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Our wonderful, loving, perfect Heavenly Father. We are so grateful that You have adopted us as Your sons and daughters. We thank You that You have not called us servants, slaves and subjects, but Your children. And we thank You that You have given us a Father's heart of love towards us. Please help us to understand and appreciate Your perfect Fatherly love towards us, even past the filters of all of our imperfect examples here on earth. But we praise You for the good love, the good Father figures that we've had in our lives. Help us now to learn from You and to grow in You and to grow closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen. Well, good morning. I didn't know if I was going to be here with you today. My car is still back at Einstein Bagels. And so I'm going to do my sermon and run back and get it fixed so I can get to camp. But I didn't want to miss out on giving you guys this message, because when I wrote it I didn't even realize it was Father's Day. So that tells you what kind of son I am. And it's perfect for Father's Day, so I'm just excited that this is the one God gave me. So I was at camp this week. We were at junior high camp. And let me just say it is crazy. I haven't been a counselor for like nine years, and it is so much more packed full of stuff and just so wild. And it's transformed so much since I was the counselor there last time. And it really tired me out. Of course, the nine years might have done that too. But it was a great time. And I was always trying to just squeeze in time to write this message. And right there, Thursday night, last night of camp, this popped into my head. And I said, "Good. Yes, this is something I need to say." So I was looking at my kids, and I was looking at all the kids at camp. And I realized that there's two kinds of campers at Quaker Haven. There are troubled kids, and there are okay kids. The troubled kids have done bad stuff in their life, and they've had bad stuff done to them. They are aware of their own weaknesses, which makes them aware of their need for God. They are the ones who were the quickest to respond to the good news of Jesus at summer camp. But then there's the okay kids. They have good parents, good families, good schools, good lives. They're financially well off. They have no stress or trouble or worries. And I find that those kids are often the ones who are blind for their need to God. They don't feel the need to read the Bible or pray or anything, because life's good. Why do I need to change anything? So as I prayed about this, and I prayed about what message to give, I imagined a kid sitting on the side of a pool. Actually, I imagined two kids. One kid, the first kid, is standing on the side of the pool, and his dad is in the water. And the kid is just jumping. The water is probably too deep for him, but he's just jumping right into his dad's arms. Huge smile on his face. The other kid is sitting, kind of dangling his feet in the water, kind of splashing. He's smiling. He's happy. The father says, "Jump in. Come swim with me." But the child just smiles and says, "Mmm, no thanks." He's happy and content where he's at. He knows that his father loves him and will catch him if he jumps. He will take care of him and won't let him drown. But he doesn't like the look of that water. He looks a little deep, and he knows how much effort it takes to swim, to kick, and he's happy where he's at, so he just sits. He splashes and he smiles, and he completely misses out on the opportunity to swim with his father. This is what I saw in some of my campers last week, and I'm sharing with you just a warning as you consider your life. Have you jumped in with God? Have you jumped in with your Heavenly Father, or are you still just kind of splashing on the side, still afraid to trust him completely? I have three verses to go along with this, and they're not in your bulletin because I didn't get them to gail in time. My first verse is 2 Timothy 1.7, and it is, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline." My next verse is in Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible, chapter 31, verse 6. "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Finally, we're jumping to Psalms 27. Verse 1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" So this jumping into the water versus sitting on the edge of the pool, it's a good metaphor, but what does it look like in practice? Someone sitting on the poolside spends very little time thinking about God, at least in practical, life-applicable way. Now they may enjoy pondering the mysteries of the universe and trying to figure out where creation and evolution meet and these sorts of theoretical mental pursuits. But once it comes time to real life and making choices, suddenly God's out of the equation and everything is just, "Now what do television personalities say or what do my friends say?" A poolside person knows they have weaknesses and shortcomings, but they just accept that this is the way they are. They use the mercy of God as a license to abandon efforts of maturity and spiritual growth. They say, "This is how God made me. If he doesn't like me this way, he'll change me, but this is just who I am." And because these poolside people have given up on growth, this has caused them to give up on serious prayer and Bible study. They don't see themselves as super-spiritual, so they assume that their prayers will have little or no effect. Because they've given up on growth, there is no value to them in Bible study. After all, they're saved, so what more is there? Because poolside people don't have God as their supreme goal in life, they have other supreme goals which often run counter to the pursuit of God's kingdom and glory. Most often their supreme goal is their own enjoyment. It's their friendships or their possessions or their pleasure. And often the spiritual walk fights against these goals. In other words, another hour of sleep is more enjoyable than spending an hour with God. Or offering to pray for someone is uncomfortable, and that might bring some stress into that relationship. Or talking to your unsafe friends about Jesus might bring some stress in, and that would rock the boat, and they don't want to do that. But let's take a look at the kind of people who jump in. To begin with, they are not perfect. They also don't think of themselves as super spiritual. They still have fears about what it will cost to jump in, and they still feel the hurt of crucifying their old lives and dying to themselves. But they have chosen to believe the Word of God, to believe in the steadfast promises of the most faithful one, and so they fight these fears with the truth. And I think a great example of this is that just this week, for the first time, I went up to the top of the rock wall at Quaker Haven. Now I didn't actually climb the rock wall. I climbed the pole because that's easier. But either way, you're still getting up really high. It's probably as high as this room. You're in a harness, and you're in a rope and everything, and you get up there, and then there's a zipline that they snap you onto, and you slide down this really long zipline back to the ground. When you get up there, it looks nice and stable from the ground. The bottom of the platform doesn't move, but the top of the platform moves, especially when the wind blows or when someone else goes down the zipline. It's just kind of shaking around. So they get up there, and they get you in your little harness strap, and they're like, "Now hang your toes over the edge of the platform." You know, like up there. And now crouch, and then when you're ready, just lean forward and go. And so it's 50 feet or whatever down, and I've been running around with all these crazy games, and my legs were so sore from all those games. And so I'm holding on to the wall as I crouch, and Kyle May is like, "I can't let you hold onto the wall, man. That's against regulations, insurance, and all these crazy excuses." He's like, "You have to just crouch." I'm like, "I'll try." And so I crouch, and at that moment you just have all this adrenaline and this fear because you're looking down so far at the ground. But I told myself, I said, "Hundreds of people go down this thing every year. This structure is constantly being inspected to make sure that it is safe and secure. The people who are running this are thoroughly trained and know exactly what they're doing. All of my equipment has been checked and double-checked. And so even though I was terrified, I took my logical reasoning and I overcame my fears with logic. And I went off and I slid down, and it was a blast. And this is exactly the same how it is for the people who jump in with God. There is still the terror and the fear and the apprehension of giving up and dying to your old life and jumping in and plunging in with God completely. It's scary. But we have this Bible that is full of promises, like, "I will never leave you or forsake you," or, "The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?" In fact, when I was preparing this sermon, I said, "I'm going to sit in McDonald's and get free refills on a drink while I write this sermon, because it's a dollar." And I had my Bible with me, and as I got out of the car, I immediately got hit with those feelings like, "Uh-oh, I'm one of those guys who carries a Bible around with them when they go to McDonald's, and people are going to look at me like I'm a weirdo." And then I was like, "Oh, this is what my sermon's about." And so I said, "You know what? I'm writing this sermon to bless my friends at Caramel Friends. I'm writing this sermon to glorify God, and God loves me. And this Bible is full of the truth and the goodness that everyone in this world needs. And so I'm going to carry this Bible proudly into McDonald's and read it right there in front of everyone. And even though I'm nervous and apprehensive about doing that, I'm just going to do it, because God is on my side, and He's bigger than any name-calling that might happen. And in fact, there was no name-calling, believe it or not. And I did have one lady walk up to me and say, "It's so nice to see a man reading his Bible in public." And I said, "Oh, thank you. What do you say to that?" You fight your fears, you fight your apprehension with the truth that God is for you who can be against you. People who jump accept and believe that they are hugely important and completely loved by God as dear children, adopted as His children. They reject the lie that you are just a face in the crowd of Christians, mostly overlooked, only noticed when you do something bad. That's a lie, and the people who jump in reject that. They know that God has something super important for them in their lives, and they eagerly and actively seek it out. They find their greatest joy in pursuing His destiny for their lives, and this ends up directing every decision and consuming their time and resources. It is not a begrudging burden for them to pray or to read their Bible or to do any of those so-called spiritual activities. It's their greatest joy because they found their purpose and their destiny in doing those things. And having accepted this destiny, the one who jumps fights to become more effective in achieving their destiny. They fight against their weaknesses. They joyfully ask for prayer regarding their weaknesses. They put off the other things of life for prayer and Bible time because they know that this is the fuel that allows them to achieve their destiny. They don't always feel like praying and reading their Bibles, but they know it's a good thing, and they know that when they get done doing it, that they're going to be ready to handle whatever comes next in the day. They don't always feel like it, but they persist in faith. Those who jump die to their own plans and self-interests. It's called dying to yourself because that's what it feels like. It feels like dying. It's not easy and it's not pleasant, but they do it in faith, longing for the greater prize. They give up the temporary pleasures and joys of this world for the eternal riches and treasure that God has in store for those who die to themselves. Do you see the recurring theme here? I've worked this word in several times, and maybe you've caught it. Those who jump live by faith. They sacrifice, they face fears, and they take risk, not because it's easy, but because they've chosen to believe and they take God at His word, that it is the life they were created for and that there are good things in store for them when they do it. If you ask any one of these people who give up all of the things that this world treasures and values and holds dear, they will tell you that He doesn't disappoint and that every moment is worth it. God makes good on His promises. My friends, God did not send His Son to die on the cross so that we could just whip out a sinner's prayer, get out a hell-free card, and then say, "Thank Sia! That is not why Jesus died on the cross." His plan was to purchase us and to restore us and to transform us, to give us a destiny and a hope and a future, life and life abundantly. He is a good Father, and if you jump, He will catch you. If you believe the promises in His word and live by them, in other words, if you walk by faith, you will find the life you were created for. You will find yourself filled up with everything you thought you were missing. So go big, my friends. Cast off your worries and fears and doubts and grab hold of the rich, full life of faith in your Heavenly Father. Let's pray. Our wonderful, loving Heavenly Father, please help us to grasp and understand the amazing, rich depth of love and life that you have in store for us. Help us to cast off those fears. Put in our hearts and our minds the truths to counter those fears. Help us to say, "Today is the day. I'm just going to stop caring about what other people think and start caring about what you think, God." Help us to dedicate our lives to you. Help our lives to just be a beautiful song that glorifies your name. Give us the strength and the courage. Teach us from your word the promises for those who walk down this path. In Jesus' name, amen.