

**OUR LORD'S COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**SERMON: Prepared For Adventure**  
**SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40: 25-31**  
**July 27, 2008**  
**Robert D. Foreman**

**Introduction**

A few months ago the preaching elders met with Jim Van Zetten, our interim pastor, to plan dates we agreed to preach. At that meeting I did not realize the timing of this sermon. Of course, I began to seek the Lord to give me His heart's desire for the words He wanted me to share with you today. However, the full weight of the timing of this sermon did not hit me until Scott Manley told us the Lord had revealed that Roc Bottomly's call to Our Lords would be his one last great adventure. The intensity was felt more keenly last week when Dale preached his sermon on "Expressions of Grace." He discussed how we as members of Our Lord's would join Roc and Bev in bringing the expression of grace into the community. These sermons coupled with the awareness that I would be preaching the last sermon before Roc became Lead Pastor left me in a challenging position. I realized I was between a Roc and a hard place.

The sermon this morning, the scripture and its implications seem to fit very well with the life of Roc and the life of Our Lord's. I can imagine that Roc soared like an eagle when he was piloting a jet fighter during his life in the Air Force. But more than that, I believe God has called him to join us and to encourage us to also soar on wings like eagles as we enter this exciting, new and challenging adventure.

I would like to spend just a few minutes reflecting on the eagle. The Eagle is a beautiful bird that God designed to soar with the wind currents beneath its wings. With its magnificent wingspan it can climb high up into the sky. As you may know eagles build their nests in the cleft of a rock on high places. There they lay their eggs in security and safety. For 10 or 12 weeks after the eaglets hatch they live and mature in the comfort of the nest. However, when eaglets have matured the parent eagle begins to stir up the nest. This makes the eaglets nervous and worried because they do not understand what the parent eagle is doing. They can't understand why parent eagle is messing up the nest. The eaglets are strongly encouraged by the parent eagle to move to the edge of the nest. The parent eagle then flies around and around, to show them how to fly. Then it flies back to what is left of the nest and where the eaglets are huddled together. At first, one eaglet has the courage to leap from the nest and then with some reluctance the others follow but all of them end up soaring. Today we are preparing to fly! Be ready to stretch out your wings and take that step of faith.

You and I were born for a purpose. You and I were born to soar. Like the eagle, we make our home in the cleft of the Rock of Ages, where there is safety

and security. Like the eaglets God has to stir up our nest here at Our Lord's and we might not like it, but it is for our own good. He does this to move us out of our comfort zones. He wants to show us that we were born for a purpose. Our purpose is to soar with the wind of the Holy Spirit beneath our wings that lifts us up to new heights in God. As we enter this new phase of ministry at OUR LORD'S we are being launched from our comfort zone and prepared to soar to new heights in the ways that Christians are to live their lives.

Scott Manley challenged us to be prepared for an adventure with Roc's leadership. He also told us that without risk there is no adventure. He also told us that if the pastorate at Our Lord's is the one last great adventure that God has prepared for Roc to do, we know that it will not be small and will not be without risk because God has planned it. Now Roc won't go on this adventure by himself. So here is the question; how will you and I join him? How has God prepared us to support the adventure God has planned for Roc Bottomly and for us? Now remember without risk there is no adventure. Roc is just the designated leader who is called to orchestrate things. But he needs the gifted people in this body, and we all have gifts, operating in their full strength, walking in worthy ways, and doing what God has called him and us to do.

I would like to focus on ways God has prepared us for this great adventure as Roc joins Our Lord's next week and becomes our Lead Pastor. God has used two main ways to prepare us for the adventure. They don't sound earth shattering but they are so integral to the growth of a Christian. They are **Trusting in the Lord who is a Sovereign God** and **Waiting on the Lord**. I firmly believe that our Sovereign God delayed the arrival of a Lead Pastor until the Lord had taught us to more fully trust and wait on Him before we are ready to soar with Him. I will read from the scripture lesson today to support how these two ways, **Trusting in the Lord** and **Waiting on the Lord** are critical for **Soaring with the Lord**. (Isaiah 40:25-40)

## **TRUSTING IN THE LORD**

The very basis for trusting in the Lord is to know that our God is Sovereign. Is. 40: 28 says, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD our God is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and his understanding no one can fathom." There is a similar message in Revelation 4:11. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power. For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." These verses reveal an awesome teaching. In each of these verses from Isaiah and from Revelation God is announcing His sovereignty, His power, His knowledge His authority, and His ability. God's sovereignty also has immense practical importance. It makes Him our proper object of worship. He is the almighty, omnipotent God, the creator and sustainer of all that exists. There is none higher, none more worthy of worship and honor.

In the Bible God's sovereignty is featured from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis 1:1 boldly states that in the beginning, God in His sovereign power and authority created all things. He ordered His creation and brought all humankind into existence. The book of Genesis continues by revealing that God in His sovereignty chose the family of Abraham and the nation of Israel to bring forth His promised Messiah. This Messiah, Jesus, was the One through whom God chose to reveal Himself to the world. God continues to demonstrate His sovereignty throughout the New Testament by choosing you and me to be His sons and daughters. Then, finally in Revelation God reveals Himself as the One who sits upon a throne of judgment to rule over His Kingdom for ever and ever as the Lord God Almighty.

I believe that God used these past two years without a pastor to help us better understand the Sovereignty of God and to trust in the Lord more deeply. Let's reflect how God used this time to help us trust Him more fully. The Bible teaches that the better we understand the Sovereignty of God the more willing we will be to trust Him in every area of our lives.

In His sovereignty God chose to send us Jim Van Zetten. God used Jim to help us to more deeply understand God's sovereignty. In his sermons and his teaching times, the theme was the Sovereignty of God. Jim expressed the Sovereignty of God in the illness of his son, Matthew who suffers from Crohn's Disease. In everything he shared, the peaks of good news and the depths of disappointment, he always came back to realize that God was Sovereign in these circumstances. The sovereignty theme ran through his sermons, but the sermon that directly addressed the Sovereignty of God was preached on April 27. He reminded us that God reigns over every square inch of the world. He told us that "all life lives before the faces (or the Majesty) of God. We are ALWAYS in His presence.

**Why is it so difficult to trust in a Sovereign God?** The Bible clearly states the following about trusting God, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5,6). Even though we know this with our head, most of us experience difficulty in trusting God at least at one point or another in our walk with Him.

Trusting God may be difficult because His ways don't always make sense to us. God told Noah to build an ark. Rain and the closest lake were not in sight. From a human perspective this command most likely did not make much sense to Noah (story found in Genesis 6-8). Oh how we want life to make sense. Our deepest desires are to set our own terms and timetables.

We also need to realize that God operates with a different timetable than our minds can comprehend. Recall that God promised Abraham that his wife Sarah would have their own child. In God's plan this promise was delayed 24 years

before it was fulfilled exactly like God had explained. During this waiting period, Abraham and Sarah struggled greatly to trust God. They even tried to use their own methods through the servant Hagar to fulfill the promise and we are still struggling with the results of that action. We want what we want and we want it right now! Like Abraham we often find it difficult to trust in a plan that requires us to surrender all control of the time for completion.

For us to trust in God implicitly, we must totally surrender our desires, our ideas, our wills, and our future into the hands of a Sovereign God. The first and most important result of trusting in God's sovereignty is that you will sense that there is real meaning and purpose for all that takes place in your life. You and I will be able to commit even the tragedies and the difficulties that have happened into God's hands because we will trust that He has an ultimate plan. That is what the sovereignty of God means. God is big enough to handle it all.

God is not dishonored if we struggle and express our puzzlement, frustrations, complaints and laments in His presence. Even the Psalmist in Psalm 44: 23-24 asked the Lord if He was sleeping. He said, "Awake O Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever." Richard Mouw in his book, "Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport" states that, "I am convinced that a willingness to express these various moods is an important way of honoring the Sovereignty of God. "However, he also states that "because we know He is sovereign—and that He does not have to justify his ways to us—we must eventually get around to the praise songs."

In Romans 8:28, Scripture declares that all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose. This verse declares the power of God's sovereignty over all the things that occur in your life and mine. He is working all things for our good. He doesn't use just the good things for His purposes, but He uses all things to bring about His ultimate purpose in our lives. He's shaping everything together to bring about good in your life. We learn that it is through trust that our relationship with a Sovereign God strengthens and our love for Him grows.

The testing ground to know the depth of our trust in God is when He asks us to wait, and we have been waiting. We have been waiting for a new lead pastor in His timing.

## **WAITING ON THE LORD**

We are living in a fast moving world of high technology that attempts to reduce or eliminate waiting. However, in contrast a sentence in our scripture lesson contains a word that is frightening in the world in which we live; and that word is WAIT. The sentence says that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." WAIT, and that is where the real problem comes in today with our daily living. Wait. No one waits for anything or anyone! All of us, well most of us, are

rushing in the fast lane of life as we do our own thing! It seems like today we have no patience to leisurely enjoy a Sunday Dinner together. We need to prepare the meal instantly in the microwave or we stop off for a quick bite at Mickey D's. WAIT: try standing in a long line at a store, or sitting in a traffic jam, or waiting on the telephone. We have lost this word along the way and replaced it with WHY wait?

To wait upon a Sovereign God takes strength and courage. It takes strength of character to "will" to wait, and it takes courage to do what others do not. When we are challenged to do something with eternal significance, we must do that something through the power of the Holy Spirit. Emotion or logic or self-will or common sense will be useless. When we come to understand that His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts, it will become easier to wait for the Lord. Have you experienced times in your own life when you should have waited for the Lord and didn't? Did you learn the lesson well, or will you have to suffer again? Most of us will not come to understand this vital truth without experiencing many failures.

From a human perspective, it would have been much easier if we could have found a Lead Pastor quickly here at Our Lord's. However, God in His sovereignty knew we were not ready to receive a new pastor. He needed to prepare us. Also, and as importantly God needed to prepare the man He had chosen to come to OUR LORD'S. I believe the two year wait was necessary so that God could transform our hearts, prepare our minds, and raise our desire to bring the expressions of grace to our community, as Dale said last week. The wait was also necessary so God could prepare Roc and Bev to act on the message that they needed to prepare for one last great adventure. Did we feel restless at times? Oh yes, and maybe many times. Did we feel like we were moving out of our comfort zone? Does it feel like there is some uncertainty about the uncertainty?

Are all these events good for us? Remember how the parent eagle made life uncomfortable before the baby eaglets left the nest and learned to soar? I believe God used this time of waiting to make us uncomfortable. But he also used this time to teach us to trust in Him. We wondered what God was doing as people left and members of the ministry team left their positions. All those experiences made us feel very uncomfortable and created uncertainty. But in the midst of those experiences I believe our trust in God was deepening. During the wait we were learning and preparing how to live as a Transforming Community of Life for the Glory of God and Devoted to Jesus Christ.

Let me share what happened in microcosm with the Lead Pastor Search Team during this time and what I also believe was happening in our midst at the same time. When each member was invited to serve on the committee we came with our own agendas, our own opinions, our own self-wills. We started as a committee, but ended up as a team because God has melded and molded our

hearts and minds and differences so that we love each other and we can speak honestly with one another in love. Only the working of the Holy Spirit could transform us from a committee to a team. As the Holy Spirit worked in the committee during the time of waiting, I believe He was working in each one of us to become a Transforming Community of Life for the glory of God.

Did God demonstrate His faithfulness during these two years of waiting? I say “YES!” with an exclamation point. Let me point out how he was faithful.

As I mentioned earlier, He brought us Jim Van Zetten as interim pastor; he brought us music ministry leaders, Leah Howlett and then Bryan Bradley; He brought us men and women in as leaders and chairs and members of committees; He continued to keep a committed staff, Charlotte Foreman, Vicki Khoury and Carla Peters; He brought us Natalie Blasdel to lead the Youth ministry; He brought us Jennifer Selke and Stacie Miller to lead the Children’s ministry; He brought us Rene George and Janet McEwin to lead Community Life; He helped us meet our budget when from a human perspective it seemed impossible; He brought us Larry Sharp to lead worship; He brought Ronnie Ladd and Chris Jones to lead Communion; He brought the preaching elders to step in the gap; He brought each one of you so that you could minister in ways that we don’t even know about, but God does. Isn’t our Sovereign God awesome and faithful?

Does everything that happened here at Our Lord’s during this waiting period make perfect sense? I would say a resounding NO!! My mind wonders in bewilderment, sometimes confusion, sometimes discouragement and sometimes even frustration and anger about my life and about our lives together at Our Lord’s But then I am reminded that we serve a Sovereign God whose ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts higher than our thoughts. I can’t help but be reminded of how Paul responded to God’s Sovereignty when he was dealing with difficult circumstances. Paul says in Romans 11: 33ff: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his Counselor?” “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen. “Let us respond in the same way to our circumstances.”

Let me also stress and emphasize that during this waiting our Sovereign God was also preparing Roc and Bev to join us as a people of God at Our Lord’s. God was preparing the Bottomlys’ and us to soar into a new adventure of ministry that He is calling us to in our next phase of life together. After trusting and waiting on a Sovereign God are we ready to join in ministry with Roc and Bev and Soar with the Lord?

## SOARING WITH THE LORD

Isaiah 40:31: "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." How often we've quoted and sung this verse, but I wonder, are we really ready to soar on wings like eagles? And what does that mean to us, after all?

How will Roc and Bev and we as part of Our Lord's soar with the Lord in this great adventure that God has laid on the heart of Roc? Following his message on June 29, 2008, Roc shared his heart and direction for Our Lord's:

He told us that he is joining us with our desire to be a Transforming Community of Life for the Glory of God who is devoted to Jesus Christ and who is about the work of being and making disciples. He told us that the name "Our Lord's" is prophetic.....he said it describes what God longs for this place to be and that is **Our Lord's** Community Church. This is a place where people from the community, whatever their background, in terms of spiritual life, can come to a place where they can meet him.

We will learn how to be a disciple in the world where God has called us to live and then help others to be disciples. Then corporately, we will be intentional about finding specific places where we can communicate the love of God – through schools and other community organizations. We already do that globally – that is missions...but we will make disciples locally...you do not need to leave your community to be a disciple.

Roc shared three ways that we will be about the business of being and making disciples. 1) As a Congregation, we come together to worship; 2) As a Community, we will provide a strong training time in the Sunday School hour to do life and ministry. 3) In Companionship – Everyone in a disciple or "D" Group. This small group from 2-6 men or women will meet together to help each other find daily time to be together with God, to learn how to be a disciple and to help each other respond to those around us who need Christ.

Roc reminded us that Love for God begins with the Love of God. We need to do everything with God in view and we need to do everything with all of our hearts, minds, strength. Life is all about God. He also reminded us that we need to love God passionately.

As we soar together with Roc in ministry and discipleship we should do it with passion. The Lord our God is a God of Passion. The scripture is rich with evidence that our Sovereign Lord freely expresses His feelings, and He fully expects us to express them as well. Roc in his book "The Promised Power" makes the following comments. "Whichever part of the Bible we examine, it is clear that God wants our life with Him to be passionate. He wants us to be *intellectually* passionate—in awe and eager to understand all He has revealed

about Himself and His plans through His Word. We are to love Him with all of our minds. He desires us to be *devotedly* passionate—willing to obey, ready to sacrifice, and determined to persevere at all costs. We are to love Him with all of our strength. And He wants us to be *emotionally* passionate—full of irrepressible joy, deep affection, and enthusiastic wonder. We are to love Him with all of our hearts.”

God’s purpose for passion is to help make us whole. He wants to complete the picture of our spiritual lives and all the wonderful plans He has for us. I believe that as we join Roc and Bev we can anticipate that God will give us firsthand experience with Him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our Sovereign God has taught us during the time of waiting to trust Him as He called Roc and Bev and us to prepare for a great adventure. God is leading us into a powerful, joyful, and complete relationship with Him.

I would like to close this sermon with words written by Dr. Bob Moorehead that spoke to my heart and I pray that it will speak to yours. I modified some of the words slightly to make it relate to Our Lord’s.