know some people will say oh my heaven is going to be you know cheesecake land and and they think that they'll never see another person but that's not that's not the case it's going to be one big place and we're all going to be together but we will be receiving rewards and responsibilities based on how we've lived this life we really are storing up treasures in heaven and so I think that the reason God doesn't just command and demand that we go here do this is because there's no reward in that that's just the obedience of a slave he doesn't want that he wants children to prove their their heart to him to demonstrate their love for him he's giving a chance giving us a chance to prove our love and to earn heavenly rewards and so on this Thanksgiving Sunday we have so many blessings and so many things that we are thankful for but what I want to encourage you to remember is the blessings you have in your life the the money and the talents and the relationships you have these are not your wages these are the company credit card God has given you these things in order to spend on his kingdom and it's it's it's good to be thankful for these things because they are beautiful wonderful things but we're not just supposed to sit in them and enjoy them and not share them God has given us these things to spread out his kingdom into the world and when you die the things of this world are are going to become someone else's or they're going to pass away but using your time here God has an exchange system and you can convert your earthly treasure into heavenly treasure and heavenly treasure is infinite treasure and it's and you're going to spend the rest of eternity enjoying the rewards of anything that you forwarded up onto heaven in this life so whether it's actual money that you use to feed the hungry or support missionaries or whether it's a household of love that you bring in neighborhood kids or orphans or whether it's just the ability to write birthday cards I've been so blessed by all the birthday cards that that Betty Fields has has sent me over the years and and and it can be it can be so many things it can be anything you can do but that's converting the time and your resources and your abilities into heavenly treasure so so figure out what God has given you a heart for let's read Psalm 37 verses 4 and 5 this is this is the verse I was alluding to earlier delight yourself also in the Lord and he shall give you the desires of your heart commit your way to the Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass find your heart follow your heart God has put something good on your heart and it's it's possible that you think that you're not capable or that that you don't have the resources but when Jonathan went climbing up on that hill with just him and one other guy to face the entire Philistine army he knew he didn't have the resources for two men to defeat and to scatter an army but he had faith in God and he knew that God had all of the capability to accomplish what he was stepping out in faith to do and and Isaiah 40 31 I think says it really well but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings like eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint the story of the Good Samaritan has it has people has these religious folks who they see a need but they are under no obligation to fulfill that need so they bypass that need but then a Samaritan walks up who is also under no obligation to fulfill that need in fact if that person beat up on the road was was a Jew then there's a probably a good chance that that he would have asked the Samaritan please please don't touch me you're a Samaritan and and that kind of a thing but the Samaritan saw the need and so he he gave up his own time and resources to tend to a need and and I realize the story is a parable but this is the only place in the Bible where Jesus said go and do likewise so so so step out don't don't get hung up waiting for your burning bush don't get hung up waiting for you know well as soon as I'm a little stronger or a little richer or a little whatever believe that God will make up the difference in whatever it is that you put your hand to for his kingdom and and just prepare to be blown away at the doors that will fly open at the strength that you'll have at the resources that you will obtain if you ever get a chance read the story of George Mueller he was a man who believed God wanted him to start opening orphanages and and and he did the whole thing completely by prayer and there were times that the kids had sat down at the dinner table with and there was no food and so he had the kids start praying and in the middle of the prayer there was a knock on the door and someone that hey I got this food you your kids need food and this is the kind of this is the way God works step out in faith trust him and and let him bring it to pass amen all right let me close in let me close in prayer Heavenly Father thank you so much again for the blessings and and the treasures and the wonderful things that you've given us we ask that you will please speak to our hearts put in us a burden of a burden of love towards what needs to be accomplished in this world the places where you have empowered us and equipped us to push forward your kingdom please give us inspiration help us to see what part we can play in your great story please show us how we can forward all of this earthly treasure up into heaven to be ready for us as heavenly treasure I praise you and we thank you that you give us this opportunity to partner with you and and and allow us to partake in your beautiful wonderful plans for this world pray this all in Jesus name amen