



Flying Through the Clouds

It's August already! We've officially been here in Alaska for 1 year. There's been so much that's happened, and we've learned so much about Alaska and the needs here. We've met a lot of people and heard their stories. Life is unique here, but the remedy for broken people is still the same here as anywhere.

When we got to Alaska a year ago, we were just in time for the South-Central Alaska Campmeeting in Palmer, Alaska. So, to reconnect with people we met before, meet new people, and be spiritually recharged, we went again this year. We wanted to fly the AWA plane to save money, but we were dependent on good weather, so we left a day early when the weather was slightly better. It wasn't great, though, so I kept checking the weather leading up to our departure, and I talked with the weather briefer multiple times before our flight, and things were looking doable. Things were marginal, but if things got bad, we would have options, and,

most importantly, the weather through the mountains looked good. When the clouds are low, as on the day of our flight, there is a mountain pass that can be followed, allowing flight below the clouds and between mountain peaks and glaciers. It's an awe-inspiring flight as long as the weather is agreeable enough to allow blood flow to your knuckles. We loaded up the plane with supplies for camping out at the conference campground, as well as a few items that needed to be returned to the church conference from the junior camp at Camp Polaris. We then taxied the plane over to the gas pumps, filled up, and checked the weather one more time before departing.

Flying out over the tundra, we stayed under the clouds. We carved our way around rain showers to maintain visibility, keeping in touch with air traffic control for a little oversight and company. It's good to have as much help as you can when flying out over the



expanse of nothingness. We pass over a few small villages, more tundra, low between some hills, over a big lake, and then we get to the mountains. The weather improves as we fly below snow-capped peaks and mountains, but once we reach the other side, the cloud layers start to drop. We start following the coastline up the Cook Inlet. Then the clouds and precipitation appear to go all the way to the ground, creating an impenetrable wall for our non-instrument-approved aircraft. We circle around, hoping that the conditions improve, with disappointing results. One option is to fly out over the water, away from the bad visibility over the land. Still, the option I deemed safer was to land at a gravel airstrip I could see along the coastline. I circled above it, and then we swooped in for a landing. We taxied to a little pull-off area and hopped out. We looked around, and in a few minutes, a man drove by in an old pickup truck. I explained our situation and said that I hoped we weren't being a bother. He said we weren't hurting anything and that it wouldn't be a problem. We thanked him, and he drove off to attend to his work.

In about 20 minutes, the weather had passed enough to continue up the coast. We took off the narrow strip that looked more like a country road than an airstrip and turned North toward Palmer. We called up ATC (air traffic control) again and started maneuvering through the cloud layers. ATC helped let us know where other air traffic was and where we could go if need be. Finally, we were within a few miles of the airport, but where was the airport? I figured it was just beyond the cloud in front of us. We headed toward the cloud, and as we began to crest it, the airport appeared straight ahead. We were lined up for a straight-in landing on runway 10, and since there was no other air traffic in the sky, we slipped in and parked. In the rush of things, I had neglected to arrange transportation from the airport to the campground, which was 6 minutes away. I texted a few people I knew and tried to find an Uber, but to no avail. Just when I was scraping the bottom of the barrel for ideas, I got a text back from Pastor Tobine Dodge from the conference. He was able to come pick us up even though it was getting close to 10 pm. The sun sets late here in the summer, so we weren't in the dark, but we were thankful we got a ride despite the late hour.

We were able to meet up with friends, make new ones, and be inspired to serve God and people. We shared some of the things we've been doing in Dillingham over the past year and what we want to do in the future. Just like our flight into campmeeting, our trip to and our time so far in Alaska haven't always been without

their challenges. But just because we face challenges doesn't mean it's over or that we're completely off track. If we didn't have challenges, we'd never get on our knees. Sometimes, even in challenges, we have a hard time getting on our knees, do we not? May it not take an earth-ending event for us to humble ourselves in God's presence. Let's look at challenges as a reminder that we need God's guidance, provision, and maybe even correction. May we remember to walk humbly with our God and seek to be a blessing in the sphere He's placed us in, believing that He'll provide for our needs and enable us to fulfill His will.

Thank you all for the support that you've given us here by praying for us, encouraging us, and faithfully donating to us. If you'd like to watch a video summarizing our first year in Alaska, visit the @thefixfamilylife Instagram page to check it out and see more content. Love you all!



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