

## Eagles Wings

### [Isaiah 40:21-31](#)

God is in control. The message from Isaiah seems to be just this – God is in control. God is over and above all earthly leaders, all persons who inhabit this earth. God gives power to the faint and the weak. God mounts us up with the wings of eagles. Isaiah 40 verse 31 says, ‘they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.’

I wanted to share with you some recent headlines from the Wall Street Journal:

- Economy dives as goods pile up.
- As red ink spills, Ford drains credit lines – auto maker reports \$5.9 billion quarterly loss.
- Sony net plunged 95% in quarter.
- Toshiba retrenches as big loss looms.
- Nintendo lowers estimates for earnings.

- ABC to lay off 200 employees.
- Dow drops 226.44 points.
- Proctor and Gamble sales fall 3.2%.
- Hitachi, NEC slash jobs amid big losses.
- 2 million jobs lost since November.

There's an old Billy Joel song that says, "there's a storm front coming." I think the storm front is here! Yet God is in control.

That almost seems to be an oxymoron – why put us through such tough times? Why not just sweep in and take care of us?

How much more does God think we can take?

In the Bible studies I have done in the past and present, I do not hear a recurring theme of being spared from trials and difficulties. What I hear is an assurance of a partner to walk with us through the storm. Our strength comes from God who helps to see us through the most difficult situations. We are experiencing a unified series of difficulties with our faltering economy. Many of us are hurting with the fact that our incomes are either fixed or declining and pricing for many things

continues to rise. Notice how gas prices are once again creeping up. I have been shocked recently each time I open a utility bill and find all these extra charges and increases that continue to strain each of us. Yet God is in control.

“They shall mount up with wings like eagles.” What a beautiful image. I did a little research on eagles in preparation for today and found out some fascinating facts. Adult eagles have a wing span of about 7 feet, yet they only weigh 12 pounds on average. Eagles can fly to heights of 10,000 feet or more and can dive at a speed of 75 to 100 miles per hour. It’s interesting that eagles shed all of their feathers every year, yet they do this in a rotational fashion in order to keep their ability to fly. Eagles can also glide at altitudes of over 2,500 feet. You can often see eagles gliding and soaring almost effortlessly in hurricane force

winds. Eagles seem to take what is given them as far as flight conditions and adapt to meet the challenges presented.

Eagles can sense the oncoming storm. At the precise moment, they can soar to great heights and ride above the storm. They can expand and contract their wings to adjust to gusts of wind and appear to be gliding effortlessly in the midst of chaos. When they need to soar higher, the eagle will contract its wings slightly and lift to a higher level. When the wind dies down and the eagle begins to descend too fast, it simply expands its wings to balance out and glide to safety. God's promise to us is that we too will be able to cling to God, pull in and ride above the storm as long as we stay beneath God's wing of love. When the challenges change and present a new direction, the wings will expand and get us back on a level plain. There can be peace in the middle of chaos.

My father was a Pentecostal preacher when he became terminally ill, however his illness lingered for seven years. I remember many times when my father would feel that the storm of his illness was just too great; he would explain the calm and peace he would feel from God – even in the hospital room where he would feel most alone. God was raising him up on eagle’s wings. [I inherited some of his Bibles, and the one I used for Christmas Eve had a flower in it from my wedding. When I opened that Bible and saw that flower I was reminded of how much God had carried him through the storm of his illness – he was determined to walk me down the aisle. God called him home not long after Mark and I were married.]

With God, we can take on the qualities of eagles and ride out some difficult storms. The one fact I also find interesting is that the eagle renews all its feathers each year through the

molting process, yet it is never left at a point where it cannot fly. Other birds become incapacitated during the molting process because they lose all their feathers at once. But eagles lose their feathers in rotation so they are always able to fly. At times we need to renew our faith. We need to let go of some old hurts or hang ups that are preventing us from continuing on our faith journey. Some can be painful to let go, yet once we can put that in the past and leave it there, there is usually a sense of relief and calm – we can glide on with the current and continue to fly. We can continue to fly through the process of renewal.

I learned a lot about eagles as I researched this sermon. Pastor Anthony Mancina shares this fact. It is interesting how adult eagles teach their young eaglets to fly. They create an air current which lifts the trailing eaglet so they can strengthen their wings and eventually fly without help. As we are lifted on

eagle's wings, we are also challenged to create air currents for those who are just starting on their faith journey, or for those who are facing specific difficulties. God gives us love, strength, and courage, but God also gives us each other. We can share our strength and comfort to others as we receive strength and comfort from God. God is in control.

In the Christian calendar, today is also noted as Boy Scout Sunday. The Eagle Scout is the highest advancement rank in Scouting, and only 5% of all Boy Scouts obtain this award. To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills. Although many options are available to demonstrate proficiency in these areas, a number of specific skills are required to advance through the ranks—Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. To advance, a Boy Scout must pass specific

tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges. The process for obtaining this status is four-fold. First, the scout must learn the skills needed for particular tasks. Learning comes through observing other scouts and through the teachings of leaders for specific skills. Second, the scout is tested to verify the scout has truly learned and mastered a specific skill. Third, the scout is reviewed. This is more of an overall process to determine that the scout has met all the requirements leading up to the specific award sought. Finally, the scout is recognized, being presented with the badge or symbol of recognition. For those receiving the honor of Eagle Scout, the badge looks something like this (show badge).

God's promise to us seems to follow this similar pattern. As we encounter challenges, first we must learn to trust God and develop an attitude of faith and perseverance to meet the

challenge. Second, we are tested. As young eaglets, at some point we need to put our skills into practice as we contract or stretch out our wings and face the storm. Third we are reviewed – others stand with us as we continue on our Christian journey, and at some point we will stand before God as faithful witnesses. When we have run the race with perseverance and have fought the good fight, we will reach step four – our heavenly reward.

Our storms continue to rage. We will not leave here and find that the economy has suddenly fixed itself and we are all actually millionaires! But God will raise us up on eagle's wings. We will find renewed strength to continue to share God's love with others as we are called to do. We will run and not be weary. We will walk and not faint. Thanks be to God. Amen.