

# Launch & Don't Look Back

Jan 9, 2022 // Rock of Grace // Kinsman Campus

A big THANKS to Jessie for her sermon last week. I thought it was so GOOD and many of you told me how God spoke to you through her so let's give Jessie a hand - THANK You for using your gift Jessie!

Quick Serve Team Member Highlight

I'm celebrating Luba E. today.

Luba serves our little ones downstairs and does an amazing job making it fun and interactive teaching them God's Word. Let's THANK LUBA (get that gift bag on stage Jordan)

Vision Week Melted into a week about Stepping into the call of God on your life and the idea of significance / making an impact for Jesus before your time on earth is gone.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Jessie taught last week...**

**His law is love and launching into a new life - a life with God - starts with surrender to God.**

Apart from God, we really are selfish. Before our sinful nature is replaced with the Divine Nature that Paul talks about, we are driven by selfish motives and self-preservation. We are content with serving only ourselves and only GOD can give us a new heart!

But what happens once we give our hearts to God?

Hopefully, we join a community of believers - a church like Rock of Grace and join a Life Group where we can read the Bible and discuss the scripture together.

At some point though, we will be given a chance to really prove our faith in God - not just to leave sin behind but to say YES to what God has in front of us - ways to serve others. Vision is saying "yes" to the unknown with God - adventures with God. When God gives you a vision for your future - a way to exercise your faith in Him - there must be no plan B - no going BACK!

## **BURN THE SHIPS**

On February 19, 1519, the Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés set sail for Veracruz, Mexico with an entourage of 11 ships, 13 horses, 110 sailors, and 553 soldiers. The indigenous population upon his arrival was approximately five million. From a purely mathematical standpoint, the odds were stacked against him by a ratio of 7,541 to 1. Two previous expeditions had failed to even establish a settlement in the New World, yet Cortés conquered much of the South American continent.

What Cortés is reported to have done after landing is an epic tale of mythic proportions. He issued an order that turned his mission into an all-or-nothing proposition: Burn the ships!

As his crew watched their fleet of ships burn and sink, they came to terms with the fact that retreat was not an option. And if you can compartmentalize the moral conundrum of colonization, there is a lesson to be learned: Nine times out of ten, failure is resorting to Plan B when Plan A gets too risky, too costly, or too difficult. That's why most people are living their Plan B. They didn't burn the ships. Plan A people don't have a Plan B. It's Plan A or bust. They would rather crash and burn going after their God-ordained dreams than succeed at something else.

**There are moments in life when we need to burn the ships to our past. We do so by making a defining decision that will eliminate the possibility of sailing back to the old world we left behind. You burn the ships named Past Failure and Past Success.**

**We often don't step into God's PLAN A because we keep PLAN B as an option.**

You burn the ship named Bad Habit. You burn the ship named Regret. You burn the ship named Guilt. You burn the ship named My Old Way of Life. Let's be really honest. There are even friends that gotta go when you say "YES" to the things of God. There are friends that may even call themselves Christians - but when you're around them, you're compromising, you're sinning, you're going *back* to old way of life. Gotta let those friends go!

**Philippians 3:13-17**

**13 Brothers, I do not consider myself perfect. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

Turn to 1 Kings 19

**1 Kings 19:19-21**

**<sup>19</sup> So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. <sup>20</sup> And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said,**

**"Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" <sup>21</sup> And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him."**

Talk about intense! Elisha left NO PLAN A

That is precisely what Elisha did when he turned his plowing equipment into kindling and barbequed his oxen. It was his last supper. He said good-bye to his old life by throwing a party for his friends. They shared a meal and shared stories into the early-

morning hours. But it was the bonfire that made it the most meaningful and memorable night of his life because it symbolized the old Elisha. It was the last day of his old life and the first day of his new life.

Burning the plowing equipment was Elisha's way of burning the ships. He couldn't go back to his old way of life because he destroyed the time machine that would take him back. It was the end of Elisha the farmer. It was the beginning of Elisha the prophet. Stop and think about the symbolism of what Elisha did. Elisha literally cooked his old way of life and ate it for dinner. And forgive me if this is taking the analogy too far, but after digesting it, he got it out of his system. He eliminated the possibility of going back to farming by eating his own oxen and burning his plowing equipment.

It doesn't matter whether you're trying to lose weight, get into graduate school, write a book, start a business, or get out of debt. It's how you start a ministry, join a ministry leadership team,

**The first step is always the longest and the hardest & the most important! It takes faith - trusting GOD and HIS ability to work! And you can't just take a step forward into the future. You also have to eliminate the possibility of moving backward into the past. Launch and don't look back!**

That's how you go after goals.

That's how you break addictions.

That's how you reconcile relationships.

You leave the past in the past by burning the ships.

Comments Here

Now what did Jesus have to say about this idea of "All or nothing" when it comes to our faith? Turn with me to Luke 9:57

**LK 9:57-62 "As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." <sup>58</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." <sup>59</sup> To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."**

**<sup>60</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup> Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." <sup>62</sup> Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."**

***The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Lk 9:57–62). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.**

**"DON'T LOOK BACK!" Jesus says! Kill the cow and burn the plow and burn the ships! Remove plan B of your old way of life! Say "YES" to the things of God!**

Today's sermon could also have been given the title: *Kill the cow and burn the plow*

But I felt that was a bit strong. =)

But really. When we read that story earlier about the prophet, you need to know that Elijah serves as a type of Christ. Many of Biblical heroes in the Old Testament do. They point us to another human but not just any human - hero - the GOD-MAN Jesus, the Son of God himself!

The prophet burns down the opportunity to go back to his old way of life when he sees that GOD has given him the opportunity to step into the GOD-way of life, the life of faith! EliJAH serves as a type of Christ and WE are a picture of the one who follows the prophet and receives the mantle! WE are responsible to burn the plow, burn the ships, destroy the option to go back to your old way of life.

Now please understand that this IS a metaphor. If you used to own a meth lab, please do not go immediately home and blow it up! Lol There could be people in there. LOL

But really, we need to take action with our faith!

**Faith always involves action. Always.**

So Elisha serves as a type of Christ; Elisha is a picture of US his protégés. Jesus comes on the scene some 600 years later and tells that anyone who starts out in faith but then gives up isn't fit for the Kingdom.

I think so often we don't step into the future God has for us because we're too busy looking at the past. We're too pre-occupied with regret or

Now if you know the story of Elijah, you might know that Elisha, his spiritual son did exactly twice as many miracles as his spiritual dad. Interesting.

What did Jesus say to us in John 14 about about ability to follow in His footsteps, not only in character but in power?

**JN 14:12-20**

**<sup>12</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.**

**<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**

**18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.**

**We need to be reminded that our identity is being God’s child. That security and identity, what I call “sonship” gives us the courage to take risks and move forward into the unknown on adventures with the Holy Spirit. Launch and don’t look back!**

Now I want to challenge you today in three ways.

**1st I want to invite you to cut your ties to your past sinful habits and say YES to the things of God - holiness, purity, integrity, holiness, prayer - a life of friendship with God!**

**2nd I want you to challenge you to pray for the sick - to believe God can do ANYTHING - to launch into a life of faith - an adventure with God - and DON’T LOOK BACK!**

**3rd I want to challenge you to explore the ideas within your heart - the specific promise of God within you!**

I’ve written a book called **The Process of a Leader**. I wrote for it for every person that wants to step out in faith and do something big for God but just feels incapable, unworthy and unfit. If that’s you - if you feel like there’s something inside of you - a promise for your future - a vision - a product you’re supposed to launch at work, an invention, an app, a ministry, a non-profit, a chess-club tournament WHO KNOWS - I want this book to encourage you! To give you the courage to START. This book is not so much about HOW to lead while it does have some tips on that - it’s primarily about WHY you lead and how to start. We look at Gideon and Joseph and Jesus and we find a process they went through - that purified them and brought about GOD’s plan for GOD’s glory. It’s available on Amazon and it will be available in the foyer today in a few weeks if you’re interested. **It also makes a great coaster. (Pause)** if you just like have a lot of condensation on your glasses at dinner, just grab 6 books - you know - enough for each glass at the table - then place them beneath each glass. You’ll save that dining table and it’ll look GREAT.

No really if you can’t tell I’m a bit passionate about this.

The absolute most FUN thing I get to do as a pastor is talk about what GOD is doing in someone’s life. When someone wants to get lunch or coffee to talk and sometimes they say “I have an idea.” My ears perk up! I love seeing believers step out in faith to do something for God! It can be an idea for the nursery - for a special needs non-profit, for a foster-care ministry - for knitting winter hats and gloves! WHATEVER it is if YOU are passionate about it and can use it for GOD’s glory - LET’S GO!!!!!!

**There is a specific talent that GOD has given YOU to steward. That talent and gift is what you USE to take you into your promise. In fact, I have a hunch there are a few talents with in you, SOME are sitting dormant and it’s time to awaken them!**

Example

Josh Moran - drums

Julia Felts - kids, keys, singing

Ray - sound

Ray and his wife helping with Communion so Happy could go help out in Warren and share his story of drug recovery there on occasion.

Kayla our Kids Min Leader in Warren was praying “GOD WHAT IS NEXT!?” And we had a need for HER GIFT and HER PASSION!

### **YOU are NEEDED in the KINGDOM of GOD!**

**To say YES to God's new future for you, you often have to say NO to the past and to what you know / are comfortable with.**

So often we are looking in the past and living with regret and playing the movie over and over and over in our mind of what could've gone better and what went wrong. You can not launch into God's plan for your life if you live in the past in your mind.

Take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ! Sure, we can and should learn from the past. But don't let your past stop you or distract you from going into the promised land - the future God has for you!

**Now what do you do when you've got that hunch - that idea that might be from God? It starts with believing that God CAN speak to you.**

### **You must first BELIEVE and IMAGINE with God.**

John 10 says that He's our Shepherd and we hear His voice! He teaches us to imagine the future. He teaches - His Spirit retrains our brain to STOP dwelling on the negative - the negative in your life - the negative in OTHER people's lives - and start THINKING with God. I'm amazed at the number of Christians who are so preoccupied with where other's have failed them that they are blind to the fact that they're missing the moment they're IN. Focus on what GOD wants YOU to do.

THE WAY you serve in God's Kingdom will look different for everyone. You can serve within the vision of your church - we have a 10 Year Vision to transform trumbull county through worship services, life groups and church planting. There's likely a place you can serve in our vision - BUT there's also a unique gift on your life that goes beyond the walls of Rock of Grace. It's a Kingdom thing!

You must FIRST learn to image with God - to dream with God - to get HIS heart. If you want to be a chef, you must first imagine being a chef. Imagine preparing incredible dishes. Imagine the ingredients coming together perfectly as an expression of God's design. If you're a chef, you need to imagine what the plate will look like when you're serving it to that hungry customer. Once you imagine it, you can start combining the ingredients.

If you're an architect, designer or home-flipper. You walk into a dilapidated building and begin to image the walls a new paint color. You walk not an empty property and you imagine the building. You start to imagine a table, some chairs. You imagine a couch, a lamp, a fireplace, maybe some beams. Once you imagine all your ideas, you throw away your lest favorite, keep the best, then begin to make your plans.

**What you don't realize is that once you just take a TINY step in the right direction - a step towards your promise - God starts to show up and confirm if it's Him!**

184 Park Ave

God used Marc See and Justin Goist and 3 dreams my wife had to confirm that this was God leading us.

Kings Home Properties was born after this home! The mission: Buy a home. Give a home. 10% of profit goes towards orphan care globally. I have SO MUCH JOY in sending a check to a Missionary friend the Cukows in Shanghai, China! They take in orphans who are missing a limb - kids who are discarded like trash. They give him a home, dignity and a family! Most importantly, the GOSPEL. I took a BIG risk to buy that home; but GOD was so faithful with tenants for 4 years and now a buyer a couple weeks ago. It's a beautiful home ... now.

We had to imagine what the walls would look like - imagine what the rooms could look like with new flooring, new paint, new appliances...

WHO KNOWS what's in you!?

Just think. **You're the Wright brothers** (PIC ON SCREEN) and you're trying to imagine that crazy idea of yours called a plane in the air, actually carrying you! You squint your eyes on the beach. You're trying to tune out the comments by your cynical friends "It'll never work! Wilber! You're kidding! Men don't fly, man!" You squint even harder. "But what if we make the wings look like..." "What if we get enough speed to lift off...?"

Leaders in the sports world have known this principle for years. Winning coaches almost always help their team imagine the play working - in the locker room. They teach their players to imagine themselves running the route, crossing the goal line. They know the power of the imagination - sadly, I wish more Christians knew it too.

Just think. **You're Abraham and God says "Look at the stars! (VIDEO LOOP of amazing stars)** I'm going to make your children as numerous as them. Now. Get up, fold up your tent and start walking." "Where God?" "I'll show you. Just walk." He could've thought "Sarah, I imagine, we'll lose all our livestock in that move. I imagine, I'll never recoup all that I've built over the years.... It won't work." Instead, he lived by faith and imagined what God had promised. The rest is history.

God then told him "look at the sand. I'm going to make your grandchildren and offspring as numerous as the sand!" He lived in a desert people!

God was giving him a VISION BOARD!

This is the POWER of writing down the vision and making it clear and placing it before you.

**A vision that isn't written down often isn't accomplished.**

**Habbaukuk 2:2...**

**"Write the vision and make it plain so that he who hears it can run with it..."**

God knew that every day Abraham would be seeing sand and that sand was a picture of the promise. God knew that every evening and night, Abraham would look up and see the stars, reminding him of the promise God put on His heart. **God made the promise of his future a picture he could see and understand. He can do the same thing for you!**

I know about 25 to 35 of you are business owners in here. What if God was speaking to you about land lately? Maybe ... You know the plot of land. You know what it'll look like. You can almost see it. A friend even told you about a dream they had that confirmed this new building

idea. BUT! You let your faith stop right there! Don't let your lack of faith and imagination stop you.

Fear will stop you from saying "yes" the purposes of God on your life.

\*When you say "But Pastor Jordan, wisdom matters too." Of course it does. But when you read Proverbs and Luke 19, God's definition of wisdom is very different than ours. Wisdom according to God is the fear of God and obedience to His voice. Wisdom according to man might be different than wisdom according to God. Sometimes we lay down in fear and call it wisdom.

Sadly, for many business owners or potential ministry starters, non-profit start-ups, the dream of God ended before it began. Someone said something hurtful to you. So you stopped. Really. You're going to let a human, one of 7 billion, someone who is NOT the creator stop you from doing what the CREATOR told you to do?

**Everything is created twice; first in the imagination, then in reality.**

**Philippians 4:8-9 "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."**

A **peace** of God (which is supernatural) will always accompany a God-given bold dream, even if it's risky.

**Let's look at Simon Peter's call to ministry.**

**Don't let your past mistakes stop you from your future victories.**

**Jesus still wanted Peter on His team and Jesus still wants you!**

JOHN 21 \*Jordan Maybe just tell the story bc it's too long to read. Memorize it and tell it.

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. <sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup> When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### **Jesus and Peter**

<sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” Jn 21:1–15

It didn't make sense for Simon Peter to leave his fishing business behind to follow Jesus. But something inside of him leaped at the sound of Jesus' voice! **When you see your calling, and when you find JESUS in it, your spirit will leap, even if your mind can't comprehend how.**

“A double minded man can expect to receive nothing from the Lord...”

### **Philippians 3:13-17**

**13 Brothers, I do not consider myself perfect. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. 15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained. 17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.**

Listen to the passion in Paul's voice, the sense of urgency ....

They've encountered the Risen Lord!

They, like Mary Magdalene have said “Lord, Lord, I love You I just want to serve you!”

They, like Peter and John responded to Jesus when asked “Are you going to leave me too?”

Peter and John responded Lord, where else can we go? You alone have the words of life.”

WOW!

They found that their hearts burned with passion when Jesus spoke!

They can't escape the idea that their life was meaningless and empty and BORING before they came to know Jesus!

But when Jesus came He LIT their hearts on FIRE!

**Our mission as a church is this: We are *leading people to follow Jesus together.* That never changes. **But our vision, our preferred picture of the future - is that we Transform Trumbull through worship services, life groups and planting churches. It's the tangible stuff that we do Monday through Sunday.****

## If it's 11:50 or earlier, Ushers pass out the 10 Cities Booklet

OUR 10 CITIES VISION BOOKLET. There is no PLAN B.

You have a hand-out - a small booklet that you were given on your way in. Can you open that up please?

Screens - Correspond with the Booklet

ASK (WHAT DO I WANT THEM TO DO?)

### 6 Things About Your Promise & Purpose

- **It will scare you (it'll require others bc it's so big; this builds humility and character)**
- **It solves a conflict in your heart. Your conflict is often related to your calling.**
- **It brings a blessing to others. "Ambition is when you... Vision is when you..."**
- **It may be a ministry here at Rock of Grace**
- **It may NOT be a ministry here at Rock of Grace \*While I think everyone can serve at ROG somewhere, your main gifting & purpose may not be in church; may be in marketplace or school board or somewhere outside this building.**
- **It will likely (not always) be somewhat obvious to others bc it's your gifting**

### We have 4 initiatives for #TransformTrumbull

If you visit [TransformTrumbull.com](http://TransformTrumbull.com) you'll see our progress but I wanted to share some of our progress with you today!

We believe Christians should be the most loving people in society; therefore it's up to the church to solve the orphan crisis in America and up to US to solve it here in our county. We set a goal of giving #EveryChild a safe and loving home in Trumbull County - specifically - seeing 140 kids placed in foster care then reunited with mom and dad once they recover OR adopted by 2030. \*We've discovered that loving and helping mom and dad is just as needed as helping the kids.

We've seen 36 kids come into care and another 27 given respite in Rock of Grace families! WOW! God is on the move!

Our 2nd Initiative is concerning drug and alcohol addiction Reducing overdoses deaths from 307 to 250. We believe the Gospel changes us from the inside out and we've seen him restore many in our congregation from addiction to a life of joy and meaning!

Last year, we wanted to see 4 new Life Groups began and we did! As you can see, there are now 16 Life Groups for you to experience genuine friendship - where you can commit to community like the early church did. Let's follow Acts 2 and meet in homes and discuss Jesus and how His Kingdom changes our lives.

We wanted to see 25 people give their hearts to Jesus and we saw 30!

In 2022, let's get even more bold!

Let's pray for 4 new Life Groups to begin - for discipleship and community to take place  
Let's pray and believe for 50 people to give their hearts to Jesus! With 3 campuses now,  
I believe that's definitely possible! Don't forget WHY we plant churches.

1. To pattern our church like the early church - believers in ACTS were leaving comfort to plant churches and ...
2. Reach Lost People with the GOSPEL
3. Assignment that came to me through 2 different people then confirmed a 3rd time by our District Pastor John Wooton.