

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

Supplement 1

THE EAGLE CHRISTIAN.

From a series of pre-sermon messages by Brother Daniel E. Yoder
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*“There will be storms that confront the life of every Christian,
Every child of God.
God’s intent is not to put fear in us,
Nor to chase us off or destroy us.
His intent is to allow you and I
To do what no other species can do,
To rise above the tempest
and
Draw closer to Him.
To conquer the storm by putting it under our feet.*

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young,
Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wing
So the Lord alone did lead him,
And there was no strange god with him.”
Deuteronomy 32:11-12.

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We would like to consider this week for pre-sermon talks what I have entitled "The Eagle Christian" Each evening of this week of meetings before the main message we will be looking specifically at these verses to understand a little more of the meaning behind them.

Now as we look at God's creation and look at nature around us it is interesting to see the many times God uses nature, God uses creation to make Himself known and to make His truths and principles known. Consider the parable of the sower, it was something that people were acquainted with and He could make an illustrated lesson to make His truth known to them.



Part 1. Introductory to our text verses: Deuteronomy 32:11-12

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

The eagle is known as the King of birds, it is often used as a sign or symbol of freedom, of authority, of strength and God Himself back in Exodus chapter 19 makes an analogy of Himself with the eagle.

Exodus 19:4 says “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”
I bare you on eagles' wings He says.

The eagle that the Scriptures refer to is the one that is found over in Palestine and it is the big Golden Eagle, I realise that there are various kinds of eagles and I'm not sure if you have eagles here or not, but this is the Golden Eagle.

As we look at the life of the Golden Eagle throughout this week, not only will we discover things about God but we will also discover things about ourselves as we consider that.

Yes we will come to see and appreciate God more but we will also come to understand ourselves, our problems, our nature as well as our potential in a new and added dimension.

This evening I simply by way of introduction would like to give a few characteristics of the Golden Eagle so that we know what kind of bird it is that we are talking about throughout this week.

The Golden Eagle is a big bird, the average weight of the full-grown adult eagle is 31 pounds and they usually have a wingspan of 6 to 10 feet and are usually from 28 to 36 inches long from head to tail, they are large birds.

The claws of their feet I am told are larger than the canine teeth of the lion and there is a lot of strength in their feet as well.

Golden Eagles mate for life. When a pair pairs up they remain in that relationship till one or the other dies or is killed. They usually have a domain that they fly and hunt over for around 5 to 6 square miles.

They are powerful birds. I am told that when they dive after their prey they can reach speeds of up to 200 miles per hour and then still come out of that at the bottom without damage to themselves, they are powerful birds.

They fly high, they spend an average of 4 to 6 hours a day in flight and seldom flap their wings, they have learned how to detect the air currents and they just set their wings and soar and go higher and higher and higher, they like playing in the jet streams that cross the continents, that is their place.

They usually use the same nest year after year and the weight of that nest can go to as much as 2 tonnes of weight, fairly large.

The Golden Eagle usually builds its nest between six and 10,000 feet up preferably in the cleft of a rock. Jeremiah speaks of that in Jeremiah 49:16, he is speaking to those who thought they could set themselves up and that they were invincible he says: "O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence." The Golden Eagle usually builds up high and God uses this simile to tell man that even if he would exalt himself He (God) would still be able to abase him.

The eagle is a bird of the air, he is created to live in the heavens and so has an overview of all that is below him.

The eagle flies high in the heavens with that overview below him and the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 3:1 that He (God) has called us to be partakers of the heavenly calling, a heavenly calling. It is a different perspective from the world around us.

You know many time we see individuals who are fearful of the here and now and what may happen but the child of God views life from the perspective of eternity and it is a totally different perspective.

We are created to be partakers of the heavenly calling.

God has a calling for us this evening, one that summons us closer to Him and farther away from the world, one that gives us a proper perspective of life that we face and we can rest assured in the promise of what the Psalmist speaks of in Psalm 91:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”



Part 2. Feeding the Inner Man

This evening we would like to consider the Golden Eagles diet.

Now someone has said that you are what you eat, implying that our diet directly affects our strength and our health. Our diet not only affects our strength and health, but also in turn can affect such things as our personality, even our attitudes and outlook on life, our outlook on life can be affected by our diet.

The Golden Eagle is very choosy about his diet. Other birds can eat worms, they can eat berries, insects or the carcasses of highway tragedies but not the Golden Eagle. The Golden Eagle does not rely on what he can happen to find for his daily nourishment, rather he finds what he wants, he actually chooses his diet each day and then goes to find it. Maybe it is fish today, maybe squirrel tomorrow, maybe it's a lamb the day following and so on but the Golden Eagle has very little to do with decomposing meat, he goes out and chooses his diet and he catches the fresh, the living.

Now as we look at the Eagle we can also think of ourselves as Christians, the Eagle Christian you might say.

Do you see that parallel here?

If in a spiritual sense we are what we eat and if our strength lies in our diet than it follows that a poor diet for our inner man, for the spiritual man, means poor spiritual health and of course our spiritual health in turn affects our spiritual tolerance and our spiritual endurance in the battles and struggles and things that we face day by day.

So then the question becomes: What do we feed on? Spiritually speaking what is our diet like?

Is it light and entertaining or is it the spiritual nourishment that which would feed the inner man?

Tonight we must be finicky eaters when it comes to a spiritual diet, discerning what it is that we are taking in, discerning the spiritual and nutritional value of everything we take in for the inner man. That means not just being satisfied with what is easy to come by but rather being willing to dig in and to choose our diets and to dig into the Word of God and there find the nourishment that we need.

This brings into focus our reading habits.

Consider this evening what is your main course when it comes to reading habits. What are the things that we feed on?

True our main course should be that of the Word of God, the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful” and that word quick means alive, the Word of God is alive and powerful and if we want to be spiritually nourished we need life food the Living Word and we find that in Word of God as we read it, as we study it. Without this living food we are exposed to many dangers in the world around us, it is vital for our spiritual well-being, and that is one of the reasons why we stress the importance of the child of God maintaining a daily personal devotional life because he is feeding on the life, the Word of Life and it is that which nourishes the inner man, it is that which encourages, strengthens, fortifies us for the work that lies ahead.

The Proverb writer says: “My son tend to my words, incline thine ear to my sayings let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thy heart.” Proverbs 4:20-21.

I see that as something to be pondered over. I realise that in the world in which we live there are many things fighting for our attention, we live in perilous times, there is the threat of war, there is the uncertainty of the future and then on top of that is the concern, the daily concern for the provisions of life. How we are going to work and sustain ourselves and the things that need to be done in the house. Those are things that need to be contemplated as well but we need to keep the Word of God in the midst of our hearts and meditate upon it.

As we think of being finicky eaters it doesn't just include our eating habits, it also covers the things that we look at, the things we listen to come in the as well. Spiritual weakness many times is the result of a poor diet spiritually.

The sick eagle is not able to reproduce and as sick individuals spiritually we are not able to discern the truth, we are not able to contend with our enemies.

Now the eagle's cousin, the vulture, is just the opposite. I suppose you have those out here, we see them in Kentucky time and again, there's maybe half a dozen or more circling and when they finally come down you can rest assured that there is some dead animal or some dead meat down there that they are after. They circle over it sometimes for hours to be sure that it is dead and then they descend usually accompanied by others who want the same kind of diet. There is nothing even tasteful about the diet of the vulture and yet that is what he feeds on and often he will eat until it becomes so intoxicated by the blood of the dead animal that he is unable to fly and if other predators come around to this dead carcass the vulture himself may become a victim and a prey because he is unable to escape, he has so intoxicated himself with dead and decomposing flesh.

I'm sure again that the parallel is apparent.

We can't feed on the filth and the decomposing entertainment or whatever you may have out of the world and expect to be able to prosper spiritually. If we feed on that kind of thing the time will come that we will be a prey, we will fall victim to the further ensnarement of the evil one and find ourselves totally overcome, totally overcome.

The Golden Eagle by nature is a healthy bird, they can live to be 60 years old, in large part due to his source of food, it gets life food, he very seldom if ever gets sick, but it is possible for the eagle to get "food poisoning" because something maybe he picked up like a sick animal and he becomes sick. When this happens the eagle senses it, he becomes weak and his instincts take over and he will fly up to some inaccessible place like a ledge high up on a cliff and there he will prostrate himself with his wings spread out wide and his eyes firmly fixed on the sun, and there it will stay until the warmth of the sun and the natural healing processes of his body take over and he returns to strength.

There are three different circumstances in the Golden Eagle's life that will prompt this kind of behaviour:

One: If he is sick.

Secondly: If he is moulting, changing feathers and

Thirdly: If he is dying.

The only difference between the three is that when he is dying he will watch the sun go down and as the sun is setting he closes his eyes in death, and that's the way he dies if he dies by natural means.

Again some lessons for us.

If we find ourselves weak we need to analyse our diet and if we want to overcome it the answer is to lay ourselves open before the Son of God and keep our sight fixed firmly on Him. There are plenty of other things that would attract us in the world around us.

There are a lot of other things, even in professing Christendom, that would appear appealing but if we want spiritual health our focus has to come off that and back to the Son.

The Golden Eagle has an extra eye lid that enables him to look directly at the sun, we will notice more of that another evening, but we need to turn back to God.

The songwriter said: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will go strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace."

Psalm 103:5 says: "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

We heard it in the devotional reading this evening, those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles. Isaiah 40:31.

That is possible as we keep our sight fixed on our heavenly Father, on the Son of God.

May that be our portion and may we watch our diet, not speaking of that which is physical but of the spiritual, that which feeds the inner man because out of the heart come forth the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23.



Part 3. The Eagle Pair

Tonight we will consider what I have entitled the eagle pair.

The young eagle leaves the care of his parents when he is about one year of age, he still has a lot to learn and it continues to mature till he is nearly or approximately 3 years old and then he seeks a mate. Hopefully he has learnt at least most of the lessons that he needs to by that time.

When he finds the mate that he has chosen he begins following her and starts what is known as a game of tag and this can continue for quite some days.

Finally she gets tired of this and she will go down to the ground and pick up a small branch or twig, and back up she will go to eight to ten thousand feet up in the air and she will start flying a lazy circle eight pattern back and forth.

He is right behind her when suddenly she drops to stick. Well, he is a gentleman, and he swoops down after it, catches it, takes it back up to her, but she has lost interest by this time and she is heading back down for another stick. But he doesn't take this personally, he simply drops the stick and follows her, and she goes down and gets a slightly larger one and goes back up, not quite as high this time and again she is flying the circle eight pattern, he is following right behind and she drops it, and again he goes and picks it up or catches it, he is to catch it before it ever hits the ground.

Well this keeps going and every time she goes down she gets a bigger stick and she doesn't fly quite as high the next time and this thing continues on until finally it culminates with her flying at a tremendous speed in a very nip and tuck figure eight less than 500 feet from the ground with a stick or a branch that can weigh as much as she does and she drops it and he has to dive and catch that thing before it ever hits the ground!

If at any point during this time of retrieving the falling sticks he misses a stick she is done with him, he is not fit and she is finished with him, it is all over and he has to improve his skills and try with another eagle later on. If however he catches the stick every time that she drops it, even that last time when she is less than 500 feet above the ground and drops that limb that can weigh up to 30 pounds, and he catches it then he is fit and she will accept him.

Now the eagles, as we mentioned before, will mate for life and Lord willing we will also notice Friday evening the purpose of this performance of courtship, the importance of that in their life and experience. But once she accepts him it is for life and now it is time to start nest building.

And again this is a careful undertaking and a search for some ledge preferably high up on the rock face, on a cliff usually, they want their backs to the rock so that they are protected. They will look carefully because they will spend an average of 50 years there at that one location and they seek something that is likely at least 10,000 feet high.

I found it interesting that in Job 39 he relates or refers to the eagle, just a few verses we want to read there:

Job 39:27-29: “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.”

Tomorrow night we want to notice more of the eagle’s sight - her eyes behold afar off it says.

But she dwelleth and abideth up on the crag of the rock and the strong place, that is where they choose their nest. It has to be a fair sized nest, they like a brooding area that they can cover with the wing span of 6 feet or more in diameter.

To build that nest requires a lot of sticks and limbs and there is nothing close to the nest site 10,000 feet up. This requires thousands of trips back down to the ground to pick up the nesting material. Now the nest can end up weighing between one and 2 tonnes and so it needs a strong base and they begin to base their nest with limbs up to 4 inches in diameter that they take back up there to build their nest.

The base of the nest is made up of around 4 inch diameter limbs, 8 feet long, and as they build it higher and higher they get smaller limbs and finally when they get close to the brooding area itself they are down to about 1 inch diameter limbs. When they get to that point, once the major framework is done, the female stays in the nest arranging and rearranging while the male keeps bringing more limbs up.

When they finally get ready for the brooding area they bring a few vines, a few leafy things, maybe the fur of the rabbit they had for dinner before, to make it softer and there they will make the soft nest there.

The eagles' cousin, the vulture, is just the opposite.

There is no commitment of mates between them and the male vulture is of no help at all in locating a nest or in nest building and a female isn't all that concerned either. She will eat the nest and that is basically what she does, and house building gets put off until one day the female vulture realises it is too late and in a panic and rush she quickly tries to find a nest or something she can use, maybe a little tree or a fallen log, or if the worst comes to the worst she will just use a grassy field and lay her eggs there.

She does very little of supporting her young, she definitely does not give many honours to parenting, house building or raising the children.

Quite the opposite of humans.

I'm sure it doesn't take much to realise parallel between the Christian marriage and the noncommittal marriage of many in the world today.

We are not going to take time to go through all of the various parallels that we could pull out of the eagles' life but there was a time of examination, there was a need of preparedness, there was a need of proving one's worth and ability, one's strength before there was acceptance.

But then when it was proven that the commitment is there then it is for life. There is nothing that would separate the eagle pair. Even if times would get so bad that they would need to migrate, which they seldom do, they would still go together.

We don't have to look far in the world around us and we see individuals who have quite the opposite view of marriage. We have the situation in our community where a couple knew each other two weeks and went before the judge to get married and they hardly lasted two months following that.

What was going on?

There was no commitment, there was not the seriousness, recognising the seriousness of it. But talking to that individual one time he said: "Well we'll try it and if it doesn't work out we've already decided we'll call it off and go and try somewhere else!"

That is not the Christian relationship.

The Eagle Christian makes a commitment recognising the seriousness of that and that the commitment is for life. May we keep that in mind, as I trust we all do.

But simply to reinforce that; I find it interesting that even among the creatures of nature that is the policy as well.



Part 4. Eagle Sight.

Now we would like to consider this evening the eagle's eye or sight.

Like most young animals when that young eaglet is hatched his eyes are not fully developed, his eyesight isn't perfectly clear and in fact is not really able to focus for several weeks after they are hatched.

However there is something unique about the eagle's eyes, inside the eagle's eyes are a series of tissues folded into pleats and they are called pectines.

Now I don't want to lose you and some of this description here is a little bit more technical but I will try and explain it more in our everyday language.

Each of these pleats or pectines contain a fine network of lymph tubes and the lymph fluid in these tubes is an electrolyte, which means it is affected by magnetic pull and also operates as a conductor of electricity. It simply means the eagle's eye is divided if up into what is called the pectines that are filled with a fluid which is affected by the magnetic pull of the earth for where they are located.

Now when the eagle is young and his eyes are not fully developed these tubes are pliable, they can be shaped, they can be moulded while they are young and they are affected by the magnetic pull of the North Pole, somewhat like a compass would be.

And it simply means that as the young eaglet matures over the next several months these pectines become more rigid and fixed to where they are aligned, if you can follow what I'm saying, they are aligned for where they are on the position of the globe as it relates to the North Pole, they are fixed.

And as they reach maturity they are permanently set, they don't change.

What this means is that as long as the eagle is away from the area or locality in which he was born he feels a certain sense of imbalance, there is pressure on his eyes that will cause a certain degree of pain and trouble for him if he goes too far away. That is part of that which enables him when conditions are bad and food is so scarce that he has to go elsewhere, that is part of what enables him to come back to the same area from which he has left, because he can sense that this is now back in home territory, my eyes are resting again. That's the way God created it.

Now looking at ourselves.

As I read this my mind went to the verse in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

There is a real influence in the pliable age of young children.

In fact I am told some time ago in working in our community that there was a real upsurge in the catholic involvement and I'm told that the Catholic Church made this statement: "Give us a child until he is six years old and we will have him for life."

What is happening? As an infant as a young child they are very pliable.

Now we could take this a stage further and consider a young Christian.

You know at the beginning of Christian life there is a lot of immaturity and sometimes we don't always see things as clearly as we should, but there is teaching, there is instruction class and there is the preaching of the Word, and little by little the pectines are set, and we begin to be able to discern clearly and see clearly where we are.

Another fascinating characteristic of the eagle's eye is their ability to sharply focus on objects several miles away, not just feet away, but they can sharply focus on something several miles away, it is clear, it is precise, this coupled with his flying up high and his nesting up high give them better than a bird's eye view. He is able to find his food quickly, he is able to identify impending danger, and Lord willing Sunday evening we will notice some more of that.

But again the Eagle Christian, if you understand my terminology, should likewise be able to focus clearly on things even yet on the horizon that may be a threat or may have an influence on their life and experience.

Can we see the trends that may be coming in, or can we see the various things that are taking place within the church, can we see them clearly and discern properly what it is?

One other thing yet I would like to point out about the eagle's eyes, we mentioned a little bit the other evening, and that is the eagle's eyes are covered with two eyelids and because of having that second eyelid they can fly directly toward the sun and not be blinded, they can fly directly at the sun and they are not blinded all. Normally when a bird flies directly toward the sun he is blinded by the sun's rays.

But by this second eyelid the eagle is able to stare intently at the sun.

This brings to mind the inability of the non-Christian to draw near to God, but the child of God can focus on the Son because there is a covering, the blood of Jesus Christ.

That is what makes it possible so we can focus directly on the Son.

To the individual in the world who has no interest in God the focus on God is blinding, it is disconcerting and it brings discontent but when the blood of Jesus Christ has been applied then there is clear focus.

Hebrews 9:22 says and without shedding of blood is no remission of sin.

I'm thankful tonight for that covering that is there that we too can focus clearly on the son of God and there find life, there find health and there find strength in discernment for the days that are ahead.



Part 5. Stirring up the Nest

This evening we would like to look at our text verses and how it relates to the Eagle.

Remember two evenings ago we left the eagle pair building their nest high upon the crag in the cleft of the rock some 10,000 feet above ground. As they finished the nest remember it kept getting smaller and smaller with maybe one inch or three-quarter inch twigs to finish up and then they would bring in vines and maybe rabbit fur to make it soft and once it was finished mother eagle would lay the eggs.

Incubation period is 40 to 45 days, once they are hatched the eaglets, usually one or two that is usually what there is at a time, but once they are hatched mother and father's life becomes very busy because there are one or two young children with big appetites and growing appetites.

And as they continue to grow in size and their wings begin to develop, one day life begins to change.

Up to this point the eaglets have had a life of comparative ease basically all they had to do was eat and sleep and that was about the extent of it, everything was provided for them. Their parents provided food, they provided warmth, they provided shelter and father of eagle was even known to bring a few toys for his eaglets play with, just a few things he found that they might be interested in.

But the day comes when mother eagle comes flying into the nest with a wild look in her eyes and she begins stomping around in the nest and first go the toys that father eagle brought, and next goes the rabbit fur and she keeps throwing things out and she fluffs up her wings and she flutters and flutters and basically blows the nest clear of everything down to the twigs. She stirreth up her nest. That is what she is doing.

The eaglets are faced with a dilemma.

No longer can they lay around in the nest because the twigs poke them and it hurts and they need to learn now to sit there gripping the twigs, learning both balance, supporting themselves, their bodies are already getting good size and they are developing strength in their feet. It is not always easy to hold themselves up but the alternative isn't very pleasant either.

The purpose behind it is to create strong feet to grasp that wriggling rabbit and hang on to them and take him back to the nest. They require strength and this lesson is to begin preparing the young eaglets for catching their own food, their feet, and their claws grow stronger and their sense of balance is improving but the young eaglelet is unaware that he is learning a lesson.

He notices life is getting hard, life is different to what it used to be, I'm facing struggles now that is what he is learning. After while he gets somewhat accustomed to that, things have somewhat settled back to normal, almost forgotten how life was before they lost the toys and their softness.

They have learned to support themselves to balance themselves and one day mother comes in again and she begins standing at the edge of the nest and she begins to flap her wings. She fluttereth over her young.

She stands there and flaps her wings and pretty soon the young eaglets begin imitating mamma and they begin flapping their wings. What is she doing? She is teaching them, they begin learning, they begin imitating her. This goes on for a while but then one day mother eagle comes back to the nest and begins fluttering her wings in the nest and the young eaglets begin scrambling to get out of the way and screaming for father eagle to come down and stop this madness, but he continues circling up there as though he is oblivious to what is going on, but as mother eagle keeps fluttering on the nest gradually one eaglet gets closer and closer to the edge of the nest and suddenly finally there he is standing on the edge of the nest looking down some 10,000 feet.

A strange sensation comes over that young eaglet, he sees the ground below and he gets a sense death and then mother eagle pushes him over and there he goes.

He is falling over!

Now that sense of death is even more real. He is panicked and he is struggling and he is doing all he can, he begins flapping his wings and flapping his wings, he screams for help, he is young and clumsy he can't get very far and finally he is so weak that he can hardly fly, and now he is only a few thousand feet from the ground and from almost certain death but suddenly he catches a glimpse of father eagle who swoops down under that young eaglet just moments before he crashes into the ground. With lightning speed father eagle has calculated the exact moment to save that young eaglet and he has executed his job with perfection and he takes the young eaglet back up to the nest and the lesson starts over again.

Remember the dating game?

Mother eagle would drop to stick and father eagle had to catch it before it hit the ground, you realise the importance? You realise why if he failed to catch it she would no longer have anything to do with him, because then he may miss the young eaglet and he would fall to his destruction.

And the young eaglet gets returned to the nest and the process gets repeated.

What to that young eaglet seems to be the most cruel thing his parents could ever do to him will turn out to be the most beneficial thing that he will learn from them and that is how to fly. He is being taught how to fly. They are teaching the eaglets to become Eagles.

In the lessons that follow the young eaglets learn many things about flying and they are well on their way to eagle-hood. All the kicking and screaming will stop, the fear of smashing into the ground will disappear and the eaglet will be free to become an Eagle.

Now notice the second verse of this passage: So the Lord alone did lead him.

Do you catch the picture? Have you found yourself at times when suddenly the comforts of the nest were kicked out and you found yourself facing difficulties? Have you found yourself perhaps at times looking over the edge of the nest and then feeling that you got pushed out and you didn't know which way to turn? Yes, perhaps you screamed for help as well but our heavenly Father is always there and He provides a way.

Simply, I don't want to go too much into this because Lord willing we will look more at it on Sunday morning, but simply look at it this way, all of us this evening I'm certain have faced times of difficulty times, of trouble.

We can look at that as something that is going to do us in, something that is there to beat us down, or we can look at that as a messenger from God. He is endeavouring to help us to fly. He is endeavouring to teach us how to be strong Christians, how to mount up above the difficulties that come our way.

This may seem like a paradox but I believe the child of God should view the trouble that comes our way as a gift from God, He has a purpose for it, He has something for us to learn, there is something He wants us to gain strength in and He is endeavouring to help us to grow.

And as we learn that we can cease struggling against it and we are freed then to grow in a trust, in our confidence and in our strength in Christ as we learn to wait and rest on Him.

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. And the scripture goes on to say that if ye endure chastisement God dealeth with you as sons.” Hebrews 12:6-7.

So don't take it as your destruction, or as some individuals' do, that sometimes you seem to have the feeling that God is out to punish, where everything that goes wrong and this is the punishing hand of God. It is true that God does bring judgement but many times He is simply working to accomplish some good in the lives of His children and that is the purpose.

If we didn't have the rough spots we would not develop the strength needed to carry on and to go on faithfully.

So as we think of that, as you think of these verses, think of God working in your life and mind to accomplish His purpose.



Part 6. With Wings as Eagles.

Recently we read a verse from the book of Isaiah in our evening devotions and this evening instead of looking at the Eagle in our theme verse I would like to consider this verse, Isaiah 40:31.

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

The phrase we would like to pick out of this verse is: “They shall mount up with wings as eagles.”

We mentioned the other evening that eagles scarcely flap their wings and if you see them sometimes on a nice clear day they are soaring way up high and they are going higher and higher and higher.

Do you know how they get up there?

Never on a calm day!

They would have to labour feverishly to get up there, they are a big bird but you know when they soar the highest? Harking back to this morning's message it is when the winds of adversity are blowing and then they simply set their wings and go higher and higher and higher because they are using the winds that are coming their way.

We would like to consider this evening the eagle in the storm, the way that the Palestinian Eagle responds to the storms.

Most animals by nature can sense when a storm is coming. Out in the woods when a storm is coming up well you can sense it things, get quiet, they instinctively seek for shelter.

The eagle because of his vision can see the storm coming long before the rest of the animals see it, he can see it from a great distance yet he does not seek cover like the rest of the wildlife, instead he sits there on the side of the nest and calmly awaits the storm to come.

He can see the rest of the wildlife down there scurrying for cover but he is unafraid of the storm. He has no power to stop it from coming but he has no fear of it.

And soon the storm's high winds begin to blow and bluster around him, he is still unafraid, and as the storm gets closer and the clouds get closer and closer still he waits patiently until the first drops of rain began to fall, then he launches flight and using those strong wind currents that accompany the storm he begins to spiral round and round and higher and higher until at last he sees the sun shining around and the clouds are pouring their rain on everyone else below him.

I'm told the Golden Eagle can go as high as the jet streams that cross the nations and he enjoys playing in them, in those strong winds. If there is any eaglets in that nest yet, mother eagle stays behind although she would like to join him, and she will open wide her wings and completely cover the brooding area, the nest area, the young eaglets look out and see dad disappear there in the clouds but they are tucked under the wings of their mother and they are sheltered.

The eagle, though he is fearless of the storm, does not have the ability to stop it but only to rise above it.

Remember that there will be storms that confront the life of every Christian, every child of God, and God's intent is not to put fear in us, it is not to chase us off or destroy us but God's intent is to allow you and I to do what no other species can do and that is to rise above the tempest and draw closer to Him. To conquer the storm by putting it under your feet.

The winds that accompany the storm they are a special breed all their own, they are hardly ever the same, they are shifting, they are changing and they are swift and they could be deadly, they are hard, they are fast, they are destructive.

Yet we can master the winds, I'm thinking more of us as individuals, the Eagle Christian is not frightened of but rather is challenged by the storm.

Each storm has its own separate wind currents and so do the hardships and the storms that come your way and mine. This will make a better Christian of us with each passing storm till finally the storm is no longer something to be feared but rather it is a lesson to be learnt, it is a foe to be conquered.

As we face those difficulties, if our focus is as it should be we can, as it were set our wings in those winds of the storm, it will simply lift us higher and higher and higher, drawing us closer and closer and closer to God.

Remember when storms come into our life we have the potential, we have the possibility through the Lord's help to rise up above them. The clouds can pour the rain on the rest but we can bask in the sunshine of our Father's love day by day as we walk and live with Him.

May that be our portion as we face life.



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