

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

February 11, 2024 "Leap of Faith: Living in The Leap"

### I Intro.

Okay, we're into 2024 now, and we've got a lot going on. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### II Recap.

We're doing this "*Leap of Faith*" series for two reasons. One, it's a leap year. Two, sometimes we get into places in our daily lives where it's time to step out of our comfort and security. It doesn't have to be a big life changing step. But often there is this tiny nagging voice inside of us telling us it's time for a change, something different. We call that 'holy discontent'. It's not an unhappiness with life or with something specific in your life. Most of the time it's simply answering the question; "**Does what I'm doing matter?**" "**Am I making a difference?**" Life can often feel like the movie "*Groundhog Day*". Basically, we're going through the motions just existing rather than actually living...fully.

So, this series is not to push us in a particular direction, or do a specific thing. It's asking if we need to take that one step, that "*leap of faith*", into something that's been in the back of our mind for a while. Just whispering to us to take a risk. We want to help you if you find yourself in this place. And give you some assurance that it's okay. You can trust God. So, a couple more questions.

**What can help you step out of comfort into unknown new places?**

**What has to change, move inside of you to be able to do this?**

### III Sunday.

The scripture Sunday was a little, tucked away in the corner, story usually told around Christmas. But it's actually a profound account of someone who took their "*leap of faith*", and then had to wait years and years to see it pay off. Read **Luke 2:36-38**, and we'll build on what happened.

**What jumped out to you from this little story about faith?**

**What do you think Anna had to battle to stay faithful?**

**What do you think kept Anna committed to her "*leap of faith*"?**

This account is connected to the bigger story of Simeon seen in **Luke 2:21-35**. You don't have to read this entire account, but know that Anna's story is attached by the first line in verse 36. "*Anna the prophetess was also there.*" There was a "*leap of faith*" Anna took, it took a long time for her to see her faith pay off. And it came from her devotion and spiritual practices that sustained her while she waited. So, let's look at them.

How to sustain yourself when you haven't reached your realized landing spot yet.

**1. "She never left".** There was something about Anna's understanding, trust, 'of sureness', having a faith based on believing and not seeing that you could see. Or what she didn't see for the longest time. **What does it mean when you take that leap of faith to "never leave"?**

In this time of waiting, uncertainty, questioning. *"Did I make the right choice?"*. She stayed in it. Now she probably didn't bring a sleeping bag and sleep in the temple. But she adapted and adjusted her life to stay in the choice she made. I am not saying that people who make changes to previous commitments are quitters. There are plenty of things we 'leap' into that have nothing to do with God. **Relationships, jobs, big moves, decisions, etc.** Sometimes we have to get out when we can. And it's the right, wiser, thing to do

But, if the leap is into something about the Kingdom of God. A bigger more worthy cause, AND you still need to move on, it may have been that leap that led you THROUGH a place to the place you were supposed to be. **Some doors aren't into other rooms but are passages you may have to travel through for a while to lead to another room.**

Anna's cause was big, like Simeon's. And it wasn't a personal, 'what's in it for Anna' cause. She had committed herself to waiting expectantly for the promise to all of Israel. And she *"never left."* When you take your *"leap of faith"*, make sure it's for something bigger and more worthy than your own personal gain. And in that waiting space, you will find peace.

**2. "Worshiping night and day".** How did Anna find what she needed to stay in that place of waiting, while in her leap? *"She worshiped night and day."* Let's give a bigger, more inclusive understanding of worship. Worshiping is just some practice, habit, that helps you experience the presence of God in a way that **encourages you, and helps you to keep the faith**. When you take that *"leap of faith"*, there will be tough times, bouts of discouragement, doubt, when you're not sure that it was the right thing to do. So, you need to build into your life practices that help you deeply and genuinely experience something transcendent. A practice of experiencing God that can carry you through those tough times. And we all worship differently. **Music, volunteering, study, meditation, prayer, etc.** Worshiping isn't for God's sake. He's not an egomaniac who needs strokes. Worshiping is for our sake. Because entering into the presence of God is good for us. It both reminds us of our smallness in the big picture. And our significance in relationship with God. Find the things that allow you to:

**Reflect-** Who am I? The good and the ... not so good.

**Learn-** What don't I know that I need to know?

**Grow-** How can I grow in faith and practice by what I've learned?

**What are those practices of experiencing the presence of God that move you to reflect, learn, and grow, that can encourage you in your leap?** Make those regular routines in your life

**3. "Prayers and fasting".** In addition to building in practices of encouragement, you need other practices. To live in the meanwhile, waiting to land your leap, you need to **build resilience**. Developing and growing your ability to overcome and sustain. Build your self-discipline muscle. Do things you need to do to stay committed to what you believe was your *"leap of faith"*. These will be different for each of us. **What grows within you a resilience to stay committed to your "leap of faith"?** Nowhere does this say, when things are tough for you and you're getting discouraged only pray and fast. This is not a command to do so. This is someone's story of what they did to build resilience, stay committed. In the midst of the unknown. Prayer and fasting may be exactly what works for you to weather the storm. But if it's not. Then find something that grows your resilience.

#### **IV Challenge.**

Sometimes when you take that “*leap of faith*” it takes a while for confirmation to come. You won’t see or feel the results for a while. Remember our faith isn’t grown by what we can see. But by the faith we’ve cultivated through our values, convictions, and beliefs. And you have to **trust while living in the waiting**. And it’s in this waiting, living in the meantime, is where hope is born.

**Don’t let your circumstances dictate your ability to survive or what to expect.** Sometimes your “*leap of faith*” comes with two parts.

1. Your expectations of what the leap will lead you to.

2. And the actual leaving the old for the unknown new.

But this often means that your original expectations of where this leap would lead don’t pan out the way you thought. The leap was still right and good. Better than staying. But it’s the flexibility to say we did the “*leap of faith*” thinking this would happen. It hasn’t. And rather than believing the leap was wrong. It’s reassessing what our expectations were, and what they should be now. **And we learn to live in the waiting.**

Because Anna, and Simeon, did the above things, they were able to recognize the God intended landing place of their leap. THAT is the secret to a successful “*leap of faith*” that takes a really long time.