

Series: Created to Fly
3-b. The Eagles and the Storms
John 16.33

Last Sunday we observed that Jesus warned his disciples that **Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.** John 16.33 If anything is guaranteed in life it is that we will all face a few storms, some are small and others huge. Some can be seen coming from a distance, but others come when least expected. Some are created by us, while others are not our fault.

We also said that in our lives we'll face at least 3 types of storms:

1. Storms of Correction – They come because God loves us, He disciplines us as a father corrects his children if he really loves them. God loves us immensely and will correct us so that we might acknowledge when there is disobedience in our lives. We spoke about Jonah as an example as he was corrected by God when he decided not only to disobey but also to run away from Him. The correction came through a storm.

The correction is not to harm but to restore our lives, so that He might bless us again. When the storms of correction come, we just have to obey, because if we do not, more storms will come, stronger in their intensity. The choice is ours.

2. Storms of Direction - They are used by God to correct the trajectory of our lives or to take us to the place where He wants to use us like He did with His servant Paul on the road to Damascus.

3. Perfecting Storms - They make us more into the image of Christ and prepare us to serve God. This type of storm transforms us into the men and women He needs us to be. They prepare us for a future that is not possible without God's perfecting work in us. There isn't maturity or spiritual power without going through storms.

It is important to know that the storms we might be facing right now or have faced in the past, don't mean that God doesn't love you or that He has abandoned you. We ought to analyze the storms and discover what God is wanting to say or achieve through them and cooperate with the will and leading of the Lord.

God desires as much to help us in the midst of storms as He wants to teach us through them. That's why He takes the time to come to our aid. God doesn't give us faith so that we can avoid the storms, but so that we might be strong and firm in the midst of them. It is not as important to learn to escape the storms as it is to know how to navigate when they arrive and learn how to take advantage of them.

Storms can be physical, family, financial, marital, spiritual, etc. Some can be avoided through our choices but since we can't avoid all storms, what should we do when they arise? To answer this question let's look at what the eagles do when the storm approaches.

a. Sometimes they open their wings, cover their offspring and remain firm in the nest until the storm is gone.

Similarly, sometimes we can't do anything and we need to stand firm in God until the storm passes. That's what happened to David when he was being chased by King Saul. In the storm he hid in a cave and prayed to God: **Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy! I look to you for protection. I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings until the danger passes by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me. He will send help from heaven to rescue me, disgracing those who hound me. My God will send forth his unfailing love and faithfulness.** Psalms 57.1-3 David couldn't escape the storm so he asks for God to cover him with his protective wing. Sometimes that's all you can do, stay firm and ask for the Lord's protection and deliverance.

b. Other times, when the storm hits, the eagle sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it.

Sometimes we have to face our problems head on and God will help us fly over them. God will use the storms to help us grow and lead to other levels in our lives. In this case the storms represent opportunities. That's why Isaiah 40.31 says: **Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.** Whatever it is we have to do, when storms come we have to learn to do 3 things.

1. Learn to Wait

I remember one night when a storm descended upon the city of Bangkok, Thailand, where I was living. A huge roar woke me up. It was raining heavily and thunder could be heard well above the apartment, while lightning flashed across the room. I tried to go back to sleep but couldn't because I was afraid and anxious. All I wanted was to escape the storm or for the storm to go away, but I had to wait a few hours for calm to be restored and I could go back to sleep.

When we are in panic, or we are in an uncomfortable situation, it is difficult to wait because all we want is to flee or for the circumstances to change as quickly as possible. And because we do not like to wait, many times, we are impulsive and think we have to do something, therefore we end up adding or creating even more problems or storms. Waiting is difficult because it demands discipline, confidence and patience.

Psalms 147.10-11 says that: **The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.** To "put their hope" doesn't mean to resign oneself but means to wait with expectation. For God it is important that we wait on Him with trust, faith and expectation. Our Father knows exactly what we are feeling. He knows it's uncomfortable, painful and difficult. He won't allow us to stay in the storm longer than necessary.

All great men and women of God went through storms. We talked about David, but there were many more, such as Daniel in the lions' den, Moses when he was pursued by Pharaoh, Joseph when he was sold by his brothers, Stephen being stoned for preaching the gospel, and Christ crucified, etc.

You may be in the will of God and still go through storms and suffer with others. Being a Christian doesn't exempt us from storms but it does guarantee that God will be with us in their midst. We must learn to wait for the time and the will of God if we are to emerge triumphant from our storms.

When storms come we have to:

2. Learn to find God in the storms and draw blessing from them

Often we can't avoid storms and therefore we must learn to find God in their midst and take advantage of them. Actually the only way for us to be blessed through the storms is if we invite God to our storms and find Him in their midst.

When a storm approaches, other birds run away looking for places to hide but the eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. The eagle does not escape the storm, it simply uses the storm to lift it higher and fly above. For a few moments, she may be pulled back by the wind but as that happens she also gains altitude and rises up. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.

Sometimes the same happens to us. A storm arrives and immediately we look for ways to escape it, but sometimes that isn't possible, therefore, we have to face it head on. When the storms of life come upon us - and all of us will experience them - we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them. Maybe at first the storm might pull you back but with God's favor you may also gain altitude and rise above the storm.

We'll have to fight against the wind, the circumstances that sometimes scare us, weaken us, tire us, but the scriptures promise that the Lord is with us. Isaiah 64.4 states that: **Since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him!** The Lord knows your limitations and when you can no longer endure, He will act on behalf of those who wait for Him. God wants us to win and after trials we'll find great blessings, so persevere in your faith. Seek to find God in the midst of your storms and discover the blessings that might be hidden in them.

If you make the decision to SEEK and OBEY God in the midst of the storm, you will be blessed through it. What the enemy may want to use to harm you is what God will use to bless you.

When storms come we have to:

3. Learn to fly above the storms

To face the storm isn't to ignore that it is dangerous and difficult to bear. The storms represent uncomfortable moments in our lives but, with God, there is a way out, we'll be able to raise up and fly above the storms. But for that to happen:

a. You must give steps of faith

In the midst of the storm you must decide to trust in God, believe in Him and His promises. You won't seek to flee but instead to believe that God can use the storm to take you to higher paces and bless you. That's not possible without faith.

In Matthew 14 we read that some of Jesus' disciples were caught in a storm. They feared for their lives and Christ appeared at the right time. Peter looked at him and he believed that he could walk over the storm, so he left the boat and took a step of faith in Christ's direction. The miracle was a reality meanwhile he believed and kept his eyes fixed on Christ.

We'll be able to walk over our storms, over our problems, if we take steps of faith in God's direction instead of running away from Him. In the midst of storms God often calls us to give steps of faith in His direction. We can allow God's power to lift us above the storms.

To raise up and fly above the storms:

b. You must seek the Lord even more

The storms will lead you closer to God or away from Him. It all depends on your attitude and the direction you take. In the midst of your storm, walk in the direction of the Lord. The eagles are not afraid of the wind. On the contrary, they use it to their advantage. Do the same and see the storm as an opportunity and surrender yourself in His hands.

In Isaiah 43:1b-2 we are taught: **Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.**

To raise up and fly above the storms:

c. You must maintain balance in all areas of your life. Balance is the key to fly above the storms.

- You need to maintain spiritual balance, meaning your relationship with God, because many times when we go through storms is when we turn away from the Lord and his people.
- You have to maintain physical balance and take care of your body.
- You have to maintain emotional balance and take care of your relationships and protect your thoughts.

Amid the storms we tend to despair and not take care of what is really important. But if we are to rise up and fly above the storms, we need to maintain balance in all areas of our life.

Let's end with Psalms 37:5-7 **Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.** Today God is talking to each of us and He is asking us to trust in Him.

Let's pray - Lord, You are with us. You know the storms that we are facing right now and you know the ones that are coming. You're big enough to help in the midst of our storms. We need your help to take steps of faith. Although the winds are strong, we want to grow in our trust in you and learn to see you in the midst of our storms. Take away all the anxiety of our hearts and fill us with your peace. Thank our God!