

7th March 2021 6 pm Healing and Refreshing: Flying

Led by Ann Gibbons. Talk by Ann, Meditation and prayers by Lynda Howells
This transcript is only of the talk, the meditation and the concluding thoughts.

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.

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.

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.

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 a 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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