

The Winged Fowl of Scripture

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and searching for God's altars, highlighting the characteristics of various birds in scripture to illustrate key principles of prayer.

Duration: 33:51

Scripture: Genesis 8:9

Topics: "Spiritual Rest", "Prayer And Strength"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Noah and the dove as a symbol of service. The dove was sent out to see if the waters had receded from the earth, but it found no rest. This represents the world being overthrown by sin and the lack of rest for the child of God in a sinful world. The preacher emphasizes that a true child of God should not find attraction or rest in the evil of the world. The sermon also highlights the importance of prayer in understanding God's will and the need for believers to wait upon the Lord and renew their strength, comparing it to the wings of eagles mentioned in the book of Isaiah.

Transcript

Father in heaven, as we turn to thy holy word, I take the promised Holy Ghost, the blessed power of Pentecost, to fill me to the uttermost, I take. Thank God he undertakes for me. And the people of God said, Amen.

These past few days I have been contemplating the subject of prayer. We need to pray. And my mind was directed to the winged life of the birds of scripture.

Because if you look with me at the fortieth chapter of the book of Isaiah, you will find at the end of that fortieth chapter the word of God. And in verse thirty-one of the fortieth chapter, you read that 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 fail. And I said to myself, there is something special about the winged fowl of scripture that is related to prayer.

In those words we have a pointer to this. We will mount up with wings as eagles. But there are a lot of other birds in the scripture and created persons in the scripture.

So I turned in my Bible and started to look for these birds and other creatures. And the first one I looked at was the sparrow. And do you know what the characteristic of the sparrow is? The characteristic of the sparrow is to search.

But you say to me, how do you know that? Because I have read the Bible. And if you turn with me to the eighty-fourth Psalm, you will find a special reference to the sparrow. And you will find there in Psalm eighty-four that, Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young eve at thine alters, O Lord of hosts, my God and my King.

And I looked at that verse. And I said it was never permitted under the law for any bird to alight on the altar. In fact, when Abraham, and you can look this up in the book of Genesis and just read the whole book through until you come to it, you will find that the fowls of the air came down upon the sacrifice.

And Abraham spent his time chasing them from the sacrifice. And I said, why is that? I went to my Hebrew Bible, and I discovered that those words there at the end of that verse are specially in brackets. And the writing of the Hebrew is that this is a parenthesis.

It is something that does not run in the full message of the writer, but he parts a little from his main theme, and he puts these words in parenthesis. So you leave them out for a moment and read it again. Yes, the sparrow, my soul longeth, verse 2, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh cry about for the living God. And then you come to the parenthesis which you leave out. Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and to swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.

And that is where the parenthesis ends. And then it says, even thine outers. So even thine outers are connected to verse 2. My heart and my flesh cry about for the living God, even thine outers, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

And in those verses there is this inset, this inset about the sparrow and about another bird called the swallow. And I said, there is something very, very good here. I turned back to the book of Exodus and I said, where are God's altars mentioned? And they are first mentioned in the making of the tabernacle.

And there is two of them only. There is the altar of incense and there is the brazen altar of the sacrifices, the burnt sacrifices on the altar. Where will I find God? My heart and my flesh cry about for the living God, even thine outers, O Lord God of hosts, my King and my God.

And then the Holy Spirit reminds us of the sparrow. And the sparrow is characterized by searching. And what do we read? Yea, the sparrow hath found a nest, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young.

So we have in this portion of Scripture a tremendous emphasis on searching. Searching for what? Searching for the altars of God. And in searching for the altars of God, we have three names given to God.

O Lord of hosts. To learn the lesson of the sparrow. And what does the sparrow do? The little sparrow keeps searching until she finds a nest.

And that is what we have to do when we come to prayer. We have to search until we get ourselves and our soul and our mind and our conscience and all that is within us into the house of God. Prayer brings my soul to find the house of God.

And if prayer doesn't get you to God's house, then you have never prayed. For it is in God's house that God answers our prayers. So every time you see a sparrow, please remember that.

But please also remember the preciousness of the sparrow. Only once in the New Testament is a sparrow mentioned. And the sparrow is mentioned by our Lord Jesus Christ.

And He says that a sparrow can't fall to the ground, can't die, but your heavenly Father knoweth it. And then He says, Are ye not better than many sparrows? What a wonderful encouragement and motivation for God's people to pray. If God remembers the sparrow struck down and lying, dying, and He notes that fact, how much more does He care for His own children? Let us learn the lesson and let us be searchers after God's house.

And may we not rest until we come into God's house and plead before God at His altars. Your requests never go away until your requests are made known unto God and you have the assurance that they will be answered. But please note something else, that the sparrow here is united with another bird.

In verse 3 of Psalm 84, The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young. Now, this swallow is emphasized by swiftness because the swallow is one of the most swift birds in all the universe. In fact, there is a family of birds, there is a swallow, there is a swift, and there is a marten, and those birds are the fastest little birds in all the world.

And the strange thing about that family of birds, the only time they rest on this earth is in the breeding season. All the other times they fly and they have been examined and discovered that they eat flying. They must have good digestion if they can do that.

Do you ever try to eat flying? I'm not talking about flying on a plane, I'm talking about using your hands and feet and running and trying to eat at the same time. Yes, you'll be looking for some sort of bottle to take away indigestion if you try that. But the amazing thing is, they sleep.

They sleep when they're flying. Scientifically it's proven. These birds sleep.

The only time they rest is when they bring forth their young. There's some message here, isn't there, about praying. We should be praying all the time.

Our atmosphere should be one of praying. And the time we rest from praying is when the souls are being led to Christ and the seed is being born. It says here in this verse, when the young are laid, the swallow speaks of swiftness.

How swift that little bird is. Now I was looking at another verse in the Old Testament and it's over in the book of Proverbs. Turn over to Proverbs.

There's a little interesting verse in the book of Proverbs and I'd like to direct your attention to it. And it says there in the book of Proverbs, verse 2 of chapter 26 of the book of Proverbs, So this little bird as it flies reminds us of a great truth and fundamental fact that no curse comes upon us without a cause. And if there's no cause for the curse, there will be no curse.

And then I thought I would look at some people that caused curses to come. And I looked of course at Balaam. He had no right to curse the children of Israel.

And there was no cause for a curse of the children of Israel. So what happened? The curse causeless does not come. Balaam was himself cursed and died, but the saints of God got the victory.

So that little sparrow teaches me as I pray that the curse of God cannot touch me. You know why? I'm covered in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus Christ took my curse for me.

And the curse causeless shall not come. There's another man who cursed the people of God. He was a big fellow.

He got plenty of orange juice in the houses of the Philistines evidently. He grew to be a great man. He went out and cursed little David.

Remember that? He cursed David. But the curse causeless doesn't come. And instead of David being cursed, Goliath got a sore head that never membered.

I was reading a very good sermon by Archibald G. Brown who was one of the first students that Spurgeon ever had and became a great preacher. His church in London, the East London Tabernacle became the second greatest church in London. And he always boasted that while Spurgeon had 1,600 at his permitting, he had always 2,000 at his.

So he was a great man of God. And he said once, he said, you know, we hear people boasting. And he said the best story of a boaster he ever heard was about an Irishman.

And the Irishman was a soldier. And as a soldier he was out to fight with the enemies of his country or rather of Britain for he was in the British Army. And they had a great victory one day.

And the old general went round the regiment to congratulate his men for the great fight they put up. And this Irishman was right out in the front and he was shouting about the great victory. And so the general said to him, well man, what did you do? Oh, he said, sir, I faced the enemy and I cut both feet off.

And the general said, why did you not take his head off? He said it was already cut off. Now there are people like that in the Lord's Army. And they can fight disabled people, but they don't fight the real enemy.

David dealt with the head of Goliath. He didn't cut off his feet, he cut off his head. And he took the head home with him.

He says he carries it back. And in that head was the stone. So he had four stones in his pocket and a fifth stone in Goliath's head.

So he won the battle but brought all the ammunition home. That's the way God helps us to fight the battle because the curse causeless cannot come. Look at the little spiral.

Learn the lesson. And the last man was a man called Shemaiah. It's found over in 2 Samuel 16 verses 5 and 12.

He cursed David in the day that David fled from Absalom. And he called David a bloody man and he said he was full of bloodthirsty deeds. And David was not guilty of those things.

And the curse causeless did not come. And the end of that man, Shemaiah, was death. But David returned to the throne because the curse causeless does not come.

So we have learned, we have learned from the swallow that it is stamped with searching and the swallow is stamped with swiftness. But there's another bird in Scripture. It is the dove.

Now the first bird in the Bible ever mentioned is the raven. And I read the portion of Scripture. That's the first reference to any bird in the Bible, the raven.

But the second bird is the dove. Now the dove is a very interesting bird. And everywhere you come to look at the dove, it is emphasized with service.

Our prayers have to be emphasized with searching and with swiftness like the spittle and the swallow. But then we need to serve. Prayer is a service.

I am told that there are four species of doves in Palestine. And I am told that Palestine has many, many tens of thousands of doves and of their fellows, the pigeons, in Palestine even today. But I turn over to the 8th chapter.

I turn over to the 8th chapter of Genesis, part of which I read with you tonight. And I discover some special things about the dove. And the first thing I find out about the dove is that the dove was sent forth so that Noah could find out if the waters were abated from off the face of the earth.

But the dove found no rest of her foot and she returned unto him into the ark. And then she was put out a second time. And the second time she came, she had an olive leaf in her mouth.

And then she went out again and returned not again any more. Now here we have the study of prayer. God sends us to pray that we can find out what is happening in this world of ours.

Oh, I know there are people and they have strange views of things and they think to know what is happening. But the only place you can find out what God is really doing is in the place of prayer. When God opens our eyes to see what is happening.

And this dove which speaks of service, this dove that speaks of service, she was sent out to see what? And she saw a world that was still covered with water and she found no rest for the soul of her foot. She evidently tried to land in the flood but she could not do it. And God wants to give us a vision of this world.

The vision of a world that is overthrown by sin and where there is no rest for the child of God. A child of God that rests in a world of sin is not a child of God. It is a hypocrite.

It is a reprobate. There is no rest for me. The evil of this world has no attraction for me.

God has saved me from the world. The world is a hateful place. Why? Because it has rejected the Son of God.

I can have no part with those who kneel to the tree and where his name is never named. That is not the place for me. Farewell thy turn aside, though thou seem kind and good.

That hand of friendship that the world holds out to you, it is stained with the precious blood of Christ. They put him on a cross and nailed him to the tree. But the second time, the dove did not finish the service the first time.

The second time the dove went back again, she came home in the evening. And when she came home in the evening, she had an olive leaf plucked off. The olive tree was seen.

Its beautiful foliage was seen. And she snapped off a leaf and she brought it in her mouth. That olive leaf is the sign, the first sign of revival blessing.

How happy is the soul that gets an olive leaf in the mouth of its prayers as he awaits before God for an outpouring of the Spirit. But the olive leaf is not enough. Noah did not want an olive leaf.

He wanted the whole world to be rid of water. So he sent her out again. And the dove returned not again.

Because the water was dried up. What a lovely picture of how we should pray. And how step by step God leads his people to the place of answered prayer.

Now I would like to go on and give you these other words. But the time has gone. But I just want to say to you, think about the eagle.

And if you look carefully in your Bible about the eagle, you will find that the eagle is stamped with sovereignty. And then think of the hen. Christ is the only person in the whole Bible that talks about the hen.

And he said, how often would I have gathered thee under my breast. As a hen does gather her offspring under her. But ye would not.

Under her wings. But ye would not. Luke 13 verse 34.

The hen is characterized by safety. The safest place is to have your ear on the heart of God. When the chick goes under the wing of the hen, what does it hear? The heartbeat of the mother hen.

And prayer brings us to the place where we hear the heartbeat of the Lord Jesus. Nothing will give you a passion for souls until you hear the heartbeat of Christ for the lost. But then there's another bird.

It's the raven. And that's the first bird that was mentioned in Scripture. The raven.

And then came the dove, as we have seen. Let me say to you that raven brings in some wonderful teaching about praying. The hair of Christ in the Old Testament is hair as black as a raven.

Read the Song of Songs. But go to the New Testament and it's hair as white as snow. Revelation chapter 1. Why is that? Because he has been through the cross.

The raven is a bird of prey. Prey. An unclean bird.

Not allowed to be offered on the altar. That's what happened to our Lord. The curse fell upon him.

His hair was black like a raven because he stood in the place of sinners. But thank God today his hair is white as snow. And your black heart can be washed in the Savior's blood and can become whiter than the snow.

So the raven. The emphasis of the raven is upon the sorrow. The sorrowful thing.

When that raven left the ark never to return. At least the dove came back with the good news of a world to be saved. The last wing of course is the wing of the angel.

And if you read the Bible you'll find something about the angel's wings. And you'll find the emphasis of the angel is upon the sentinel. The angels are the sentinels of God.

The first angels mentioned in the Bible were at the tree that they guarded. They were God's sentinels. And they guarded it with their swords.

Turning every way to the tree of life. The angels. The angels came with speed to a man called Daniel.

One angel. He flew with God's answer. I read in the Bible that the angels are the servants of the elect of God.

The angels serve the saints. And I also learned that the angel of the Lord encompass round about those that fear him. And delivereth them.

Do you want deliverance? Get your eye on the angel. May God bless these few remarks to our hearts.

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