

# On Eagles' Wings Pt 14

by Don Courville

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*The church's greatest need is to understand who God is and to rightly respond to Him, and this can be achieved through a personal relationship with God, biblical education, and prayer and revival.*

**Duration:** 29:19

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:28-31, Matthew 6:33, John 8:32, Romans 7:15, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 13:17

**Topics:** "Radio Show"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the importance of seeking the truth and understanding the problems we face in our lives. They emphasize the need to honor and glorify God in our pursuit of truth. The speaker also highlights the responsibility of church leaders to provide resources and support to their congregations, such as good books and special speakers. They suggest that pastors can listen to tapes or attend seminars for personal instruction. Additionally, the speaker expresses their burden to provide pastors and churches with helpful books and resources through their tape ministry.

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## Transcript

Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increases strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

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. We welcome you again to On Eagle's Wings, a church revival ministry. Today we're going to get into an interview with Dr. Victor Matthews as we talk with him about the church and revival, and we trust that God will use this to encourage you.

So we'll just move right into our interview right now. Well, Dr. Matthews, it's good to have you with us today. Thank you.

We're glad that we can spend some time visiting, and especially my burden has been for pastors, churches, since in 1985 God dealt with me in revival and broke me. I was a bitter pastor, and since then I've traveled around the country and in Canada and in dozens of places sharing my testimony and sharing with churches, and especially with those that are desperate for revival and tired of playing games and they want to see God move into their church and cleanse them. And I just wanted to ask you maybe a few

questions in relation to the church, and first of all I'd like to ask you, what do you see as the church's greatest need today? Well, I think that we have to reflect on what the Bible says about that, and that is our greatest need is to understand who God is and to rightly respond to him.

As we look into the Bible, we realize it's the way that God has revealed himself. In class, we call it the self-revelation of God, and this is overwhelming when we start to think of it that we've been created in the image and likeness of God in such a way so that we can know him, that he can speak to us and we can understand him. And so I think our greatest need is to know who he is and then to worship him, to believe in him, to worship and adore him in the way the Bible describes we should.

That's good. I was just thinking back of how over, it must have been about 22 years ago, I started off just to know God. I just wanted to know him.

Wonderful. And I was raised in church, but I wanted to know God. And the interesting thing is that that is fulfilled in Christ, and I'm still, though, wanting to know him.

And even Paul said that. Sure. Well, too often we just know things about God.

Right. Like in school, where I've taught for many years, it's very easy for a student, and we fall into it as faculty members, just knowing many, many things about God. But that's not the purpose of the Bible or the will of God, and it is that we might know him as a person and therefore worship him, love him, live with him, for him.

I think that's the primary goal. And this is a key message, even for those that are listening, because there's so many, even in our churches today, that know about God, but yet have never come to know him personally. Exactly.

A key need, and many outside of the church that I believe have a hunger to know God, too. Sure. Many have probably been discouraged by churches or by relatives or someone that sort of turned them off, but that doesn't change the fact that they still need to know God.

Well, I meet a lot of people like that. A lot of people who say to me, I know so much. I've been in church all my life, and there's something wrong.

There must be more to it than what I have found. And with most of those people, I realize that they have never been taught how to know God. And it's not a matter of they haven't entered into worship and adoration and praise.

They don't know how to worship God, and so it is a matter of just living according to certain group of rules, or according to the way the church has talked about their culture, instead of a personal relationship. And it's that personal relationship, and then every day implementing that in worship and adoration that I find really satisfies the hungry heart. Hmm.

Yes, I was just thinking about my race. I was raised in church all my life, but I really wasn't taught how to have a close daily walk with the Lord, how to have a quiet time and spend time in the prayer and draw out of the word. Sure.

Those things I need, and we need those things. Now, I was just wondering, since we're talking about churches, do you think there's any major element missing in our preaching today in the pulpits? Well, I

think so. I think we have, too many of our churches, major on a list of rules that we are to do, and sometimes people get the idea that you can sort of earn the grace of God by how you live.

It's so true what Watchman Nee said was the turning point in his life when he came to the realization through the study of the Bible that Christ was the answer to all that God ever demanded. And that's so true. We have to realize that when Christ came into the world, he came as our representative to do what we couldn't do.

He kept the law of God for us in his life, paid the penalty of the curse of the law in his death, and that we were represented in that crucifixion so that we died in him, as Paul said in Galatians 2.20. And we were resurrected in Christ. We ascended in him. And when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, then in a technical sense, all believers were anointed.

Now, here we come along in the 20th century and are born again, and all of that grace is given to us automatically. All of that grace is legally ours. That's why it says in Colossians 2.10 that we are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power.

And so the grace of God, we've been blessed, like Paul said in Ephesians 1.3 and Peter in 2 Peter 1.3, that we've been blessed with all spiritual blessings. Now, what we need in our churches is to know God, and the way to do that is to understand what redemptive work Jesus Christ has performed for us, to receive that, to believe him, and to receive him into our life as Savior and Lord, and then to live our daily lives in harmony with the crucifixion and the resurrection. That means giving up of ourselves, giving up our pretense and hypocrisy.

And being willing to obey God and to walk with him and to learn how to practice the grace of God. You can't earn it, but we have to learn how to practice it. That's the key.

Right. So basically, you've been sharing just the basics of the faith, and probably then maybe our pulpits, if our pulpits are not just teaching the simple basics of the gospel, people are going to be hungry. They need the basics of salvation and walking by faith and completely surrendering ourselves to the worship of Christ.

Do you think, now you've taught in a school, you might share a little bit with us about your teaching in the seminary, and the seminary you taught in, and the school, maybe the name, and how many years, I know it was at least 40 years. Do you think the schools are slipping in turning out men, say men of God, preachers, that will preach the basics? Well, there have been, of course, tremendous impact upon our schools in the years gone by of a form of liberalism. And that's why right around in the 20s, a number of Bible institutes were started.

Because some of the mainline denominations in their seminaries where their pastors were trained, they were adopting a form of theology of interpreting the Bible that was incorrect. They were teaching that the Bible wasn't our final authority. It was only good religious advice.

They were teaching that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God as the second person of the Trinity, but that God had sort of adopted this very, very godly person, Jesus, and so they did not, many of them did not believe in the full deity of Christ. And many of them did not believe that when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross, it was a historical, vicarious work of redemption. Well, due to that, a lot of people have left those denominations back there in the 20s, and Bible institutes were started.

And out of that now, a lot of our Bible colleges and evangelical seminaries have come into being. And we're happy that in this day, there are quite a number of fine evangelical schools that are teaching the truth. One of our great problems, however, is always to be emphasizing the basics of the Bible.

And it's very, very easy for a school to start to deviate on some of those basics. The school where I have taught for many years, the Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary, we have a very clear-cut biblical confession of faith. And all of us as teachers, we sign that every year.

And it's very important that we do that. Our school was set up in such a way that the control of the school is not in the executive board, but it's in the churches that support us. For example, one-third of the executive board is voted in by the churches every year.

So if the churches start to feel that there is something in our school that is not biblical, they can put men on the board to investigate that. And so the control of our school is not the president or vice president. It's not the deans.

It's not the executive board. Ultimately, it's found in the people who sit in the pew of the churches. And that's a great safeguard for our school.

That's good. Glad to hear that. I was just thinking about some of the things you shared.

And when a pastor or church moves away from the basics of the faith, then actually they're digging a hole for themselves, maybe digging their own grave. Right. Do you feel like that many of these churches that have maybe deviated from the basics, that deity of Christ and salvation by grace, do you feel like that there's maybe a general feeling of discouragement in these churches and maybe even in pastors? They feel like there's something missing.

Well, I think so. And there are a lot of pastors who, I'm sorry to say, are leaving the ministry today because they've been quite disillusioned. They have not been as successful as they thought they would be.

I mean, successful in the biblical sense of winning people to the Lord or solving the problems of the day. We're living in a day of great tension. We're living in a day where there are many, many problems that people get into.

And some pastors have felt that they did not know, do not know how to help such individuals. And they become discouraged. People in the church get discouraged too, that they work real hard to try to live the Christian life.

But because they have been inadequately taught, they do not know how to live the Christian life. Like what you mentioned is your testimony a few years ago, where you were taught what the cross meant in your daily life and the power of the resurrection. Well, if a person doesn't know how to internalize those truths and how to practice that in daily life, they're not living with the power of God released in their life.

And that can be a very discouraging and disheartening way of living. Yes, I think that the thing that probably got me was I had so many years of college, many years of college and all of this truth. But somehow or another, the practical aspect of how to put all this truth into a practical, powerful way, I missed it.

But when I found it a few years ago, when God dealt with me in revival, it was just like a whole new life, at least for me. And it's been an exciting thing. Right.

And the scriptures are so alive. No wonder I can see how the apostle Paul was such a fireball. Because when he got saved, it's just like light was thrown on all of those years of truth that he had.

Exactly. And we just need to... I was wondering, what do you think churches can do today? If they're feeling discouraged or dead or dry, what can they do to get back? Well, there are a number of ways. Of course, the pastor can... There are ways that the pastor can listen to tapes if he thinks that he needs some instruction of his own and can't go to a seminar.

There are a lot of good seminars that are being offered today. There are churches that are putting on special seminars for discouraged pastors. There are many very, very good books out today to help people understand how to apply the Bible to certain areas of life.

I'm very much taken up with the way that some godly men are writing good books on a practical level for lay people. And for a church to make these books available or to go through those books in, like in Sunday school or in a training time or in a Bible class, some of these can be very helpful. Like some of the books written by David Seamans, for example.

One of his books, *Healing of Damaged Emotions*, a splendid book. Or the book by Bacchus on telling yourself the truth. Or by Dr. Carter on lies that we believe.

There are many of these very, very fine books that are oriented towards problems that people have and how to apply the biblical material in their walk with God to these problems. So there are a lot of things that the discouraged pastor could do or church members could do. Now, that's one of the things that I have a burden for us to get out good tapes and books to pastors.

And this tape ministry is relatively new. We've just been going for a short time. But as we go, I want to make available to pastors and churches some of these books.

And when I used to travel around the country, well, I guess I still do some. But right now I'm trying to develop this ministry. I would take and set out a book table and offer many of these books to these pastors.

They've never seen these type of books. And so I think it's key. If I think if someone is to the point where they are desperate, then they'll be willing to reach out.

It's like someone that's drowning. When I took life saving, I was taught you don't go out there and jump in the water and try to save somebody while they're drowning. You wait for them to get tired and then you go after them.

Otherwise, they'll drown you. I think that God is sort of to the point to where he's waiting for us just to get tired of our floundering around and our own self effort. And then we cry out to him and he jumps in.

That's what he did with me. Sure. And I think these churches and pastors that might be listening if there's and not everybody is discouraged or down.

And there's a lot of good churches that are winning souls to the Lord. But if we are in that situation, I think we need to reach out. And that's why we're here today to say we want to help you.

Very good. The Lord Jesus said, you know, the truth and truth and make you free. But we have to find out what the truth is about the problem and how to understand the problem.

Why do I do what I do or why do I not do what I should do? And how do I solve this problem? And why is it that the promises of God are not working in my life? God is pleased when we seek him on the basis that we want to honor him and glorify him. And there is a very important responsibility that leaders in the church bear to their own people. And one way pastors, of course, can supplement their ministry is by through providing good books for their people or for having special speakers who have been taught in certain areas.

They have a specialty and to bring in a person who can help individuals in a certain area of life. Often that can turn the lives of people around and could be a great help. Right.

Now, that's a good I'm glad you brought that up, because I have many friends in the ministry and you do, too, that if we knew of a church that had a need, my mind would immediately click with a man that could really minister to that church's need. Since you mentioned something, I want to pick up on that. And that was the church's responsibility, the leaders in the church.

I think that the leaders in the church that realize that things maybe aren't right or the way that God would want them to be should set aside specific times to start praying for God to meet their needs. I know this is what we did in our situation. Another pastor and I, we met together every week with our wives and we just prayed for God to minister to us.

We prayed for revival. At that time, I really didn't know what revival was. But when it hit, I found out that it was a breaking of my self-life and a releasing of the Lord Jesus to come in.

I want to say something. I have a friend that's a missionary in Honduras, and we were down in my hometown last May, and we were there at the same time. I was visiting my folks down in Louisiana.

And he said something to me that I've never forgotten and probably never will. And I know it's true and you know it's true. But he looked at me and he says, when I come back to the States, he says, I go into the churches and I go around speaking in the different churches as missionaries do.

And he says, I see that there's just no difference between the church and the world. Hmm. Do you think that that churches maybe ought to take a close look at their operation and maybe some of the music programs and other programs and things that they've allowed to come in and just see if they have just sort of been throwing water on their own fire? Well, it's possible.

All right. Because the leaders in the church realize that when you have individuals coming for services, you want to present something that's interesting to them. You want to entertain them to a degree.

And many times pastors really do not know how to present material that will be very, very helpful to people and very captivating as well. And they, it is very possible for a pastor to get into or a church to get into a way of ministering to people where it is what we, what the Bible would call worldly. And that is using methods or a type of music that caters more to the entertainment than to edification.

Now, I do think that Christianity is a, is very, is a, an emotional experience as well as mental and spiritual. And I don't think that our services ought to be dreary and sorrowful and worrying to people, but we have to be careful about not being worldly and just looking like other people living as a separate person. But that

has to do basically with spirit and not with dress or attitude.

And maybe your friend from Honduras, maybe he needs to be a little careful as to how he's judging people on the basis of culture. Because just because somebody is different, it doesn't mean they're wrong. If we would go to a foreign country ourselves, we'd find their culture to be very different from ours.

And we have to be careful that we not call it wrong. It may be different, but not wrong. Let me clarify something on that.

What I was saying, and maybe I wasn't clear, is when he would come back to the States, to this culture. I see. The culture he was raised in.

Oh, sure. He says he goes into the churches and says he finds there's no difference between the world and the church. And then he goes back to Honduras.

And of course, it's a primitive situation that he's in down there. But when he comes home, it's hard to agree because he finds so little difference between what we term worldly, sure, and the church. Let me ask you about this area.

One of the, it seems like, areas that pastors, especially fundamental pastors that love the Lord and preach the word and are burdened for souls. One of the areas that seems to be most bothersome to them that I've noticed is the area of prayer in their church, maybe their midweek prayer meeting. Can you share some thoughts with us on prayer in the local church? Well, I think it's very important because the Bible puts so much emphasis upon it.

The apostle Paul talked a great deal about praying and intercession. The Lord Jesus did. And by his own example, he taught that.

And we have it all through the Old and New Testament, the importance of spending time in prayer, learning how to intercede. An important part of that, of course, is worship and thanksgiving, supplication. Now, people have to learn how to do that, however.

And again, as leaders in the church, we just can't take for granted that when a person becomes a Christian, repents and believes, receives Christ as Savior, struggles to live the Christian life. We just can't take for granted. They know how to do that.

It's important that we teach the principles of prayer and they're clearly spelled out in the Bible. And it's even more important that we teach them by our example, praying with people. I think that's vitally important.

And if the leadership in the church will know what prayer is all about in their own life, it'd be a lot easier to teach the people. Yeah, probably a lot of it comes back to leadership. If the deacons or elders, Sunday school teachers, if these leaders are not praying in the church and when the church has a set time for prayer, then it's going to kill the spirit in the church, I believe.

The members aren't going to feel it's important. And as a father, if he doesn't give his family that example of prayer, both private and also in the church, then it'll kill the spirit. I think churches should be encouraged to zero in on this area of prayer.

If we're, as Ravenhill would say, if we're not praying, we're playing. Things like that. Well, let me ask you this for another area that I wanted you to talk about and then you can talk about anything else.

But how do you feel, what do you feel when you hear the term revival or awakening for our day? What's your thoughts? Well, there have been a lot of revivals where in history, a lot of revivals in history where people have come to a new awareness of who God is. To go back to my original statement, my first statement, the necessity of knowing God and where they have been able to see themselves in a new light. I've tried to read good books on revival down through the years.

There is a common theme that runs through most of these books as to what happens to people during times of revival. They start to understand how important spiritual things are. They realize that their priorities are all in disarray and that they have been living for things that are very trivial, very unimportant.

And they have been living a kind of very, very, if they are Christians, living a very lazy and slipshod kind of life. And during revival, people are convicted of that kind of a life and they learn how to surrender their life to God and how to live in harmony with what the Bible says. So revival is really not where people are saved so much as the church is quickened and people start arranging their priorities on the basis of the Bible.

They start worshiping God the way they should, start living the way they should, putting the principles of the scripture more carefully into practice in their lives. That's what revival genuinely is. Right.

And just basically getting back to the basics again of dealing with self and sin. Exactly. Well, do you have any other closing comments you might like to make? Well, yes, I do.

And I think that it's so important that we emphasize in our lives the place of worship and adoration of God. Very good. And the necessity of, I urge people to read the Psalms, for example, read the Psalms out loud to God and to internalize the principles of worship that we find in the Psalms and to sing worship hymns to God as part of their devotional life and realize that we've been created in the image and likeness of God.

And our great task is to fit into that for our Father's plan to exalt the Lord Jesus and to make sure that we do that every day, that we seek to please Him and to honor Him. Okay. Well, we thank you for being with us today, Dr. Matthews.

Thank you. It was a real delight. Well, we hope you enjoyed our interview with Dr. Matthews today.

Trust God has been able to use this in your life to teach you something about yourself, your church. And if you haven't received Christ as your Savior, let me encourage you to do so soon. He loves you.

He cares for you. He died on the cross for your sins. He's waiting for you to turn to Him.

And so He can lift you up. He wants to bear you on eagle's wings. And my friend, as a believer, let Him lift you up.

Learn to live by grace. Let Him bear you on eagle's wings. God bless you.

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