

7th March 2021 6 pm Healing and Refreshing: Flying

Led by Ann Gibbons. Talk by Ann, Meditation and prayers by Lynda Howells

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Introduction

[Ann:] Hello everyone, and welcome to this Healing and Refreshing service: Sundays at 6pm from St. John's Church Kenilworth. I'm Ann, and with Lynda we will be leading you through this time together. A prayer to begin.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray that You will come alongside each one of us tonight, as we seek to come closer to You, to trust You in whatever situation we find ourselves coping with. Thank You that when You take our hand, You never let go. Amen.

Our theme tonight is flying. And we have chosen a verse from Isaiah 40:31¹

Those who trust in the LORD will find new strength.
They will soar high on wings like eagles.
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

We're going to sing our first song now, 'My Song is Love Unknown'.

Song: My Song is Love Unknown

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
Oh who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take frail flesh and die? | 3. Sometimes they strew His way,
And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
And for His death they thirst and cry. |
| 2. He came from His blest throne
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed-for Christ would know:
But Oh! my Friend, my Friend indeed,
Who at my need His life did spend. | 4. Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst Him rise. |

1 [NLT: New Living Testament translation]

5. They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they save,
The Prince of life they slay,
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes,
That He His foes from thence might free.

6. In life no house, no home,
My Lord on Earth might have;
In death no friendly tomb
But what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was His home,
But mine the tomb wherein He lay.

7. Here might I stay and sing
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King!
Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend, in Whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

Short Talk: Flying

[Ann:]

A quick and easy word to say, 'flying'. We humans are not best at physical flying at all, despite Lynda saying she always wants to float down on a wire from the church ceiling to make an entrance. Maybe we ought to go on one of those zip wires that are popular now.

So we turn to some real experts: the flying Red Arrows. Watching a programme some years ago now about this team, it brought to our homes the precision and dedication and bravery of the team flying, and their mechanics on the ground. They are a close-knit group. They practice and practice in the office how their manoeuvres will be done way before they get into their aeroplanes and go up into the sky. How they do the manoeuvres at at least 400 miles per hour is both mind-boggling and humbling in equal measure. Yet sometimes things go wrong. They have to support one another through difficult times, but then have to return and get on with the job in hand. They are precision themselves along with their aeroplanes.

The majestic eagle can teach us much about rising above the storms of life and learning to soar. A few eagle facts:

- Eagles can see fish hundreds of feet above the water;
- They have colour vision;
- Their eyes are nearly the size of our human eyes, but they are four times sharper;
- Eagles have enormous wingspan and
- They can detect a storm approaching and set their wings so that the wind will pick up and rise it above the storm.

There is a story written by Chuck and Nancy Missler that goes,

An injured eagle landed in a barnyard, learned to walk and cluck like a chicken, drank from a trough, pecked earth and food and resigned himself peaceably to pecked earth on the ground.

A visitor to the farm asked why such a bird was behaving like a chicken, and the farmer explained that he had been injured. The visitor said the bird was made to soar in the heavens, not scavenge on the ground. So he picked the bird up and launched it into the air. After a few flaps, the birds returned to the ground, shook himself and carried on feeding with the chickens.

Again, the visitor took the bird to a rooftop. And this time the same thing happened. The bird must have been getting a bit fed up by now, being thrown up in the air. The next day the visitor returned, as he was so concerned that this bird was not living as it was born to.

So he took the bird up to a mountain and said to it, "Don't you understand?"

You weren't born to be like a chicken. Why would you want to stay down here when you were born for the sky?" So, making sure the bird was facing the brilliant light of the setting sun, he powerfully heaved the bird into the sky, and this time, the eagle opened its wings, looked at the sun, caught up the thermals rising from the valley, and disappeared into the clouds of heaven.

When storms of life come upon us, we too can rise above them, lift ourselves up above adversity, by setting our minds and hearts towards God. We can allow God's power to lift us above them. Storms or trials of life can actually help us in our walk of faith, though they may not feel like this at the time. This is because they build something in us that will be part of our lives forever. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 16 to 18,

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

God's children were born to fly. They were created by a loving God to soar. He has called them to live in the heights. Yet too many have huddled together in the barnyard, content to be comfortable with the crumbs.

When an eagle flies above the storm, it is, in a sense, overcoming it. But it uses the strength of the storm to rise above it. This is one thing that God wants us to do, use adversity for gain. We need to learn from trials, to grow from experience and be made better. James chapter 1, verses 2 to 4 [NLT] reads,

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. **3** For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. **4** So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Several verses show us that trials are to be confronted and endured, a lifetime of learning: 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 5, Hebrews 12 verse 7.

I think the lifetime of learning is very ongoing for me.

We sing again now. We're going to sing 'Be Still for the Presence of the Lord'. And Lynda will then lead us in her meditation.

Song: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear;
In Him no sin is found;
We stand on holy ground;
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here.</p> | <p>2. Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire;
With splendour He is crowned;
How awesome is the sight,
Our radiant King of light;
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.</p> |
| <p>3. Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace;
No work too hard for Him;
In faith receive from Him;
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.</p> | |

Meditation: Flying

[Lynda:]

Flying: imagine for a moment, hoping in the Lord, hoping. I think, "What for?" For what I think I need? Well, maybe what the Lord knows I need.

Flying. At the moment all this word conjures up is the thought of loss of freedom. Living through this pandemic, flying off into far-flung places for new experiences, holidays, and excitement, rest and fun, seems to be a far-off dream. Living through a lockdown, confined to our homes, flying just seems to be a distant memory from the past. The word 'flying' represents a sense of freedom which is not happening at the moment. Our wings have been well and truly clipped. Many of us are feeling weak, vulnerable and unsure of the future.

Renewing my strength – if only! Life can be such a roller-coaster at the best of times. Waking up, getting out of bed can even be a challenge at times. It's good in bed, hidden away under the duvet, so that the world can find me. Hope is the last thing on my mind. But wait, think: who am I putting my hope in? Who am I trusting to help me fly? To be honest, at times relying on my own state of mind, emotions and thoughts is a recipe for disaster, a failure. But at other times self is reasonably OK.

Oh, my Lord, the choice is mine. You have given me that freedom to choose. Oh, that I would choose You, trust You. Easy words to say, but what do they mean to me? Not always easy to believe: trusting a Man I cannot see. And yet You tell me in your Word You speak to me in Your Word, You speak to me through others. You tell me that if I hope and trust in you, I will fly. I will soar on wings like eagles. Oh, imagine the freedom not to be bound by chains, chains which I've put around myself, chains which stop me from being free, being free to be the person that you want me to be. In my own strength, I struggle like a butterfly caught in a net, flapping its wings but getting nowhere, wearing myself out both physically and mentally. Imagine an eagle flying, its wings open in full flight. The power, the strength, the freedom to fly without limits or boundaries.

Father God promises this for us, if only: if only we could believe Him and trust Him more than we trust ourselves. Watch the birds as they fly: soaring, diving, following each other, taking us in turns to lead, gliding, and sometimes allowing themselves just to be carried along on the air currents. Life is like this: ups and downs, peaceful times, others stormy. But don't forget: through it all, God never changes. His Word for us is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Yes, I'm sure we all cause Him sadness, especially when we ignore Him, cut Him out of our lives. But He never, ever stops loving us. One day we pray this pandemic will be conquered, and we will be able to meet and hug one another. In the meantime, we can still fly in our hearts, trusting Father God with our lives day by day, and through that trust we may fly to places we would never have dreamed of: adventures and challenges beyond our wildest dreams.

Watch the birds as they fly from branch to branch, free; sometimes they sing, sometimes they squawk. But they are free, they're not bound. Oh, that we could fly freely without the chains and bonds which bind us, bonds of fear, self-doubt, failure, the lack of courage, no self-worth, feeling unloved, judged. Heavenly Father doesn't see us like this. We are His beloved children. He sees beyond our human frailties. Oh, that we would let go of the chains which bind us and free us to fly.

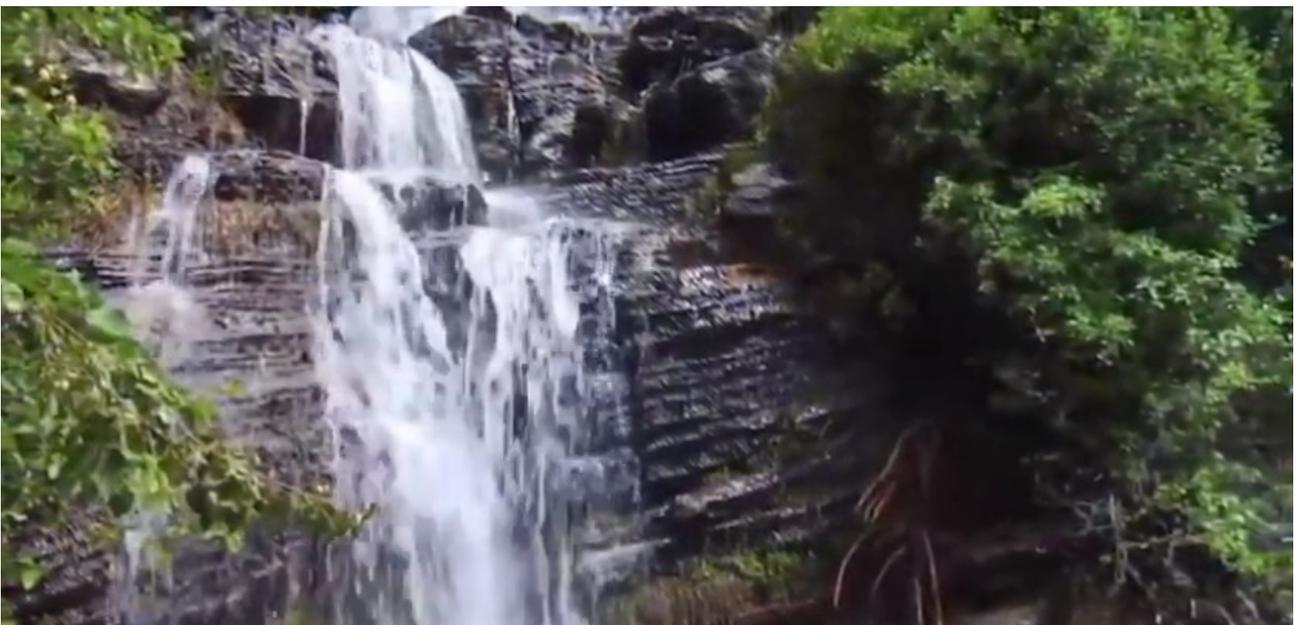
So let's start afresh, not perhaps by trying to fly to the top of the tree, but flying gently amongst the lower branches, allowing ourselves to be free, giving ourselves permission just to be. God's time is not always our time in life. And

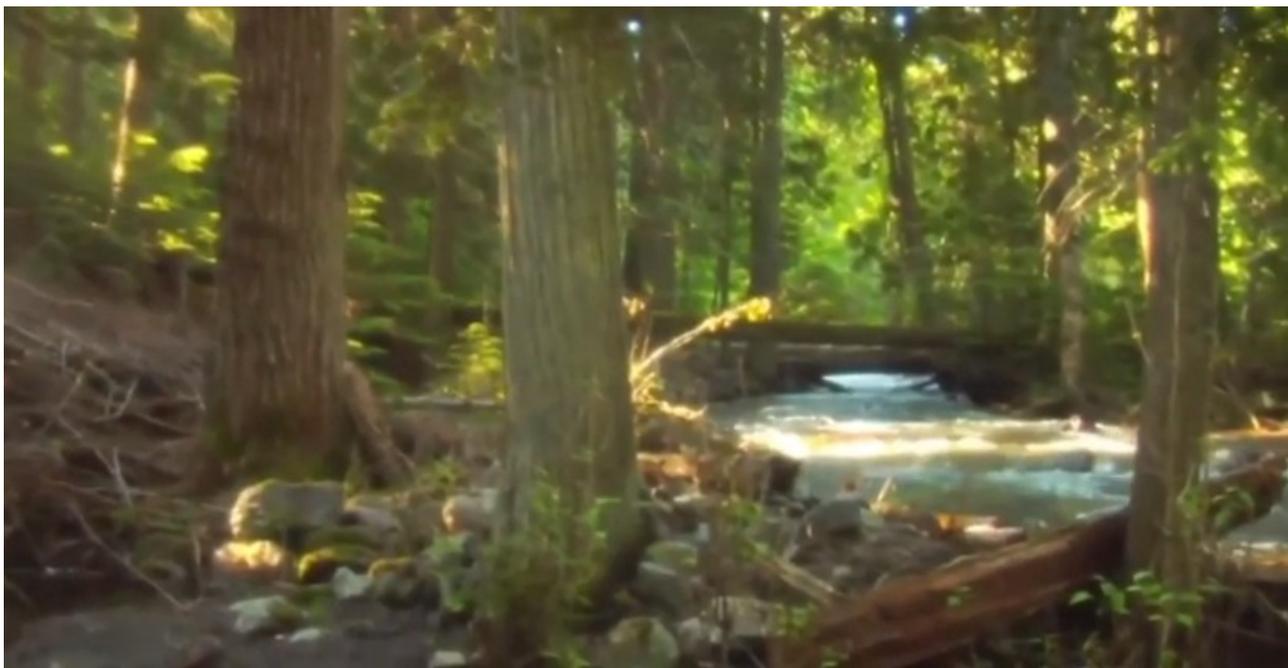
we have to be patient. His love, plans for us and patience never end. What He asks of us is our honesty, always to be true to Him and ourselves.

Flying, flying like a kite, where the wind takes it, flying free to a point, but held by the string attached to it, and held in the hand of the person holding the string, gently guiding the kite, controlling it, to enable it to soar higher and higher. Yet sometimes there is a lull: the wind drops. But we can be assured that the hands of our Heavenly Father will always hold the string if we ask Him. So whether we are flying or still, we are still safe.

But who do we want to guide and lead us? Oh, that we could soar on wings like eagles with our Father God guiding us. We can. The choice is ours. Father God is glorified when we allow Him to strengthen us and free us to fly. Dare we take up that challenge? I'll leave that one with you. Amen.

Meditation Video: Alpine wilderness





Song: The Power of Your Love

[Ann:] Before Lynda leads us in prayer, we're going to sing again, Lord I Come To You, The Power of Your Love.

1. Lord, I come to You;
Let my heart be changed, renewed
Flowing from the grace
That I found in You.
Lord, I've come to know
The weaknesses I see in me
Will be stripped away
By the power of Your love.

Chorus:
Hold me close,
Let Your love surround me;
Bring me near,
Draw me to Your side;
And as I wait
I'll rise up like the eagle
And I will soar with You,
Your Spirit leads me on
In the power of Your love.

2. Lord, unveil my eyes,
Let me see You face to face;
The knowledge of Your love
As You live in me.
Lord, renew my mind
As Your will unfolds in my life
In living every day
By the power of Your love.

Chorus x 2

Intercessions

[Lynda:] Now we'll have our prayers. As I've told you before, that normally when our healing and refreshing services are in church, Ann and I offer to pray with anyone needing personal prayer. But as this cannot happen at the moment, there will be opportunity for you in this prayer time to ask your Heavenly Father to help you to talk to Him, for whatever you need. Just tell Him one-to-one what's on your mind. So let's be still.

"Be still and know that I am God. I am here for you to listen to you, and be with you always."

Father God, as we come to You now with our prayers, our worries, our fears, and blessings that we can say thank-you for, we choose to put our trust in You, our rock. We thank You for our freedom to be able to worship You, Lord, in safety. And we pray for Christians all over the world suffering persecution for their faith. We pray for your Holy Spirit to be with them always, that they would have peace, hope and courage and freedom to fly within their hearts as they follow you. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the progress being made with the roll-out of the vaccine. We pray especially for everyone who is frightened, unsure of having the vaccine, that they would be able to trust the medical advice and choose to receive it. We also pray for the different variants of the virus, that through the knowledge of the scientists and researchers, a vaccine will be found to combat them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As our country begins to regain some freedom, we pray for people to be sensible and follow the advice given, to be able to live and work together both in our workplaces, socialising and family life, to live in a safe way, thinking of each other's needs before our own. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our Royal Family, for the Duke of Edinburgh recovering in hospital, for the Queen and her family in these very difficult times. And if there is a need, that there will be healing and reconciliation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father God, social media, the press and other groups seem to have so much power to stir up bad news and create chaos. We pray that the power of Your love would flood these organisations, and speak words of hope, kindness, and most importantly, that they would speak the truth. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our hospitals, for everyone needing care and treatment, especially for cancer, hearts and other life-threatening illnesses, that there would be progress in their treatment being carried out sooner rather than later. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our schools and colleges, universities and other places of learning, as they begin to come together again, that the teachers and students, the children, and everyone involved will be safe and able to work within the restrictions caused by COVID. And we especially bring before you, Lord, all the children and students and the school staff, all of them going back to school from tomorrow, that they would be at peace and they would feel safe, Lord. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our church leaders, that they would be led by Jesus, to be shepherds, caring for your people in practical and spiritual ways. Show your love and compassion in their daily lives. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for everyone in isolation, feeling the loss and pain of not being able to be with family and friends. Lord into their pain, we ask that your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst them. And please, Lord, bless them with the power of Your love. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray again, Lord, for the relationship of our country with Europe, especially after Brexit. Father God, may Your will be done. Guide us please, as to the new ways of working and trading together. Lord, into the unknown future for so many, we ask your Holy Spirit to bring hope, reconciliation where needed, as we seek to trade and live together. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to You Your family all over the world, especially those living in poverty and fear through persecution. Father, into their lives we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst them, to minister to them and bless them, please, with the power of Your love. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father God, we thank you for those who we hold in our hearts and who we love. We pray for their wellbeing and sense of hope. We pray, Lord, that Your Holy Spirit would go and rest amongst them and remind them of Your love for them. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

There will now be just a few moments quiet for you to talk to your Heavenly Father. Tell Him whatever's on your hearts.

Ann and I pray for you all watching this service, that you will all be refreshed and renewed.

We thank You, Father God for the freedom we have in being here with You now, our prayer times to talk to you about anything, to share our secrets, hidden thoughts, worries, fears and our joys, knowing that You are always here for us. We thank You, Father, that as the sun rising and setting day by day is constant, so Your love and care for each one of us is constant and never changes.
Amen.

So our final hymn is 'Mighty to Save'.

Song: Mighty to Save (Everyone Needs Compassion)

1. Everyone needs compassion
A love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me
Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Saviour
The hope of nations

Chorus:

Saviour, He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save
He is mighty to save
Forever Author of Salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus conquered the grave

. So take me as you find me
All my fears and failures
Fill my life again
I give my life to follow
Everything that I believe in
Now I surrender

Chorus x 2

Bridge:

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen King
Jesus

Repeat Bridge

Chorus x 2

Bridge x 3

Conclusion

[Ann:] Eagle nests are very high in the treetops. They look like platforms, a bit of a precarious outlook. When it comes time for the chicks to leave the nest, a parent boots them off the edge. The bird free-falls. And then instinct makes them spread their wings, and they start to soar.

In this season of Lent, we can read of the temptation of Christ by the devil, finally leaving Jesus at the top of the mountain where the devil had told Jesus, He could have all the kingdom if He would bow down to him. Finally, the devil gave up and left Jesus at the top of the mountain, looking out on His Father's kingdom. And God sent the angels to minister to Him. It can sometimes feel that we have had a mountain to climb, that we feel booted out when challenges come along. But we must try to remember that when God takes our hand, He will never let go. It's not us hanging on, but we being firmly, securely held. Our wings are our trust in Him holding on to us, if you like.

God has a wonderful promise for us in Revelation, chapter 3, verse 21 [NKJV]:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

In a few moments, Lynda will lead us in our final blessing. But just to say that our next healing and refreshing service will be on the 11th of April. We are having an Easter Day celebration service on the 4th of April, which we hope you'll all join us for. Thank you for being with us tonight, and I'll hand over to Lynda for our blessing.

Blessing

[Lynda:] The blessing is from the song that we had earlier, and it's for each one of you watching.

Hold me close. Let Your love surround me. Bring me near. Draw me to Your side. And as I wait, I'll rise up like an eagle. I will soar with You. Your Spirit leads me on in the power of your love. Amen.

And as Ann said, this is the end of our service. And we do thank you for joining us. God bless.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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