

Soaring 2 - Burdens & Gifts

by Gareth Evans

The sermon encourages believers to recognize their God-given burdens and gifts, and to actively engage in ministry while relying on the Holy Spirit's anointing.

Duration: 39:30

Scripture: Exodus 25:10-22, Numbers 4:15, 1 Samuel 4:21, 2 Kings 4:1-7, Psalm 27:4, Matthew 6:33, James 1:5

Topics: "Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by sharing a story from the book of Kings in the Old Testament. The story is about a little bundle that learns to fly and soar without moving its wings. The speaker then references Isaiah 40, emphasizing that the Lord is the everlasting God who does not grow weary. The sermon also includes the story of David and the ark of the covenant, highlighting the importance of doing God's work in God's way. The speaker warns against copying the methods of the world and encourages listeners to follow God's guidance.

Transcript

I guess that's my cue when he says to the kids, Go on! A few years ago I went and spent a very enjoyable day on the island of Saturna, just south of here, with some friends from Britain. Saturna's got many, many eagles, and we were amazed how close we could get to some of them. And during my travels I have learned to speak several languages, and one of them is eagleese.

So I got into a conversation with one of the eagles there, and he told me this story. A mother eagle usually lays two eggs, but there was this one time when a mother laid six eggs. Father eagle is standing on the side of his nest, and he is so proud of his wife, as she is sitting there on the eggs, and he glances across to a neighbour, who is standing beside his wife.

He says to him, Hi, good to see you. Have you had any eggs yet? Yes? Oh, good. How many? Oh, two, said his neighbour.

Oh, said the eagle, good, congratulations. Very pleased to hear that. And he couldn't help his chest going out a little bit further, his beak going up a little bit, as he put with his wing, six.

His neighbour, of course, was deeply impressed with that. Days went by, and the six eggs hatched, and soon there were six little balls of fluff in the nest, and father eagle is so proud, but he is very, very busy, as

he and his wife are flying out to get the finest of salmon from Brentwood Bay, to bring it back into Saturna, to feed his young. One day, he is just resting on the side of his nest, he glances across to his neighbour, and he says, how are the young doing? The neighbour says, fine.

He says, my, quite a task, isn't it, bringing up these young ones? Yes, said the neighbour, but we are very, very proud of ours. He said, oh, we are too. How many again was it? Two, oh yes, they are both healthy, wonderful.

Six. Well, the time comes when these six little bundles of fur are getting rather big, and it's getting quite a task to feed them all the time. Beside that now, the father eagle has to start pulling some of the nests apart, so he can expand it.

He builds an extension. He builds a big extension, at the same time as he is feeding them. It's quite an onerous task for him.

And he is very, very busy, and he is too busy to notice what is happening with his neighbour's nest, until one day he is absolutely exhausted, and he is on the side of his nest, and there are the six big bundles of falafel now in the nest. He imagines the casual eye of his neighbour, and he calls across, and he says, how are the young ones doing? Are they okay? I haven't seen them lately. I haven't seen you flying out, getting food for them.

Are they alright? And the other eagle said, oh yes, he said, fine, they are flying. The moral of the story is that eagles are born to fly. They are not born to be kept in the nest.

And it saddens me, when I see many, many churches so busy with building programmes, in order to keep their people satisfied in their church, and failing to see that their responsibility is to cast them out, that they might be serving in ministry. I'm not against big churches, if the big churches are feeding their people, and nurturing them, and are releasing them into ministry, great. But I find it very sad, when a church becomes inward looking to the place where they feel that they have to have more and more programmes, more and more feeding for their people, without the impulsion that says, it's time that you young eagles get out of the nest and start to fly.

You see, when a mother eagle wants her young to fly, what she does, or what the father eagle does, is that he nudges them with his wings, until they fall out of the nest. And then they swoop down, the mother eagle swoops and catches that little bundle of fluff on her wings. Only the eagle does this.

And then soars up into the highest heavens, and then tips the young one off. And that bundle of fluff starts falling to the ground, and the mother swoops under, before they crash into the ground, and flies high again. And then about maybe the third or fourth time, the little bundle begins to realise that she's not falling quite so fast.

And soon the little bundle discovers that they can actually fly. Not only fly, but they don't even have to move their wings, they can soar. That must be a wonderful feeling, don't you think? I want to read to you from Isaiah chapter 40.

Have you not known, have you not heard, starting at verse 28, have you not known, have you not heard, that the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth? He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might, he increases strength. Even youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted, but they who

wait upon the Lord, they 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. This is another one of those verses that sadly we have misrepresented because we read it in English and do not understand what the writer is saying. They that wait upon the Lord, well, English wait says to me that I am to wait patiently.

In fact, there is an Eagle Spiritual that says that. There are songs I have sung so many times. They that wait upon the Lord, know it? Shall renew.

And we think, oh, I'm going to wait. Teach me, Lord, to wait down on my knees. I will wait.

I will wait. The word wait, and in fact, if you've got an NIV, you'll notice it does not say wait. I think it says trust in the Lord, or hope in the Lord, or something like that.

The Hebrew word is quabbah. I may not have pronounced it correctly. Spell Q-A-V-A-H in our language.

And it literally means, if you look in any concordance, to take strings and to bind them together to make a rope. That's what it means. In New Testament parlance, what it means is this.

Those who abide in Christ and Christ abide in them, they shall mount up with wings as eagles. I want to put it in another parlance that I used last week. Those who are yoked together with the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles.

So the parallel verse to this in the scriptures would well be the words of Jesus where he said, as I quoted to you last week, learn of me, take my yoke upon you for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. If you are yoked together with the Lord, with the customary yoke that he has for you, doing the work he has designed you to do, the scripture says to me, here and elsewhere, that then the work becomes easy and you begin to soar like the eagle. That's called anointing.

The eagle doesn't strain by its own efforts I've been noticing, I'm sure you have, isn't it magnificent what that bird just saw? He has learned to feel the moving of the wind, the currents of air, and he floats on those. The man or woman of God who knows what it is to be bonded together, to be yoked together with Christ, begins to feel and experience the moving of the Spirit of God and begins to soar on the things of the Spirit. That's called anointing.

It can be upon a man like last week I told you about who repaired cars, and yet when that ministry was offered to the Lord it became an anointed ministry. We long to see anointing in the pulpit. I long to see anointing in youth work.

I long to see anointing in all the ministries of the church where God is evident, moving among his people. It has been said, and of course it does not apply to this church, it's hard to soar like the eagle when you're surrounded by turkeys. I know it doesn't apply to this church.

But I ask myself the reason why is it that so few Christians that I know really seem to be operating in a place where God is manifest in all of their doing, in their ministry. And maybe it's because they've never been taught they should. Maybe they've never been released into how they should.

And that has been, of course, the theme of my last couple of weeks. I'm going to turn you to two major portions of Scripture this morning. I want you to turn first to 2 Kings chapter 4. And I'm going to tell a story

here and I'm going to use it as a parable.

I'm not going to exegete it correctly, it's just a story in the Old Testament, in the book of Kings. But I'm going to use it as a little model this morning. 2 Kings chapter 4, and I want to read all the verses.

The first seven verses of that chapter tells a story about a woman whose husband had died. She had two sons and her husband sadly left her with many debts. And so the creditors were coming and she could not pay the debt.

And so they were going to take her two sons to be their servants. Now you can imagine the heavy burden this woman was carrying. Any mother was going to lose her two sons, whether it's to serve in the army or going away.

What a heavy burden upon a mother's heart. And this is how she felt. So she goes to the prophet Elisha and she tells the prophet of her dilemma.

My husband is dead and the creditors are coming to take my children. Heavy, heavy burden. And the prophet says something very strange to her.

He says, tell me, what do you have in your house? And she says, well, all I've got is a pot of oil. That's the question I asked you last week, isn't it? What is your burden? Then I asked you, what is your gift in? What is it that you have that you can lay down before God that he can use? I told the story of a car mechanic. But every one of you, every one of us, the scripture says, has been gifted by God through the things of God.

She said, all I've got is a pot of oil. Every one of us has been given a pot of oil. Oil in the scriptures always speaks of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit has been given to us.

If you have not the Holy Spirit, says the scriptures, you are none of his. Every single one of us has been given the Holy Spirit. And every single one of us, I read to you last week very clearly, the Holy Spirit gives gifts to everyone as he wills.

Is there anybody excluded from that? Everyone as he wills. Why does he give those gifts? Why does he give those pots of oil? So that you and I might be better enabled to carry the burden God has designed us for. The ministry God has designed us for.

The woman said, all I've got is a pot of oil. This is my gift, this is all I have. So the prophet said to her, take the pot of oil that you have and I want you to send your boys out to all the neighbours.

Tell them to collect every pot and pan that they can from your neighbours. And when they've got every one of them, bring them into the house and shut the door. And then I want you to pour out that oil.

I can imagine her saying, but all I've got is a pot. A little jar, that's all I've got. But, maybe the prophet has such a name in the area, I do not know what it was that convinced her to do it, but she did the ridiculous.

She went out and she sent her sons to get all the pots and pans they could from all the neighbours. I don't know if she told her boys what the reason was, but if she had, I think she would have had a great difficulty persuading the boys that this was a worthwhile venture. And they went and they collected all the pots and pans, brought them into the house, closed the door and then she said, the prophet said, to pour out the oil.

Can you imagine? A bucket filled. Now I'm a physicist, if you've got a two litre pot and you try to pour it into a ten litre bucket, the bucket doesn't get filled. But this one did.

Then she went to the next one. And this bowl and this pot and every single one was filled. She then told her to take the oil back to her neighbours and sell them the oil that was in their buckets and with the money she paid off her debt and she lived basically, she and her sons, in ease for the rest of their life.

What is the parable? I've taught you over the last two weeks how important it is to begin to discover that each one of us is being given a burden by God. God wants us to carry our own burdens. I can't define that for you, only you can tell me your burden.

The next question I ask you is this. What is it that you have in your hand? What is it you have in your house? You all have a pot of oil, some of you have sports skills, some of you have administrative skills, some of you have talking skills, many of us have practical skills. What is it you have? Will you lay that down for God to use it? Will you lay that down so he can use it along with the pot of oil he's given you? Will you come yoked together with Jesus with a custom made yoke so that the burden becomes light? Not a burden the pastor wants to put upon you but the burden that God has put upon you.

And then having you say to me what your burden is, others will confirm to me what your gifting is. And then the role of church leadership is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. It is then the role of the church to give ministry according to the burden, just as the prophet is doing to the woman.

And I believe that when men and women of God, and I challenge the young people which is where my heart is, who've got a whole life before them, to make the determination today that I'm going to serve God with the burden he's given me, seeking to know the power of his spirit upon me, I want to serve him in the ministry to which he's called me, because when you function there, that's when God puts his anointing, multiplies the oil. That's when you begin to learn what it is to sow like eagles. I've seen this in many lives, I've told you some of the stories, I could repeat many, many more, of young men, young women, old men, old women who have discovered God's purpose in their life and have learned what it is to know the joy of sowing like the eagle.

If I've triggered some response in you, I would love to spend time with you while I'm here these next two months, talking more about your personal burdens in ministry. I would love to see this church become a place where young eagles learn to fly. I hope it never becomes a place where you're satisfied to sit in the nest, being fattened week after week, without an impulsion to learn to fly.

A second portion of the scripture I want to turn you to is found in 1 Samuel chapter 4. Actually from chapter 4 through 7, but it begins in chapter 4. In chapter 4 of the first book of Samuel, we read that Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. The Philistines camped at a place called Aphek. The word means a strong fortress.

The enemies, the Philistines, they were camped at a strong fortress. But the children of Israel were not dismayed by this because they were camped at a place called Ebenezer. And the word Ebenezer means the rock our help.

It's good to know if you're going to come against a strong fortress that you are standing upon a rock our help, isn't it? Who is the rock our help? Jesus Christ is the rock our help. And this is where they stand at the battle. And they come into the battle and they're bold about it because there's a new prophet in Israel.

The prophet Elisha has come up. They've got a God-dwelling battle in Shiloh. All the omens are good and they come into battle against the Philistines.

But at the end of the first day, something has gone horribly wrong. And we discover that 4,000 of those Israelites will no longer return home. They lie in dead upon the gory battlefield.

And that night all the officers confer together, what went wrong? Did you say your prayers today? Did you make a sacrifice last time you went to Shiloh, to the tabernacle? The prophet who was in Israel, didn't he hear from God what's gone wrong? Why are we being defeated like this? And you know what it's like when believers get together and they start grumbling about a situation. Somewhere along the line God will get the blame. We prayed hard for this and God didn't answer our prayers.

Well this was the kind of sentiment that these Israelites felt after this first day in battle. And so somebody came up with a wonderful idea that said, well God allowed us to get into this mess. Why don't we go back to Shiloh and bring God here so he can see the mess we're in? You see, to them God was located in a tent in Shiloh.

Shiloh was in the country of the Ephraimites and they had set a tent up there 300 years before and the Ark of the Covenant was kept in this tent. And during those 300 years worship and the work of the priests had degenerated to a place that nobody understood what was happening. All the priests could go into the holy place.

The tabernacle had become a place where lots of unrighteousness was practiced there. And at this time the high priest, a man called Eli and his two sons were profligate. They were two of the priests who operated in the synagogue and they used to take all sorts of polluted sacrifices.

They would take bribes. They were very ungodly men. Yet they represented God to the people.

And over the years they'd come to believe that in that tent there was a golden box. And on top of this golden box was a seat called the mercy seat. And on this mercy seat there were two angels.

They had this story passed down. And God came and sat between the angels. And to them their concept of God was simply one who dwelt in a tent in Shiloh.

It's very similar to the Samaritan woman. Do you remember when Jesus spoke to her? She said, well you worship God there. We worship God here.

As though God is located in a certain place and cannot be found elsewhere. And that was the religion that the children of Israel had come to. It had nothing more than a superstitious act.

It had nothing to do with holiness. It had nothing to do with accessing to God's presence as represented by the box. The Ark of the Covenant.

So there on the battlefield as the officers conferred, somebody came up with the idea. They said, well God brought us into this mess. Or at least he knows we came to battle and he hasn't been with us.

Let's go back and bring him to the battle. So you can see the problems we're going through. This was met with good acceptance by the rest.

So they sent back and they said to the priests Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, we want God to come to the battle. So to show their own authority, those two priests carried the Ark into the battlefield. As the Ark came into the battlefield, and of course the first time the children of Israel had seen it, because it had been under shelter in a tabernacle for 300 years, they began to cheer.

God has come. We're bound to win. Now God is here.

The Philistines, hearing the cry, began to fear. They said to one another, God has come. Men fight like men.

Quicken you like men. Be strong. If we're going to die, let us die courageously.

So the Philistines fought as men about to die. And of course they won a great victory. They captured the Ark and took it back with them to Palestine.

When the young man came back to Eli, to tell Eli what had happened, because his own sons had been killed in this battle, Eli fell off the wall where he was sitting. He broke his neck and died. Phineas' wife was about to have a child, and at the news of her husband's death, she delivered the child and she named the boy Ichabod, which means the glory has departed.

The Ark, representing God's presence among his people, which had been so polluted in their thinking for nearly 300 years, was now no longer in the land. While it was in Philistia, they set it up in the temple of their god Dagon, and in the morning they discovered that Dagon had fallen. They put Dagon back up, they thought maybe a strong wind had come in the night, and the next day they came, he'd fallen again, and this time his hands were off.

They began to fear that maybe this god, this box where God dwelt, had some mystical powers that was causing their god Dagon to fall. So they sent it from that place to another place, but everywhere they sent it in the land, the little town where it went was soon persecuted with plagues and boils and all sorts of diseases coming upon the people. So they decided, maybe God is angry with us, the Jewish god, and maybe we should send him back.

So they came up with a very good idea. They said, well how do we know if God is angry? I'll tell you what we'll do. Why don't we get two milk cows with young, we'll yoke them together, we'll put a brand new cart, we'll put the Ark of the Covenant on the cart, and we'll point them towards Israel, and if God wants his box back, then the cows will go straight to Israel.

But if it's simply a coincidence that people are catching these places, it's got nothing to do with supernatural and God, then the cows are going to go off looking for their young, and then we'll know that it's perfectly safe for us to keep the Ark. And that's what they did. And as they let the cows go free, they saw the cows went straight to the border.

They crossed the border at a place called Beth Shemesh. The children of Israel were in the field that day, a year or so after the Ark had been taken, and they celebrated with joy when they recognised the Ark upon this oxen cart. And so they took the oxen and slew them and built a fire from the wood of the cart, and they made a sacrifice of the oxen upon it to God, and then they took the Ark and they stood it on a stone so that everybody would celebrate that the Ark, representing God's presence, was back among the people.

A few days afterwards, one of the young men opened the Ark. Now he could have justified his action by saying, well, I was just checking to see whether the tablets of the law were still inside, whether the pot of manna was still inside, whether Aaron's rod was still inside, or maybe the Philistines had taken... I was just checking to see. He could have justified himself, but the moment he opened the Ark, he and 50,000 Israelites died.

God was silent during 300 years of degenerate worship. God showed himself powerful when he was in Philistia by casting down Dagon and by bringing boils upon the people. God showed himself full of grace and mercy when the Philistines manhandled the Ark and put it on an oxen cart and sent it back to Israel.

But the moment his people trespassed upon the Ark representing his presence, he was awful in judgment upon them. During the next few years, with the Ark not present, God not present, represented by the Ark in the land, I discovered to my amazement, when I studied this, that the Ark was out of Israel for almost 100 years. I thought this was just a short two-year interlude, but almost 100 years.

And all that really happened in those 100 years was this, that the prophet Elisha goes, and prophet Samuel comes. And the people come to Samuel and say to Samuel, listen, we have now got no priests in the land, because there's no Ark, there's no tabernacle operated. And we need to be like the other nations, we need a king.

Samuel said to him, you have a king, God is your king. Oh, but God isn't here, because to them, God was represented by the Ark, the box. That's how small their God was.

But he's not here, they said, so we need a king. So after a lot of politicking, they appointed a king, and the man they chose was a man called Saul. Saul was chosen because of his head and shoulders above all other men.

And he stood out among men. And for 40 years, Saul became the king of Israel. And if you look at his reign, you will discover this much about his reign.

It was totally a secular reign, governed by a man who had himself at the head, a man who became mad in his latter years, tried to kill David several times, you may remember the story. But his entire reign is what you and I might call a secular humanistic reign. God was not present.

And all of Saul's reign was a man trying to dictate to the country how they should be. If you read the life of Saul, it is a life that brings no glory openly to God, but Saul trying to bring glory to man. And I can't help but think that that is very typical of so much of the governments we have nowadays of secular humanism, where man has put himself on the throne as represented by Saul, a man of a man.

And God is put to the circumference of our society. I quoted in a Bible study this morning, a verse that occurs five times in the book of Judges. The last five chapters in the book of Judges is a degenerating priesthood, right down to a degenerated nation, or the tribe of Dan.

And if you look at it, it's a progression of evil, those last five chapters. And every one of those chapters has the same verse in it, and it says this, and in those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. When God is put to the circumference, and man exalts himself to be the centre of his theology, of his lifestyle, of his philosophy, of his government, we call that religion secular humanism.

You know, it amazes me you get people like communists, or communism that tries to wipe out religion, totally failing to see that communism is a religion. All belief systems are religions. And now the religion of Canada, people say we're a secular nation, we're not a secular nation, we're a country whose religion is secular humanism.

That's the philosophy that governs the decisions of our nation. And under Saul, that was the country's government of Israel, because God was not in the land. After the time of Saul, David became king.

And David had been king for nearly 20 years, when he has the wonderful idea of bringing God back to Shiloh. You see, after these men had been slain, these 50,000, the men of Kijujera had come and taken the Ark and had put it in a shed, under covers, at the home of a man called Abinadab. It had been there now for almost 80 years, under covers, in a shed.

David says to his counsellors, let's go and bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Shiloh so that we might once again establish righteousness and religion on our land. Now, if anybody can complain about that, who wants God's glory to come back? How many of you would like to see God's glory come back to Victoria, and to Canada? Nothing wrong with David's desire, is there? He wants God to come back, as represented by the Ark, so that the priesthood can once again come, and sins can be forgiven, and the offerings be made, and sacrifices. Nothing wrong with that at all.

His desire is absolutely wonderful. So, in talking to his counsellor, he decides about doing this. They all agree to him.

So, David said, now, where is it? And they said, it's the home of Abinadab, some distance away on the borders of Palestine, or Philistia. And he says, well, how shall we get there? And somebody says, well, when the Philistines brought it there, they brought it on an oxen cart. That's a good way to transport anything, isn't it? On an oxen cart.

So, David decides they're going to get some trained oxen, not cows, milk cows. Trained oxen, the best, the fittest. And they built a cart, a new cart, a wonderful cart, to go and get the Ark of the Covenant back, to bring God's glory back to the church.

And they went with much celebration, much fanfare. All the nation was celebrating. We've got a righteous king who wants God's glory to come back.

And so they go, and they take the Ark from outside, from the shed where it was, took the covers off, and they put it on the cart. And all the band, all the priests start singing, and they're playing their wind instruments, and they're beating their drums. They're going to have a great celebration.

They start the journey towards Jerusalem, to Shiloh. The oxen take three steps. These are trained oxen.

And they stumble. And the cart wobbles. And a young man puts his hand out to touch the cart, to touch the Ark of the Covenant.

And he's immediately slain. David goes back home in a tizz. He's angry at God.

He's embarrassed. He shuts himself away for several days, complaining to God, that I'm trying to bring your glory back, God. Why? Why do you allow this man, this young priest to be slain? All he did was try to steady the cart.

And he's home there for three months. Locked himself away. And as his temper cools, he begins to read the scriptures.

And he finds in the book of Numbers, chapter four, where God is talking about the Ark, and talking about the progress, talking about the patterns, of which he said to Moses, make sure you follow the pattern implicitly. He read there that it says, And the sons of Kohath shall be those that bear the Ark. Of all the sons of Levi, who were given different ministries to do in the early days of the tabernacle, during the wilderness, and afterwards when it came into palace, into Israel, everyone had different jobs to do.

And he read there that one verse that said, And the sons of Kohath, one of the sons of Levi, shall be those that bear the Ark. So David called the family of Levi together. He picked out the family of the Kohaths.

He said to them, Are you aware that you should be the ones carrying this Ark? They did not know that. So he prayed to them, and he dedicated them to the carrying of the Ark. And then they went back to Kijer-Jerum, to the house of Abinadab.

This time with a little less pretension. This time with a little bit less self-ego. They come to the Ark.

He says to the young men from the tribe of Kohath, I want you to take those rods that you've got, these gold-covered rods. I want you to slip them through the holes in the side of the Ark, as it had been decreed many hundreds of years before. Can you imagine? I tell you what, if my name was John Kohath, and I was told to put that rod in that hole, knowing that the last time that Ark was touched, the young man was smitten, I'd have been very, very hesitant.

I'd have been very, very nervous. But the king had commanded it. So the young men slide the pole through the hole at the side, the hook at the side, through the other one, and they're still there.

They slide the rod down the other side of the Ark, and the king says lift the Ark, and they take it up on their shoulders. I'm sure they're still shaking. And David says, Let's go.

They start walking. They walk five paces. David says, Stop.

What's the matter? What's the matter? Let's worship. Let's worship. The priests begin to sing, and the instruments start to play, and they lift their hallelujahs to God.

David says, Okay, let's move. And they move another five paces. Stop.

Let's worship. And that's the way they took the entire journey back to Shiloh. Why am I telling you that story? If there's anything to learn from that story, it is this.

If you and I are going to do God's work, we'd better do it God's way. The world, the church today, is so good at copying the methods of the world. I know pastors' meetings put on by business institutes that teach us the best method of business organization, best made to invest money for our churches, et cetera, et cetera, the business techniques of the world.

So God sits on the side. He says, You don't need me. Just get on with it the way you do it.

You heard the story of a Christian from China who came to America, went back home, and they asked him when he got back to his church in China, what was it like in America in the churches? He said, They're magnificent, wonderful, big churches. But he said, I'm really amazed how much they can do without God.

What a tragic, tragic commentary on the church.

Brothers and sisters, it's time we got back to doing God's work in God's way. And God has decreed that he called his people to walk in unity and love. Do a prayer of Jesus.

John 17 says this. Father, I'm coming back to you to come back again to the glory that was once mine. I thank you for these men you gave me.

He's about to die. And he's in the upper room with his disciples. I thank you for the men you give me.

I do not ask that you take them from the world, but I ask that you keep them. I'm so glad he's keeping me. I would hate to go one day in this world without the assurance that Jesus is the one who keeps me.

Then he said this. I do not pray only for them, but I pray for all those who will come to believe in me. All those in Departure Bay Baptist Church in 2006.

I pray, Father, that you will make them one. As you and I are one. So that Nanaimo will know that you love them and you gave me for them.

I pray for all those in Nanaimo who are mine in 2006 that you will make them one so that you will know how much you love them and that you sent me for them. That's the prayer of Jesus. You can have all the evangelism programs you want, brothers and sisters.

The Four Spiritual Laws, the Calvary Road, whatever spiritual book. If there is no unity in the church of Jesus Christ, do not expect Nanaimo to know that God loves them. He might win one to Christ, but he wants to win the city to Christ.

He's looking for men and women who are going to do it his way. Who are going to prioritize in the things that he calls priorities. Loving one another, serving one another, being obedient to his word.

He's looking for people who understand his principle that he has set in the church gifts and each one of us, so that each one of us can carry the burden he has called us to do so that together corporately we minister to the body of Christ so that the body of Christ in Nanaimo becomes strong because the people of God are linked together and yoked together with Jesus the Savior, therefore flying like eagles so that this city will begin to see the people of God manifest in the presence of God. As long as we continue to copy Saul, as long as we continue to copy the methods of the world, do not expect the church of Jesus Christ to grow strong. But when you and I find people who are set free to fly like a spirit because they are united with Jesus, and praise God I know people like this, you will see the church beginning to impact in society.

Today is a Sunday where we remember the persecuted church. I want to tell you we support people in India who go through persecution all the time, but when we read the stories of what God is doing with some of those young people in India, in the churches of India, our hearts are thrilled, absolutely thrilled, and it is still true that the church of Jesus Christ is built on the blood of martyrs, men and women who have laid down their lives because they have learnt the liberty of soaring in the things of the spirits. And count not this life of any value, but take the motto of that wonderful man, Jim Elliot, who died saying this, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Brothers and sisters, I'd long to see a day when men and women of God are committed to do God's work in God's way. Maybe some of you are listening to this week after week. You wonder maybe at some of my

passion, because I feel it so passionately.

And maybe you know that there are burdens in your life that you've never dealt with. Maybe there's still a sin burden. Maybe there's grievances in your life that you've never dealt with.

Maybe you feel that you can't know God in this way. Maybe you feel like the turkey. You long to be like an eagle, but you feel like a turkey.

Maybe there are things that are hindering you, and maybe the root of all that is that you've never yet come into new life as found in Jesus Christ. Today's the day when you can come to him and say, Lord, I want to know you. I want to be set free from the bondages, the weight that I carry, the weight, the sin that so easily ties me down.

I want to be set free of that. And I know, Lord Jesus, that you're the only one that sets me free. I know, Lord Jesus, that in dying upon the cross you died and shed your blood, that the burden of my sin might be cast off, that I might be set free.

And I ask you, Lord, that you'll put upon me your burden, because I want to live a life here that is so full of you that soars on the wings like the eagle that brings glory to your name. If there are people like that here today, I invite you to come and talk afterwards. Maybe come out the front and we can pray with you.

Because if we did not give you the opportunity and you long for this experience of knowing a fulfilled life of God's presence in your life, whereas the hindrance might be simply that you've never even been born again of the Spirit of God, let's begin the process today. And if there are others of you who long to follow up more of this in talking to me, please, please, please come and talk with me. This is where my delight is.

My burden, my number one goal in life these days is to see people set free to fly like eagles. I'll spend all the time you want to talk with that. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you. I thank you for your great love in sending your Son to die on the cross for us. I thank you for the blood that was shed that we might be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

I thank you for your Spirit that has come to dwell in us, to quicken us and make us alive to you and aware of you. We stand before you today acknowledging, Lord, that we are not what we should be. And the church is not what it should be.

And the presence of God is not readily manifest among your people. But, Lord, deliver us from ever having that word Ichabod written above us, for we want your glory to be here. And each one of us prays, Father, and I pray, Father, that my life might be such that you would be pleased in your mercy, in your grace, to make your presence known among us.

Pray, Father, that maybe people in this congregation today or in the next months will know the joy of being set free from the sins that hinder us. That there may be some whose vision will be open to the great things you can do in their life as they begin to stretch out for you. Pray you'll give wisdom to the leaders of this church, Lord, that they might be sensitive to release young eagles and teach them how to fly.

That, Father, you might be pleased to pour out your anointing upon us. I ask this, Father, for your namesake, for your glory. Amen.

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