

## LANDSLIDE

Week #3 of the 6-Week Series, "The Songs of Life"

May 8, 2022

With Rev. Richard Maraj

### Lyrics – "Landslide" (Fleetwood Mac)

*I took my love, I took it down  
I climbed a mountain and I turned around  
And I saw my reflection in the snow-covered hills  
'Til the landslide brought me down*

*Oh, mirror in the sky  
What is love?  
Can the child within my heart rise above?  
Can I sail through the changin' ocean tides?  
Can I handle the seasons of my life?*

*Mmm Mmm I don't know*

*Well, I've been afraid of changin'  
'Cause I've built my life around you  
But time makes you bolder  
Children get older  
And I'm getting older too*

*So, I've been afraid of changin'  
'Cause I've built my life around you  
But time makes you bolder  
Even children get older  
And I'm getting older too*

*Oh! I'm getting older too  
So, take this love, take it down  
Oh-oh, if you climb a mountain and you turn around  
If you see my reflection in the snow-covered hills  
Well, the landslide bring it down  
And if you see my reflection in the snow-covered hills  
Well, maybe the landslide'll bring it down  
Well, well the landslide'll bring it down*

### Message:

How many people have ever really wanted something in your life, but you struggled for a long, long time trying to make it happen? Anybody ever struggle for a long time? How many people have a hard time dealing with change? Anybody resist change or don't like change? [Congregation titters] And last one: Anybody ever doubt yourself? Second guess yourself? [Congregation laughs] And wonder if you really had it?

You know, one of the facts of life that is really obvious, but we still don't like to hear, is the fact that the road to success and happiness is a very bumpy road. No matter what it is that we're seeking to attract and create in our lives -- whether it's a fabulous relationship or a fulfilling career, greater finances,

emotional well-being or spiritual fulfillment, or some better version of any part of our lives -- whatever it is that we desire or seek, there will always be problems and struggles and self-doubt.

And the thing is: I think that all of that is just a natural part of the process of "becoming," of growing and achieving.

I found a quote recently, and it said, *"If you are going down a path that has no obstacles, it's probably going nowhere."* [Congregation laughs] Because I really believe that facing the challenges; facing the uncertainty; making mistakes; things not working out the way we would like it to; feeling lost or stuck; or losing our confidence ... And the learning that goes with that: the adjusting; the bouncing back; the digging deeper is all a part of the process that makes us better and brings out our greatness.

And you can call it a "dark night of the soul." You could call it "choice point." You can call it a "come-to-Jesus moment." But the fact is: we all hit that wall at times where we start soul searching. And we start wondering: *"Is this what I'm really supposed to do? Is this ...? Do I really have what it takes? Is this going to work out? Am I really going to get over my past and all the mistakes that I've made? Can I really rise above all my problems? Will I ever really find true love?"*

It's a place where we feel afraid; where we feel overwhelmed; where we are uncertain and we have no idea what to do. And this emotional crisis, and these deep feelings, I think are captured beautifully in this song. It shares those emotions beautifully. And we all resonate with them at some level, because it's a part of the angst of fear. Of self-doubt and uncertainty. And a path that we all have to walk if we want to move to a higher level of success, a higher level of achievement, and a higher level of fulfillment.

Today we're in Week #3 of our annual six-week series called, "The Songs of Life," where we use songs that we know and love to help teach us lessons about how to live our lives more fully. I'll bet every one of us has some song that inspires us; some song that got us through a tough time; some song we use to help us cry and grieve. Songs can make us feel deeply; think deeply. They can transport us back to the "good old days" and memories and joyful times. And I really believe that they can also teach us great lessons in how to life.

Week #1 we looked at "This Is Me," from *The Greatest Showman*, about self-acceptance and being proud of who we are. Last week we looked at "Lean On Me," by Bill Withers. And it was about being vulnerable and utilizing each others' support: leaning on one another, because it's the only way we can get further and make it through this life with greater joy and fulfillment.

Today we're going to look at the 1974 hit, "Landslide," written by Stevie Nicks. And obviously, it makes complete sense that she was going through a tough time at the time. She and her then-boyfriend, Lindsay Buckingham, were both aspiring singers and musicians and writers who hadn't hit it big yet. And they had money issues, and that was putting some strain on the relationship. And the relationship was putting strain on their career. And they were having a tough time just paying the bills.

Then he kind of hit it, where they recorded an album, and they met some "big wigs." And they thought their career was about to take off. And then they cancelled his album. And so that drop of disappointment was really, really tough. And she was working as a maid and a waitress at night; working on music during the day. And they hit that point of wondering: "Is this really worth it? Is the relationship going to make it? Are we ever going to take off in our career?"

So she went and visited her mom and dad -- her parents -- in Phoenix. And the dad was the president of the Greyhound Bus Company, and said to her, "You know, you've been giving this a try for a long time. Why don't you just give it six more months, and if it doesn't work out, I'll pay to send you back to school. In fact, I'll pay for anything that you want, if it doesn't work out in the next six months."

And so she kind of agreed. And then amazingly, Lindsay was going to go away and do some traveling with some musical band for a while. And somebody loaned them a beautiful cabin in Aspen. And so before he left, she said at the cabin, *"We're going to go to the top. We're going to make it to the top!"*

Now she didn't quite believe it fully at the moment because she was struggling and wondering about it. But she really wanted to have that faith and that belief, because that was something that was a huge passion. She was so overwhelmed and wondering if it would work.

And so there she is in this cabin. And she's looking up, and there's snow-capped mountains; beautiful trees covered in snow. And she's thinking, "*That is so gorgeous But you know what? If there was an avalanche, it would all come down.*" And so, I thought that was a really cool thing that she saw that the beauty of nature is kind of like life. It's gorgeous; it's beautiful; it's wonderful. But you never know if something might go wrong. You never know if things might fall apart. You never know if things just don't work out the way you had hoped.

And "Landslide" is really a song about the fear and those emotions and feelings of feeling overwhelmed, and wondering if you can make it through the challenges and changes and struggles while you're trying to achieve your goals. It's a song about walking through that uncomfortable process; walking through that valley; walking through that "dark night of the soul" to come out with the strength and fearlessness we need to achieve our dreams and desires.

So this morning we're going to look at three wonderful life lessons that can be gained from the song, "Landslide."

You know, the interesting thing: she did not grow up near mountains at all. And she was not a mountain person. But with the mountains that were there, it kind of became a symbol in the song. Because a mountain is a powerful symbol. I mean I loved when she said:

***I climbed a mountain and I turned around ...***

Mountains kind of represent something strong to overcome; a goal; something to achieve. We always want to reach the top of the mountain. We always want a "mountain-top" experience. There's something about a mountain that represents some great achievement or goal or something we would like to rise to and accomplish.

And one of the things is: as long as there are mountains, there will be the possibility of landslides ... and with snow, of course, avalanches.

And so the first message I think in this song is **YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB**. So what is the mountain that you want to climb? She knew what hers was: she wanted to be a great songwriter; she wanted to be a great singer and a great musician. She was very, very clear about what her passion was: what drove her; what she wanted to strive to achieve; what she wanted to put all her energy on.

And the fact is, sometimes we don't know what we want. Sometimes we aren't clear. We're really good at saying, "*Hey, I don't want this,*" but we can't always tell exactly what it is that we want.

And so an important part of this is: what mountain do you want to climb? What is the thing that you want to achieve? Right now in your life, what is the thing that would bring you the greatest joy and happiness and fulfillment in your life? I love how clear she was about the mountain she wanted to climb; about the thing that she wanted to become; about the work and the passion she wanted to invest her life in.

And so my question is: How clear are you about what you want? How clear are you about what is next for you in your life? The next thing that will bring your life a closer step toward what you truly desire?

And I like when it says:

***When I saw my reflection in the snow-covered hills ...***

And I think that is an invitation that we have to ... There are things we can think of that we think would be good to want, but the question is: What do you want? What is your soul here to do? What is the thing -- the gift that you're here to share? What is the difference you're here to make? What is it in you that wants to come forth?

I love in Proverbs 29, Verse 18; it says, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish. But happy is he who keepeth the Law.*"

And I think "*happy is he who keeps the Law*" means that we are creators and we're here to have a vision. We are here to bring forth and to create something greater. When it says, "Where there is no vision, the people will perish," it means when you don't have a direction and a sense of purpose, you know what perishes? Our passion perishes. Our joy, our motivation; those are the things that perish when we don't have clarity of the mountain we want to climb or the things that we want to create. And I believe the opposite is true! That where there is a vision, people prosper. People progress. Because it gives a definite channel to direct and focus our creative powers and energies. It gets the juices flowing when we know what we want, and we're passionate about what it is that we desire.

So what do you want in your life? What is that mountain you want to climb? What is that thing that you are meant to do that your soul is calling you to do?

And I believe we have a responsibility, not just to come up with some nice job that'll earn us some money. I think we're here to do something specific and greater than we realize. That it is not just for you; it is not just for your family. But we are here to bring forth something to fulfill our souls and to do the work that God has called us to do.

I love in the Gospel of Thomas: it says, "*If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. And if you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.*" And it sounds harsh, but I think it's absolutely true. We have something in us we are meant to express and share and manifest and bring forth for people. And that is what makes life fulfilling.

It's this idea of knowing what you want or what mountain you want to climb is a lot bigger than we realize. The question is: Are you clear about what you want? Are you clear about what it is you want to climb and achieve?

So the next thing in this song I think is about **FACING THE INNER STRUGGLES WE HAVE OF OUR OWN INNER FEAR.** Of our own inner doubt and our own inner challenges about change and changing.

You know, some of the verses share clear that, at this time, she feels overwhelmed. At this time, she doesn't feel very confident. At this time, she doesn't know the answers; she doesn't really know what to do. And she starts contemplating and throwing out these questions, looking for answers; looking for hope; looking for strength. Here are some of them:

***Oh, mirror in the sky, what is love?***

***Can the child within my heart rise above?***

***Can I sail through the changing ocean tides?***

***Can I handle the seasons of my life?***

We can all feel that! We have all felt that at some point! Some self-doubt and not sure what to do. And not sure if we've got what it takes to do it. But here's the thing: asking those questions ... you know the only place we can get the answers are within ourselves. There is a Spirit and an Intelligence to guide and show us. There is a Spirit in us that has implanted in each of us a purpose and greatness and talents. We just forget sometimes!

So when we answer those questions, it's about an inner reflection of talking to your soul -- talking to your spirit -- and let that wisdom and intuition and knowledge within us begin to remind us that we have a spirit of power and love and self-discipline. That we are amazing, powerful spiritual beings here with a purpose and blessed with gifts and abilities. We have to get that conversation inside; only we are the ones who can give ourselves the answer or let ourselves get reminded and reassured of the very truths of who we are and why we're here, and what we're able to do.

And then the next lines I love! It says:

***Well, I've been afraid of changing,  
'Cause I've built my life around you.***

So when she's talking about this -- talking about her relationship with Lindsay and their desire to make music -- that's what she's only been focused on. All of us in our lives tend to focus on something: our family, our career, whatever. And sometimes when it isn't going well, we hit a place and wonder: "Am I really afraid to change? Is it time to hold on or is it time to move on?" And sometimes we can allow fear to keep us stuck in a place that may not serve us any longer. And sometimes we can make fear scare us and keep changing things.

And I'd love to tell you what the answer is, but only you can give yourself that answer of finding out what's the right answer for you. Is it time to change? Is it time to change and move on? Or is it time to hang on, hang in there?

I saw a quote this week. It says, "Life is like a book. Some chapters are happy; some chapters are sad; some chapters are exciting. But you never know, unless you turn the page, what the next chapter has in store."

So where are you in your life? Is it time to make a change? Or is time to hold on? And, again, only you can answer that question. But it's an important question to ask. Doing that inner work and figuring out what's going on, and allowing our soul to help us, is a vital part of this process.

And then the next one says:

***But time makes you bolder;  
Even children get older.  
And I'm getting older, too.***

And sometimes life is saying, "You know what? We're not going to be here forever. We are on the clock, and you've got to get clear and you've got to be bold."

So where in your life are you being called to be bolder? Where in your life are you being called to be clearer? Where in your time are you getting to a place where you're saying, "You know, I've only got so much time left; who do I want to spend it with? And what do I want to spend it doing?"

To me, this is the money shot of this whole song: is about how do you handle that inner process of self-doubt and wondering and questioning.

Do you know what I find interesting? Is that she was in a cabin for three months. She's struggling, and somehow attracted a place where solitude and quietness and reflection and contemplation and prayer could take place.

Interesting: you want to know what the most interesting thing is? She wrote this song in five minutes. [Congregation laughs] But it wasn't five minutes; it was the months and years of that process that facilitated. That because she was willing to walk through it, it brought forth that song smoothly and easily.

So are you willing to do the inner reflection of the struggles you're going through? Facing your fears? Looking at how you're working with change: are you letting it scare you or keep you stuck? And finally, are you willing to reassure your self-doubt that you're an amazing spiritual being here to do great and wonderful things?

Last thing in this song I think is the importance of **KEEP DOING THE WORK** and to **KEEP ENJOYING THE CLIMB** as you move up the mountain of achievement or the work you're here to do.

Stevie Nicks loved writing songs! It was a tough process of writing a little bit, sitting back or playing a little music. And you're going back and forth. And it's a dance! And she loved what she did! She didn't just have an idea of, "Hey, I want to be a successful musician." She was willing to do the work.

And one of the other things about life is: success takes work. It takes work! We all wish it was easy, but it takes work. It is just the fact of life. And one of the things is: she did all the work to write this song and, three months later, got a phone call from a band that was in flux, always looking for a new singer or guitarist. Of course, the band was Fleetwood Mac. And they were struggling, and what did she bring? She brought "Landslide" and "Rhiannon," and their careers took off. And why? Because she was willing to do the work. The work!

You know, I love watching comedians, and I love hearing interviews with them. And when you hear comedians, all they talk about ... They aren't like, *"Hey, I make \$10 million now!"* They talk about the struggles they had to get there. The tough clubs where they got heckled. The hard times that they all went through. That's what they love! They loved workshopping jokes in little clubs, and how they improved and honed their skills and their jokes. And, to me, I love that! The most successful people love the work they do. And they don't mind doing it; it's a passion and it's a joy.

And my question is: What's the work that you love to do? And are you willing to do it, and do it with joy? Do it with passion, investing your heart and your soul in it? I believe it's not just the work we do, but it's the spirit in which we do it. When you bring your joy and your heart -- even if it's a struggle. I guarantee you: Thomas Edison wasn't smiling doing all those experiments! [Congregation laughs] But I bet you his soul was on fire! I bet you his passion was there.

Anything we want in life takes work. Phoenix Suns are doing exceptionally well. [Congregation whoops and applauds] Aren't they? And I know the game's at 12:30, and we're going to go fast for the next little bit to get there, so ... [Congregation laughs] But here's the thing. Here's the number one quote that the coach, Monty Williams, tells the team over and over again. And he's been saying for it two years. Here's what he says. He says, *"Everything you want is on the other side of hard. You want to win? Are you willing to work hard? You want to win? Are you willing to put everything you've got into it all the time? When we play badly, are you willing to learn? Are you willing to keep practicing?"* Because that is the truth. It takes work! And it takes the investment of your joy and your passion in the work you do.

You know that phrase people always say: "Life is a journey, not a destination"? You know why they say that? Because it's true!!! [Congregation laughs] You don't just wait for 10 years until you're a success; you enjoy it now.

Every one of us is being called to make a commitment to, not just do the work, but do it with joy. Do it with heart. Do the fact, *"I get to do this!"* We get to do this and live these lives! We get to participate and shape our own lives; is that not something to get jazzed about?!? We should be enjoying the journey every single moment!

So a doctor, a lawyer ... [Congregation laughs] ... a priest and a little boy are on a journey on a little plane. And they had some trouble, and the pilot can't fix it. And so he grabs a parachute and he says, *"Hey! Grab a parachute and jump out! This thing's going to crash!"* He jumps out.

Unfortunately, there are only three parachutes left, and there were still four of them. So the doctor grabs a parachute and says, *"I am a doctor! I save lives! I must live!"* And he jumps out.

And then the lawyer says, *"I am the smartest man in the world. And my brilliance will bless people, and they will be thankful for me; I must live!"* And he jumps.

And then the priest looks at the little boy with love and kindness in his heart. And he said, *"Young man, I've lived a good life. I've been so blessed! You are so young; please take the last parachute. Go enjoy your life and live in peace."*

And the little boy hands back the parachute to the priest. And he says, *"Don't worry, Father. The smartest man in the world just jumped out with my backpack."* [Congregation laughs]

Okay ... I just want to make sure you enjoyed the journey of this talk! So, um .... [Congregation laughs]

The road to happiness and success is a bumpy road! And the truth and reality of life is that there can always be landslides. There are always going to be risks; there's always going to be a chance that you fail. Always going to be a chance that things don't work out. Always a chance that things fall apart. But we don't let that stop us!

The first lesson from this talk is you've got to have a mountain to climb. What is the mountain that you want to climb? What is the thing that you want to do? And the second thing is to do the inner reflection of your personal struggles with fear and self-doubt and change. And finally, do the work! Enjoy the climb! And enjoy the journey.

These are the words of wisdom and the powerful life lessons from this week's "Song of Life":  
"Landslide."

God bless you all! [Congregation applauds]

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