

Soar Like the Eagles

by Thaddeus Barnum

God wants to bestow his love upon us, but we must be willing to receive it and be born again to live a new life in Christ.

Duration: 29:40

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares an analogy about turkeys and eagles to illustrate the transformative power of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that it is not our job to try to change ourselves or others, but rather to share the good news of Jesus and allow Him to transform us into new beings. The speaker reminds the audience of the love that God has bestowed upon us through the incarnation of Jesus and encourages them to trust in God's plan for their lives. He concludes by highlighting the simplicity of God's message and the desire of God to bestow His love upon us.

Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we praise you and worship you and honor you this morning. As we gather together in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and I pray the refreshing wind of the Holy Spirit upon each of our lives. Even as we are here in your presence, as you meet with us, as we gather together with you in you, deepen our love for you, our communion with you, our walk with you, our heart for you, your heart for us.

Attend us in power, in Jesus' name, amen. Good morning. It is nice to be home again.

We have got a couple of things I'd like to do today. The scriptures that you just heard read have been read since the 16th century. The 1552 Anglican prayer book would have had these scriptures read to celebrate All Saints, the celebration of All Saints Day.

And you've got this beautiful picture between the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes and the great picture and revelation of the Saints in glory. Part of what I'd like to do with you this morning is to be able to simply bathe in the Word of God and let the scriptures just speak to us about God's plan for our lives. And I'm not talking about your plan for God.

I'm talking about his plan for you. And I'm not also talking about the plans of what you're called to do or what you're asking about your circumstances or about how life is going and you need some answers. I'm talking about his wanting to do a work inside of you, a work on the inside, a work by his Spirit as he continues to deepen our relationship with him and he with us.

And that requires that we make room for him in our life. It requires that we spend time with him and begin to allow his mighty power, his mighty work invited into our life in a profound way. It's for this reason I would like to simply make an appeal to you and especially during this stewardship season where we're looking at how we are offering ourselves in worship to the Lord in time and talent and treasure.

Something that I know that the world basically thinks is a conversation about dues to your local clubs. But when you come to Christ, this has nothing to do with dues. It has everything to do with worship, the offering of ourselves to him as he has offered himself to us.

So for this reason I would like to make my appeal to you this morning in your Bibles. If you've got them with you. If you don't, then they're perhaps memorized by you.

To 1 John chapter 3, 1 John chapter 3. You'll notice I told you to turn your cell phone off and some of you are turning to your Bible by turning your cell phones on. It's a stunning new generation. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God and such we are.

For this reason the world does not know us because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are children of God and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him just as he is.

And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself as he is pure. Did you notice how this began? See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us. Now you'll notice if you have conversations with people in the world today, they don't know this conversation.

Why is that? Well, it's very simple. They don't know this word Father. So many people today, if you interview them, you'll find that they don't want anything to do with God.

Why is that? Well, because they don't understand the circumstances that are in the world today. They look at the Middle East. They look at the destruction, the power, the horrible terrorism, the infighting, the violence, the pain, the suffering that's going on all over the world.

They're looking at chaos. They're looking at things that are happening that should never be done. They're trying to examine their own lives.

They're finding tribulation, torment. And they come to this very simple argument that they find reasonable and that they find quite conclusive. And that is this.

That if God is really God, he has the power to do something about this. And he doesn't do it. Why not? The other argument is this.

Yes, but God is love. If he so loved us, he would do something about it. Perhaps he loves us but doesn't have the power to do it.

Therefore, he's really not God. And if he does have the power but he doesn't do it, he's really not love. And so this becomes their argument.

He's not worthy to go before. He's a dictator. One we cannot have relationship with.

Have you met people like this? Are you a person like this? People have realized that they've decided that in their decision to be God, they would reorder the universe. Think about that. But in fact, what really is going on is this.

If we could just put our opinions down and come hear these wonderful words. See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us. When that love was manifested in Bethlehem, when he grew among us, when love itself was incarnate, when he actually came to speak among us, he told us these things would happen.

He said at the end of John 16, did he not, in this world you'll have trouble, you'll have tribulation. He told us even to the end of the age, there'll be wars and earthquakes, all kinds of troubles, all kinds of evils. And then he said, take heart, I've overcome the world.

Did he not say that? Has he not done it? Will he not do it? Are you questioning it? Have I lost you? This is the wonder of our Savior. He has come to say, yes, the world is as it is, but listen to this, we've got a Father in heaven. We have a Father in heaven that we can come to the throne of grace and receive mercy and grace to help in time of need.

We have a Father in heaven. If only we could mix out of our opinions and our fixed decisions and how we think of life and come to the God of the universe, the one who created all things, the one who loves us with a passionate love. Do you want to know God's plan for your life? He wants to bestow this love on us.

Can you believe that? He wants to bestow this love on us. Well, I say it's very simple and our Lord made it simple. He said this in Luke chapter 18, verse 17.

He actually said it in the negative. He said, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child shall not enter it. We've got to be as children to receive this kind of love.

Isn't it the problem with adults? We make everything complicated, don't we? Terribly complicated, don't we? Don't we? And why is it? Because we want things on our terms. We want things done our way. We want things in our order and fixed the way it should be.

Did you notice a child? It doesn't do that. A child knows how to open that. The child palms straight up and receive the love given to the child.

Jesus said, be like a child and receive. It's that simple. It's that powerful.

It's that wonderful. See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God and such we are. Now, where does this language come from? Well, you'll find in John's gospel, he outlines this right from the beginning and again points this to the very word receive.

In John, the gospel of John, you'll find this in chapter 1, verse 11. He came to his own and those who were his own did not receive him, but as many as did receive him. To them he gave the right.

To them he gave the power to become children of God. To as many as believed on his name, who were born not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but born of God. You see what he wants to do with us.

He wants to change us on the inside. He wants to do something that actually takes us out of the natures and the principles of this world, the disorders outside us and the sinful nature inside us. And he wants to actually make us a new person.

He wants to do a work, this love lavished upon us that actually changes us from inside. This is the wonder of this gospel. It is the splendor of this gospel, that this love is meant to be received by us, not just believed upon.

How many of you notice people who believe upon these things, but their lives are not changed? They'll say the creed in a few minutes. They'll believe the creed. But that interaction, that transaction has not happened in the soul.

Something's not going on inside. That love has not actually been received. Received to the point of being changed by that love.

My friends, this is the God with whom we have to do. And this has always been the song down through the ages. This is why the Christians have the most joyous message you can possibly imagine.

Listen to the song that Paul sings in Ephesians chapter one. Listen to this. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him.

Did you get that? Did you understand it? You'll think when your life began, you'll think back in the 1900s, sometime that you were born. Those of you who were born more recently, you'll think about a different date. When were you born? Did you know something? Your beginning has nothing to do with when you were born.

He had you in mind from the foundations of the world. This is the Father with whom we have to do. This is the God with whom we have to do.

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us to adoption as sons, as children through Jesus Christ to himself according to the kind intention of his will, according to the praise of the glory of his grace. Did you hear what he's saying, Paul? The glory of his grace.

He's lavishing grace upon us. He's bestowing grace upon us. What is grace? You don't deserve it.

I don't deserve it. Praise God. But he wants to give it.

Where are the Pentecostals? Let's not have somebody have an amen to that one. Is it not there? I mean, you understand that the way he's giving this to us is that he wants this grace to be given to be received into our lives. So much so, he goes on to say in him, in Jesus, we have redemption through his blood.

According to his kind intention, redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to his kind intention, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavishes on us. See, this is why all of a sudden you start to realize, my friends, if we're not receiving it, why aren't we receiving it? Why doesn't this love come upon us? What's going on with us? What is our condition? Which is exactly how Rob began this service, how the prophets began to pray for us. So many of us have grown up in a culture where we're actually feeling so inadequate, so much like failures, and have been taught we are failures from the

beginning, that we're not worthy, we're not deserving.

And in this false humility, we take up a pride and say no to the grace that he wants to lavish upon us. No, I'm not worthy. No, I'm inadequate.

No, you don't know real me. If you knew the real me, you wouldn't do this. My friends, that's pride, that's sin.

He wants to lavish this on you. Do you want to receive this power, this life inside? You see what he wants to do with us? Of course, there's another set of us that I'm afraid, because of our culture being such an entertainment culture, such a popular culture, where hedonism and pleasure is everywhere, we adopt Jesus into our life, plus other things to satisfy our heart. So we say yes, but we want this, we want that, it's kind of a, and we put it all into a blender, and somehow try to feel good at the end of the day.

My friends, when this love comes, there is no blender. There is nothing else that satisfies the soul. There's nothing else that satisfies the soul.

But this communion with God, for which you and I were born, and that's why Paul says it this way in Ephesians 2, God being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us. Even when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ. By grace you've been saved.

That not of yourselves, he'll say later in that same chapter, by grace you've been saved. He raised us up with him. He seated us with him in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his kindness, of grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, by grace we've been saved.

By grace we've been saved, not by our own doing. Thanks be to God. You have no excuse not to receive this love, unless you would like to continue in your sins, and walk this path in life, and live like the world.

But my friends, you don't have to. We don't have to. Let me give you an analogy.

So this summer, Erlin and I, she's preaching at some church up north in Murrell's Inlet. Saving the pagans up north. And gives her love.

This is our 30th summer that we've spent in Maine. As we go to rest, friends of ours have a cabin there. And in the 30 years that we've been in the same cabin with our family, and growing up in this beautiful coast of Maine, we saw for the first time just tons of turkeys everywhere.

Now I'm talking about the animals. They were everywhere. There were families of turkeys everywhere.

Sitting out on the front lawn, all of a sudden you look in the woods and find these heads peering up and looking out. It was just Turkeyville. So one morning, early in the morning, I get up early, just as dusk was, just as dawn was coming into play, and I took our old English sheepdog diva girl outside for her morning shot.

Remember, I said it sheepdog, not turkey dog. Did you get the difference? She blasts out the door and runs into a family of 10, 12, 13 turkeys. And if you want to hear 7th grade girls screech with this loud, I can't even describe the sound of these birds that are just scared, they're just scared.

And L'Oreal, our dog, is like, what is, what? And then the turkeys begin to run and do what's so unnatural to do. They start to fly. They don't fly well.

They don't. It takes flapping, it takes running, and they're screeching, and they're flapping, and finally they're getting airborne, and our dog's like sitting down going, wow. And then, when they actually get up, they go to the nearest pine tree and get on a branch, and the branch just is like five minutes, just up and down.

There's nothing graceful about a flight of a turkey. There's nothing graceful watching it. Now the grandmother stared at us, she was not going to fly.

If you want me for dinner, have me. And L'Oreal was just like, whatever, go. I mean, it was sweet, but when I was growing up in the Christian faith, the preacher that really shaped and formed Errol and me, who went to be with the Lord this past March, he always had a phrase he loved to say, my friends, if you want to fly like an eagle, you have to be born one.

Do you know how impossible it is to teach turkeys to fly like an eagle? Do you know how many Christian churches today are trying to teach the people in the pew how to fly like an eagle? It's called moralism. It's called legalism. You heard the Beatitudes read, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, the humble, for they shall inherit the earth. Dear friends, shall we try to do this? Shall we try to behave like a Christian, act like a Christian, talk like a Christian? Most people are teaching turkeys how to be eagles.

Try to lift up the standard of our improvement in our behavior, trying to get us out of the earthy nature of our lives and make us of a higher moral character. We're teaching turkeys to look like and act like and sound like eagles. My dear friends, if you want to fly like an eagle, you have to be born one.

And that is the glory of the news that we have. That's the wonder, the beauty of the news that you and I have. It is the most embarrassing thing for us to try to teach turkeys to be eagles.

Our job is to come tell the good news of Jesus Christ. He's come to make us children of God. He's come to make us eagles.

He's come to take us turkeys and make us by the power of his resurrected life, because of what he did at Calvary's Hill, make us a new being. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things passed away.

New things have come. New things have come. And my friends, this is the end of happening in our lives.

They who wait upon the Lord shall mount up like eagles, shall walk. You know this wonderful gift that's been given to us. You and I can actually now begin a new life in Christ and watch his divine power and his divine nature begin to grow those wings out and begin to learn what it means and how to live as Christians live, how we're intended to be, what he's called us to be.

And that's why our text says this. The world does not know us because it did not know him. The world is not aware of us.

Why? Because we're not turkeys anymore. And that is the embarrassing piece of this. Too many eagles are trying to be turkeys again.

Too many of us are trying to go back into the world and live like the world, speak like the world, act like the world, sin like the world. My friends, you embarrass yourself. When you as an eagle try to be a turkey, you're embarrassing yourself.

You cannot squawk like an old turkey because you've got a new language now. You can't act like a turkey because there's Christ in you that's gonna say no to this. He's wanting you to explore every aspect of kingdom life and that kingdom life that is now inside you isn't just designed for this present age, it's designed for the age to come.

That's why always when we talk about the saints, this has always been the story from the beginning. These great images, these great visions as you heard in Revelation. Who are these people that we heard about in Revelation 7? These are the ones who have come out of the tribulation.

They've come out of the tribulation. Now, many of you have your doctrines in order and you have a view of what you think tribulations are and what he means by that, but I can tell you all of us know tribulation. As Jesus said at the end of John 16, in the world you'll have tribulations.

He's going to come to bring us out. These are those who have brought us out. He's brought us out of those tribulations.

He's dressed us in white robes by the blood of the lamb. Who are these people? These are the ones who are before the throne of God and they serve him night and day, day and night, and he who sits on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. The sun shall not spite them by day nor the moon by night.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and the lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd and shall guide them to the springs of the water of life, and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes. You see, that's coming, and you see there's a part of it that already is. Our shepherd is already on the throne.

You are already, if you are an eagle, you are already positioned in Christ at his right hand in heavenly places. He has already spread his covering of his Holy Spirit over you and over this church. He is already guiding you, your family, this church, as a shepherd does, to the springs of the water of life, allowing us to drink, allowing us to imbibe our souls, allowing us to feed on the heavenly manna and the heavenly water that lasts unto eternal life.

And he is our comfort, no matter what we're going through, that wipes every tear from our eye, already, already and yet to come. We have the blood of the lamb washing us and cleansing us. We have the Father's love lavished upon us if we would just humble ourselves to receive.

I shall tell you a private thing. These days for Erlin and for me, we've come to our 11th year serving at a church in Connecticut and there are things that our church, our vestry, our leadership, we've come to a place that there are questions before us that for eight long years we have sought the face of God for in fastings and in prayer, things that we have watched him answer all over this country. And for whatever reason, he has not done that right now with us.

And so we have come before the Lord, fastings and prayers and a place where you actually get on your knees and hold out your hands and say, Lord, I can't fix my story. This is called bad leadership in the secular world. If you've got a problem, you get people in to fix the problem and then you tell people there's a problem and you fixed it, get on board.

But in the kingdom of God, in the kingdom of the glories of our Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who sits in the center of the throne, our shepherd, we kneel before him and say, Lord, I don't have the answers. I don't know how to fix these things, but I know the one who does. Do you know how hard this posture is? Well, it's only hard for adults.

Children know this posture, don't they? They hold their hands out just to be grabbed and embraced and brought up and held and loved. This for us has not been a season of watching things fixed. It's been a season of receiving the lavished love of God into our lives.

Oh, I wish I had the answers. But I would trade the answers every day for the one who is the answer. My friends, is that your story? You trying to figure life out? You trying to make sure all things are well with you and your family and your health and your finances and all the things? Did your football team lose last night? Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Yours is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn. We shall know comfort.

Blessed are those who are meek and humble, for we shall inherit the earth. I want to tell you something. There is no greater joy than being an eagle going to talk to a bunch of turkeys and tell them, we don't have to live like this anymore.

We don't have to live like this anymore. We don't have to squawk like you squawk anymore. We don't have to have that long runway to try to get up into the air and try to get our big, fat bodies into a pine tree because a sheepdog, not a turkey dog, is chasing us.

No, no, this is the joy of the church down 2,000 years of history. This is the joy of what it is to be a Christian. We don't live like that anymore.

We are children of God now. And though it's not appeared what we shall be, hallelujah, hallelujah, when he appears, we shall be like him. Oh, the day that is coming.

This is what we do. We prepare people for that day. We, you and I, get to teach turkeys how to be eagles in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Changed, converted, let it begin with us and let us fly like he's meant us to fly from the foundations of the world. Amen.

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