

TITLE: **Core Value #7: FAITH-FILLED RISK**

SERIES: Core Values (7 of 7)

Text: Various

Balboa Community Church

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INTRO

Today we come to the end of our series on Core Values. We have been studying the core values of Balboa Community Church, which are in reality the core values of every believer.

Core values are the things we believe that should directly impact the way we live everyday life.

Let's view the first 6 core values...

1. Lost people matter to God. He wants them found.
2. Prayer is the primary work of God's people.
3. Everything we have belongs to God. We're His stewards.
4. Knowing & obeying God's Word is fundamental to all true success.
5. Completing the Great Commission will require the mobilization of every fully devoted disciple.
6. Without the Holy Spirit's empowerment, we can accomplish nothing.

And today, our final Core Value is: **FAITH-FILLED RISK. Achieving God's purposes means taking faith-filled risks. This always involves change.**

Risk-taking is a major part of the world we live in. Whether it's starting a new business, gambling in Las Vegas, playing extreme sports, perhaps getting married... or just changing jobs. Life is full of risks.

And some people THRIVE on the risks they take. It gets their adrenalin going! Like these Wingsuit Base Jumpers.

[Video]

The very first wingsuit base jumper died in his first attempt. In 1912 a Frenchman jumped off the Eiffel Tower with a combination of parachute and wingsuit and was killed outright when he hit the ground head first.

One month ago on May 24, 2017, a 42 year old American wingsuit skydiver jumped from a plane at 13,000 feet over Lodi, California. He died when he failed to follow emergency procedures when deploying his backup parachute.

WingSuitFly.com lists the fatality rate for skydiving at around 1 death per 100,000 jumps. For BASE jumping it is closer to an estimated 1 death per 500+ jumps. So it is roughly 100-200 times more fatally prone to risk than skydiving.

Why do they do it - if the risk is so high? There have been many theories put forward, but you heard Neil, on the video, say:

"We're all scared before we jump. There's an element of fear. But afterward, the feeling of joy is so great, you're willing to deal with that."

They are willing to take great risks for the joy that follows. (Or maybe RELIEF...)

Our core value today says, "Achieving God's purposes means taking faith-filled risks."

The Bible is filled with men and women who took great risks when following God. Those who chose to remain comfortable - stay in their own comfort zone - you don't read about them. They were not the kind of people that God chose to use.

Instead, God chose to use men and women who would take great risks in following Him - no matter what - simply because they had complete faith and trust in God.

People like David... Moses... Esther... Joshua... Nehemiah... Peter... Mary... Paul...

Today we will look at two of them. Both of them are found in the book of Genesis.

TWO EXAMPLES OF RISK TAKERS

1. Noah

Genesis 6:9-22 - ⁹ Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it...

¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you..."

²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him. NIV

God created the earth and he saw how mankind was corrupting it. Earlier in Genesis 6 it says that God saw how great man's wickedness had become and He was grieved - His heart was filled with pain.

But He found one man who was righteous - Noah. And He devises this incredible plan to rid the world of evil, and yet save His creation.

He told Noah to build a boat - a flat-bottomed rectangular vessel 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high with a displacement of 43,300 tons.

I can't imagine Noah's reaction. A boat? Seriously, God? I've never built a boat in my life! And you want me to build how big?

Imagine the ridicule he must have endured. The peer

pressure. It didn't make sense. It wasn't logical. There was no science behind it. There had never been a flood before.

And yet, because Noah was a righteous man - because he trusted God completely - he took a huge faith-filled risk and followed God's instructions. He built an ark. Noah was a man who understood what it meant to take faith-filled risks.

2. Abraham

Our second example from the Bible is Abraham.

Genesis 12:1 - The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. NIV

Genesis 12:4 - So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. NIV

Talk about risk. God did not tell Abraham where he was going before he set out on his journey. There were no travel brochures to look at. No maps. He couldn't Google Canaan to find out what his new home would be like.

He had no idea how long it would take to get there. And Abraham was 75 years old. I'm sure at that age he would rather just stay put and forget about all the hassles of moving his family, servants, flocks and herds.

And yet Abraham obeyed God. No argument. No delay. He just obeyed.

Abraham was a righteous man who took great faith-filled risks.

From the lives of these 2 men we can learn a lot about faith-filled risks.

FAITH-FILLED RISKS...

1. Don't make sense

God told Noah...

Genesis 6:14 - So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. NIV

Incredible! An ark? What's an ark?

And God told Abraham...

Genesis 12:2 - "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. NIV

Why Abraham? Why would God take this unknown man in a far away land and promise to build a great nation out of him?

It just doesn't make sense. Kind of like jumping off a 9,000 foot peak with a wingsuit.

To the rational mind, what God asked them to do doesn't make sense. But God always has an incredible plan that looks far into the future and we humans can't begin to figure it out ahead of time.

If you're like me, you want to know: 1) WHY you're doing it; 2) WHAT benefit it will have for you; 3) WHAT will the end result look like? 4) WILL I be able to get it done?

These are all questions that we ask before we undertake something.

But FAITH-FILLED risk is not dependant on variables that we can control. When BASE jumping off a cliff, you take every precaution to insure a safe landing down below: Wind speed and direction, degree of slope, safe footing for the launch, etc.

But faith-filled risk is entirely dependent on God - not your calculations. That's why we call it FAITH-filled risk. It is absolute faith in God - not in the equipment, not in your own calculations, not in your own abilities.

Faith-filled risk is complete confidence in God's abilities.

In reality, faith-filled risk is really no risk at all, because it is dependent on God, and God never fails. God absolutely NEVER fails.

Robert Jaffray was born into a wealthy family in the 19th century. His father was the owner of the Toronto Globe, which is still today the largest newspaper in Canada. His father groomed Robert to take over for him when he retired.

But Robert sensed God's call to serve Him in China. He risked everything - he gave up everything - his own father refused to help him. In the end, he died in a Japanese prisoner of war camp near the end of World War II.

Robert Jaffray took a faith-filled risk... and became one of the most influential missionaries of The Christian & Missionary Alliance. His impact on world missions is still felt to this day.

Taking a faith-filled risk doesn't make sense to most people. Why give up all the wealth and luxury?

But God's plans are greater, deeper, superior, and beyond human understanding.

2. Require obedience

Genesis 6:22 - Noah did everything just as God commanded him. NIV

Genesis 12:4 - So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. NIV

Obedience to God is the key to taking faith-filled risks.

Imagine if Noah said, "No. I won't build an ark. That's silly, God." Then God would have completely destroyed the earth and perhaps started over.

But because Noah was righteous, he obeyed. And because he obeyed, God did an amazing thing. The earth was saved. And we still have a rainbow to prove it.

What if Abraham had said, "No, God. I really can't leave my family. They need me. My Dad's getting along in years and Mom would be heartbroken if we left."

But Abraham obeyed. And while it probably didn't make sense to him at the time, God indeed blessed him and he became the father of a great nation - God's people Israel.

Obedience to God is required when taking a faith-filled risk. You may not know what the end result will be, but if God is in it - you will be successful.

That's hard, because I might have to step out of my comfort zone to obey God. I might have to give up something - like Robert Jaffray - in order to obey God.

Yes, obedience might not be easy, but it will...

3. Produce kingdom results

Look at what happen because Noah obeyed and took a faith-filled risk:

Gen 9:1-3 - ¹ Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. ² The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. ³ Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. NIV

Look at this world, Noah. All the plants and animals, all its resources - they're all here for you.

And God blessed Abraham. Not only did he make of him a great nation, but through his descendants came the promised Messiah, the Savior of the World, Jesus Christ.

The only way we can produce kingdom results is by taking faith-filled risks. Playing it safe will accomplish little for God.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is a drive in most of us to play it safe. Safety and comfort are the goals of most people - even Christians. We want a nice church we can go to when we want to... to meet some nice people, make some nice friends, and enjoy life.

If that is your goal, they you most certainly can accomplish that all by yourself.

But if you want to do something great in the kingdom of God, then it will require that you take a faith-filled risk.

More than 50 years ago a group of people moved to the north side of San Diego to plant a new church - Balboa Avenue Alliance Church. That was a faith-filled risk.

Today God is still calling us to take faith-filled risks for His kingdom. What is God asking you to do by faith? What person is he asking you to share Christ with or invite to church? What ministry is He calling you to serve in? What new thing is He asking you to do... but you are reluctant?

Ephesians 3:20 - Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. NIV