

The Adventure
The Heart of a Warrior
Quest Spring 2023
Session 6

This week's lecture is based around a simple idea from *Wild at Heart*: "Life is not a problem to be solved; it is an adventure to live." Now, I'll admit, the first time I read that, it sounded a little bit cheesy. I thought not of the masculine heart, but of the countless Instagram posts from 20-something-year-old girls of a sunset on a beach and the quote, "Not all who wander are lost." But when you think about it, this is the culmination of what we've been talking about for the past five weeks. We've been encouraging you to live the life of a warrior, to go fight the battle, to go pursue the beauty, to heal the wound, and to be the truest version of yourself. All of these endeavors, at their core, are an adventure.

And that's good, because the reality is that you and I were called and created for an adventure. The human heart demands an adventure. Life without adventure is bland, boring, and monotonous.

But what is an adventure? And what does that practically look like for us today? Pierce and I have recognized that for younger men, this series can be very exciting, like we are finally discovering what it means to be a true man of God and to have the heart of the warrior. For other more seasoned men, these lectures can seem like they are for someone else. And that may feel especially true this week. Because, let's be honest, the idea of "adventure" seems a bit foreign. Not many of us have the ability to go backpacking in Europe for 3 months. Chances are, you are not going to sell everything you own, ditch your job, your responsibilities, and your family, buy an RV and start a cross-country road trip. You are not going to spend a year hiking the Appalachian Trail by yourself. Those are certainly adventures, but they are not live options for us.

So what's the solution? What is an adventure? For many men in our modern age, born with a heart for adventure, we settle for its cheap counterfeit: fun. I believe that far too many young men, even a little bit older than me, settle for an adventure in video games. Instead of getting out of their house, exploring, taking risks, and doing something worthwhile for the Kingdom of God, they are slaves to their controllers and their computer screens, spending countless hours on fake battlefields with fake weapons and fake wars. Or, maybe it's not video games. Maybe it's a TV screen or online forums or chartered fishing trips. When I thought about the most adventurous thing I've done recently, I honestly thought about how my wife's Ford Expedition has a sport mode, and on the rare occasions I get to drive her car, I zoom down Research Forest going 7 over the speed limit. These things are fun, but they are not an adventure.

Now don't get me wrong, there's nothing evil or sinful about fun. God has created an amazing world for us to enjoy, and fun is an essential rhythm that we should all adopt. But these activities take the adventurous heart and settle for a cheap and easy replacement.

A true adventure, the adventure that you and I are called to, isn't just about a foreign land or a video game or going fast down a hill. Instead, there are three questions to ask about the God-given adventure we are called to: **First, does it scare you?** When was the last time you were asked to do something for God that scared you a little bit? Maybe you thought you were too unqualified, too busy, or too uneducated. Maybe it was to say a prayer at a gathering, maybe it was to go on a mission trip, or maybe it was to lead a Quest table. Every adventure needs to come with a healthy dose of fear. **Second, does it excite you?** God does not call us to adventure just to punish us or make us do something that we don't want to do. Instead, an adventure must be exciting, must bring butterflies to our stomach and uplift our hearts. Finally, **does it glorify God?** If you make it through the adventure, who's name will be glorified? Yours, or God's? If you can answer these three questions, then it might be the adventure that God is calling you to.

From the very beginning of the story of humanity, we can see that God inviting men into these kinds of adventures.. In the first 11 chapters of our Bible, God sets up His redemption plan for humanity. Adam and Eve eat of the fruit and fall from grace, fall from perfect harmony and relationship with God. And ever since that moment, a real moment in time, God instituted His radical rescue plan for you and I. When the world became too sinful, God chose Noah and His family to be the rescuers. Then, when sinful humanity tried to become like God and build the tower of Babel, God destroyed their works and scattered all of His people. And then, in Genesis 12, we are introduced to God's next agent of restoration. From this man's family, all the nations of the earth would be blessed, including you and I. His name was Abram, and his story began not with a blessing, but with an adventure.

Genesis 12: Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God promises Abram, who will later become Abraham, some amazing things. He says that Abraham will become a great nation, he will be blessed, his name will be great, and that he will be a blessing. All of those promises come to pass, but they happen on the other side of an adventure.

And Abram's adventure gives us somewhat of a blueprint for what our adventure should be. God says that he needs to leave his country and his people. Leave everything comfortable, everything that he has ever known, and go to a land that he has never seen. A land of promise and a land of blessing.

Question set 1

From Abraham's adventure story, I think we see three main elements of the adventure that you and I are called to live.

First, Risk

It's easy to read Abraham's story, because we know how it turns out. We know that God provides for him in an unknown land and that he eventually does become a father, with descendants as numerous as the stars. But Abraham didn't know these things. He was told by God to leave everything comfortable and known and head out into the discomfort, into the unknown, into a place that he had never seen before.

And I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty terrifying. I'm not a big risk guy, and I like to play it safe. I don't water ski or snow ski, extreme sports are my worst nightmare, and I'm the kind of guy that stands at the bottom while everyone else rides the roller coasters.

Every adventure inevitably involves risk. And while that can sound rather terrifying, when you add God to the equation, risks are much more manageable. [John Eldredge provides a pretty helpful graph that you'll see here](#)

Quadrant 1 people have a high dependence on God, but do not like taking risks. I call them the **Safe but Spiritual**. They're spiritual, sure, and they may come to church because their wife wants them too. They'll write a check every month, maybe even lead a prayer before a meal. Eldredge says that these men justify their cautiousness by calling it spiritual. Ouch. Or, on the flipside, these men love control, and they practice their religion as tips and tips and techniques for helping them control the world. These types of men will stop attending church if they don't "get anything" out of the sermon, and are likely to quit praying when they feel that God is not answering their prayers exactly as they would like.

Quadrant 2 men have a low dependence on God, and low risk. Boring Agnostics. They are safe, like the men in Quadrant 1, but they have no spiritual disguise for it. These are the types of guys who coast through life, never ruffle any feathers, but live a life of quiet desperation, like we talked about in week two. I would venture to say that the majority of men in your office, the majority of men that you encounter at the grocery store or in a restaurant, would fall into quadrant 2. Because society has said that this is the best way to be. Just play nice, be nice, you don't need God for any of that, and you'll do just fine.

Quadrant 3 men have a low dependence on God, but love taking risks. These are the Wild Cards. You love to have one of these guys in your friend group. You never know what they're going to say, they always have the best stories, and they live life just for the thrill of it. These are the entrepreneurs, the gamblers, the extreme sports addicts. They will often marry multiple times, lease their sports cars, never put down roots anywhere. These kind of guys love adventure, but it's a godless adventure, not the kind that we were made for.

Here's a little preacher trick: Usually the last option is the one that you want to be.

And that's the case with Quadrant 4. These are the Godly Warriors. Quadrant 4 men have a high dependence on God, and are willing to take risks. Put another way, they are willing to take risks because of their dependence on God. Eldredge says that these are the King Davids, the Apostle Pauls, the Christopher Columbuses. Men who are willing to take great risk because they are walking in step with God. I think of those of you who regularly go to Central America or Africa. You go into some fairly dangerous places, not really knowing what will happen each time. But you take that risk in God's name, trusting that He will guide your steps and direct your paths.

Now, risks are important, but we are called to take risks with wisdom. Weighing the calculus is important. Here's some very practical advice Jesus gives in Luke: **Luke 14:28-32: For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.**

We do not take risks for the sake of taking risks. That is not wise. But the adventure that you were created to live will not come without risks. So why do we avoid them? Very simple, our excuse for not taking risks is our desire for control.

About two years ago, pretty soon after my family and I moved to The Woodlands, I became enthralled with primitive camping. Now what I actually mean is that I was enthralled with guys on YouTube that went primitive camping. If that's a new term for you, primitive camping is just camping without all the luxuries—bathrooms, power hookups, etc. In need of an adventure and some time away from the stresses of life, I decided that I was going to go out into the woods for 24 hours. No real agenda, hopefully no one else around, just me, myself, my thoughts, and of course, all of my stuff.

I went out to the Lone Star Hiking Trail up in Montgomery, and I was ready to go. I had everything I needed for this primitive camp on my back: A sleeping bag, a pillow, a tent, a fishing pole, a lighter, fire starters, a small stove, a cup, some freeze dried meals, plenty of snacks, my Bible (of course, because I'm a pastor), an external charger in case my phone died, a pistol in case I came across any snakes or bears, a physical map, and all the toiletries I would need for 24 hours. Not exactly a primitive camp. And as I hiked 6 miles into the woods, I felt it. I was so weighed down by everything that was on my back that I had to take breaks just to set it down. And why did I bring all that stuff? Because I wanted as much control as possible.

The same is true for you; **the more control you seek, the more you will be weighed down.** That goes for our general life adventures, but also for your family, your work, the economy. The more you try to control your children, the more weight you have on your back. The more you try to control your boss and employees, the more weight you have on your back. The more you

think that you can control the stock market, the more weight you have on your back. And all that weight prevents you from moving forward into the adventure that God is calling you to live.

Jesus says this in **Matthew 6:34**: **“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”** That worry, that anxiety about tomorrow, weighs your spirit down.

Question Set 2: What quadrant are you in? What is the last risk you took?

The second essential element of an adventure is this: bravery

After Abram is given his marching orders, look how he responds: **Genesis 12: 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.**

It seems so matter-of-fact to me. He just ups and leaves, at 75 years old. No children, no map, no plan for the future. But Abram believes a God who has called him and promised him that he will be the father of multitudes in a land he has never seen. This is the heart of bravery.

All throughout the Bible, God encourages and commands His people to be brave. **Joshua 1:9: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Deuteronomy 31:6: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Psalm 31:24: “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”**

As with most instructions and commands in the Bible, this is much easier said than done. We want to be brave and to have the heart of the warrior, but when troubles arise, when obstacles present themselves, sometimes we back down. Eldredge says that when faced with the unknown, when God puts something in our hearts that seems adventurous, we have three options:

First, we can shrink back and reject the invitation to the adventure. We can decide that someone else should do it, that we’re not qualified enough, and it will take too much time, too much effort, too many resources that we don’t have. We go back to living our everyday life that is predictable and completely avoid our opportunity to be brave.

Second, we can compromise, trying to find a middle ground where we still maintain some level of control. We see this in the life of Abraham. Although he is promised that he will be the father

of many nations, he is old, Sarah his wife is old, and she is barren. So, they make a compromise. After all, God said that he would be a father of many nations, just not by whom. Abraham and Sarah decide that he will sleep with Hagar, their servant, in order to further the family tree.

That's where the trouble began for Abraham, and that's where your trouble will begin too. The temptation of the human heart is the same temptation in the Garden of Eden: "Did God really say?" We try to find compromise, when the best, and most faithful option (again, you're smart, you know this) is the third:

Third, when faced with the unknown, we can simply venture forward with God. We might not know how the details will play out or how it will all come together, but that's not a good enough excuse for missing the adventure that God is calling you to.

And that's the third element of a true, God-given adventure: Trust

I think I've shared it before, but my favorite passage in the Bible, that was absolutely instrumental in my call to ministry, is **Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."**

When God called me into ministry at age 13, I had plenty of reservations. I had plenty of excuses to reject this invitation to a life of adventure. I was too young. I was too sinful. I was too smart. I had no experience of what it actually meant to be a pastor. And then, by divine intervention, God led me to this passage from Proverbs. I had to realize, and so do you, that our understanding and God's provision are sometimes polar opposites. We serve a God who makes a way in the wilderness, who bends the natural order, who does things that are so far beyond and above our finite brains' understanding that we can never make it seem rational.

Look at God's instructions to Moses in **Deuteronomy 10:11-13: (to Moses) 11 And the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.'**12 **"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?**

I love that last line: God says to follow Him, walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him with all your heart and soul, obey His commandments, and it will all be for your good. That's the kind of adventure that God is calling you to. And our church is in desperate need of men who are willing to recapture the adventure of living the Christian life. We are in desperate need of men who will trust God more than their own understanding and take the risks necessary to recapture your adventurous heart and advance the Kingdom of God.

You might have heard the old story before, but it's said that there was once a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks would often happen. Fog would emerge in the harbor, blocking sight of the jagged rocks that dotted the cove. On this dangerous beach was a small, crude, simple lifesaving station. The building was a simple hut, just had one boat, but a few people were willing to keep watch over the sea by day and night.

This little hut, and the people that manned it, saved countless lives. They didn't do it for glory or for fame, they just did it out of a sense of duty and adventure. After many years of this operation, the fame of this little station began to grow because so many lives were being saved by the brave men who manned it. Articles in the local newspaper began to vividly cover each life saving mission. People began talking about the station in the local diners and pubs.

The allure of the station, of bravery, adventure, and saving lives, brought many more men seeking this kind of work. The station began to grow. But some of these new members were unhappy that the little hut was so crude and poorly equipped. They wanted it to be a bit more comfortable for the people that were being rescued. So, they replaced the medical cots with nice beds, bought new furniture and some nice nautical decorations for the wall.

The formerly simple hut now became quite comfortable. So comfortable, in fact, that many of the new members wanted to leave its walls. They decided it would be much easier and more efficient to outsource the rescue missions and hire life boat crews. The mission of the little hut remained the same, they still wanted to save lives, and they still did. But after a while, the rescued sailors began to dirty up their nice station. They'd trudge in dirty, sandy, often sick from the cold water. So the Trustees and property committee decided that instead of dirtying up the station, they should just build a shower outside. That way they wouldn't have to be exposed to the dirtiness of the rescued sailors.

At the next administrative committee meeting, there seemed to be a split among the members. Some said that they needed to suspend life saving operations for fear that the station would get too dirty and be filled with people who weren't members of the club. Another faction said it was primary to the mission, that they wouldn't have a station if it wasn't for the purpose of rescuing shipwrecked sailors, and so they left, creating their own new life saving station.

They say that if you visit that seacoast today, you won't just see one station, but dozens of them. Nice, exclusive clubs where the members are comfortable, warm, and have a great community. The coast hasn't changed; there is still fog and jagged rocks. But unfortunately there's no one around to help rescue the shipwrecked sailors.

You're smart enough to read between the lines, aren't you? The danger of the modern American church is that we can become so comfortable in our pews and rooms that we forget our mission and purpose. But to reclaim that mission and purpose, we need men who are willing to go on an adventure. You can wait around for someone else to come, say it's for people with more time, more energy, more years ahead of them, or you can enlist, say yes, and take the next step of faith into the unknown. Or, you can make the excuse that you don't know

what the adventure looks like. And guess what? I can't tell you. But what I can tell you is this: that for you, just like Abram, on the other side of your adventure is your blessing.