

Launching Part 1 “Taking Off”

If we are going to launch a rocket into space. What are some things that we will need to do to launch our rocket?

- The rocket will have to be built by skilled builders. People that know all the ins and outs of the construction of the rocket.
- Once the rocket is built it will have to be meticulously checked and inspected by people who are skilled in the launching of rockets.
- Then the astronauts that are well trained and skilled will be assigned to pilot our rocket.
- Our rocket must then be fueled, loaded and taken to the launching pad to ultimately take off into space.
- Then after one more very meticulous inspection the countdown starts, ignition takes place and our rocket blasts off into space.

Now this morning I want to take the analogy with the launching of our rocket and parallel that with our relationship with God. What is the one preparation that we must make to launch into a relationship with God and what do we do after we are launched?

John 10:7-10, “Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Notice Jesus makes it very clear that He is the way to God. He is the shepherd and He opens the gate for His sheep and they are saved. In other words, this is the preparation that must be made to have a relationship with God. No wonder **Revelation 3:20**, says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” Have you ever seen a picture of this verse? It is amazing to think about in that the door has no door knob on the outside where Jesus is standing and knocking. The door knob is on the inside and only we can open that door and let

Jesus in. What is the meaning of this verse? It is that the inside door represents our heart and we are the only one that can let Jesus in to be our Savior and Lord. Each of us has a choice as to whether we open that door or not.

Then there is the thief described in **John 10** which is Satan. What does He do? He tries to convince as many as he can that there are other ways to have relationship with God such as being a good person, being baptized, being a member of a church or doing more right things than wrong things and thereby gaining favor with God (the balancing salvation).

The point is that Jesus must be everything in our launch into a relationship with God. You cannot know God nor have a relationship with Him without Jesus Christ in the mix. Just as you can't launch your rocket without skilled people involved, fuel and well-trained astronauts.

We Are Launched. What Now?

Once our rocket launches we must continue to climb into space to ultimately reach our destination and fulfill our mission. There is never going to be a mission planned that will only be partially completed. It is the same in our spiritual lives as Jesus Christ is the launch point and then we must continue to ascend in our relationship with Him to complete our mission which ultimately is to live God's plans and purposes for our lives.

We are going to look at a couple of key things that need to be happening once we have launched.

We Need to Ascend

By ascend I mean we need to be growing in our relationship with God consistently and constantly. I want us to look at two ways that this happens.

Ascending in Knowledge and Wisdom

Colossians 1:9-10, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."

How do we ascend?

- We need to be led by His spirit so that we can be full of wisdom and understanding. We accomplish this through the study of His word, prayer and fellowship with other believers.
- Our goal always must be to please Him by living a worthy life. Bearing fruit which is doing good works and growing in knowledge of Him consistently and constantly.

Secondly, we ascend by serving others.

Jesus provided the ultimate example of serving:

Philippians 2:5-8, “in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

How much should you and I be willing to serve based upon that example? A whole lot.

I Peter 4:10, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

Here is the mandate concerning ascending after we launch. God has given each of us specific gifts and abilities that He wants us to use to serve others and glorify Him. How do you know what those gifts are? What are you good at? What are your passions? Do those passions and gifts result in serving others and glorifying God?

If so, you are ascending and you need to focus on continuing to ascend.

If not your engine in your rocket is sputtering. That means your life may feel unfulfilled and you may like you are lacking passion and direction. It is because God created us to know Him through personal faith in Jesus Christ and then to be about glorifying Him through growing in our relationship with Him and serving others.

The Practical

We want to help you launch if you have not already. We would love to talk to you about how you can have a relationship with the God that created you.

That brings us to the practical part of this message. Here at WCC we want to help you to ascend in your journey through this life with God.

First, we want to help you grow.

Please look inside your bulletin and you will find a couple of different inserts. The first one I want us to look at is entitled 2018 Discipleship Questionnaire. This questionnaire describes all the things that we currently offer here to help you grow in knowledge and give you additional fellowship opportunities.

There is a new one listed under future discipleship possibilities. A little over a year ago I purchased an online resource called “Right Now Media”. It is like the Netflix of Christian resources (show on screen) As you can see it is has hundreds of thousands of resources to help us grow closer to our God. This resource is free.

What I need you to do now is check off any of the Bible Studies, Sunday School or online opportunities that you are interested in participating in, fold it and put in the offering plate at the end of the service. Once we get your completed forms the leaders of each of these opportunities will contact you with further information.

I realize that some of you are already involved in some of these and that is great. I also, realize that some of you are involved in leading some of these and I want to personally thank you for leading.

Second, we want to help you serve.

We want to help you ascend through the second questionnaire entitled Serving Opportunities.

I believe as we studied earlier that God has gifted each of us and wired us up to use our talents and abilities to glorify Him and serve others.

That is what the second one is about. I would like for you to consider getting involved in serving in our children’s ministry, nursery or through one of our

ministry teams/committees. I truly appreciate the individuals that currently lead and serve in our children's ministry and ministry teams/committees.

There is a summary of each ministry team/committee with your questionnaires. If you feel like you might be interested in one of these opportunities or serving in the children's ministry or nursery please check the blank beside that opportunity and that ministry leader will contact you and help sort out whether that opportunity would be a good fit for you.

There are numerous other opportunities at WCC such as greeting, sharing children's moment, helping with the youth group and others that I have failed to mention that you can feel free to ask about if you are interested.

The main thing is that we want to do everything that we can do to help you launch and ascend in your relationship with God.