

2019 09 29 – Eagle’s Wings

Psalm 91: 1-5, 7, 11-12, 14-16

On Thursday morning I came to work and tears started to well up in my eyes. I’m not sure exactly why. It could have been dismal grey skies, worry about upcoming meetings in my calendar, or grief held-over from recent funerals. It could have been anxiety about my mother’s upcoming move into a senior’s home or the church’s deficit budget. It could have been guilt over people not yet visited or emails not yet answered. Probably it was a combination of all those things. All I know is there was a lot of emotion welling up within me and what I really needed was a good cry.

I expect all of us have felt that way at different points in our lives. We all know what it means to hurt, to feel emotional, mental, spiritual, or physical pain. Some of us have dealt with cancer, heart attacks, diabetes, broken bones and other ailments. Some of us have had our spirits crushed by verbal attacks or have had our bodies and minds broken by physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Some of us have lost loved ones and know the pain of grief. Some of us may even be acquainted with poverty, with the lack of food and clothing. We have all had reasons for tears to well up and sobs to break forth.

On Thursday morning I could have done what I have often done in the past and stuffed those tears back down. I could have gone about my day as if nothing was wrong. But on that particular morning I let them flow. I left the church, found a safe haven and released a lot of pent-up emotion. I read some poetry, did a

little journaling and spent a lot of time in silence. In that silence I opened my heart and allowed the healing Spirit of Love to enter. Eventually my burden was lifted and I was able to move on with my day.

I believe that in those few hours I was dwelling in the shelter of our God, abiding in God's shadow, taking refuge under God's wings. This is what the writer of Psalm 91 was talking about. I believe the psalmist knew what it meant to live in troubled times. He knew what it meant to be filled with emotions like fear, anxiety, grief and shame. He knew and yet he still wrote lines like "The snare of the fowlers will never capture you, and famine will bring you no fear, you need not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day." He knew that bad things happen, but he also knew that love, God's love, God's unending and unconditional love had never let him down. And he wanted us to know that too.

He wanted us to know that when we are hurting God is there. God is there in the hug of a friend, in the kind words of a neighbour, in the casseroles arriving at your door. God is there in the gentle hands of a caregiver, in the cards in our mailbox, and in the music of our favourite album. God is there in the words of scripture, in a piece of poetry, a biography or a novel. But most of all, God is there in those times when we are alone, when tears start to fall. The psalmist assures us that God is there, that we will find shelter under wings of love.

And that's just the first half of the psalm. In the second half the psalmist tells us what we have to do to experience God's healing love. Using the voice of YHWH, he says:

“Because they have set their love upon me I will deliver them,...

When they call to me I will answer”

That’s all there is to it. In order to experience God’s healing love, all we have to do is set our love upon God. All we have to do is open our hearts to God and then call to God for help.

That’s all there is to it. So why is it so hard? Why is it so hard to be vulnerable and admit that we might need some help? Why is it so hard to let go of our need for control? Why is it so hard to take the time for a meaningful relationship with the sacred? Why is it so hard?

If you’re like me, you probably need to be crisis mode before you even think of asking for help. When life is good, when things are going the way we think they should, then we forget that we are being supported by God’s love. We start to believe that our happiness, our success has been earned. And then, when a crisis comes, when life becomes difficult, we think we need to fix it all by ourselves. We think that all we need is a stiff upper lip and a plan. When what we really need is honesty, humility and vulnerability

On Thursday morning I admitted that I needed some help. So I let go and let God take all the burdens that had been weighing me down. I let go and let the Essence of Love take all the grief and fear and anxiety that had been paralyzing

me. I let go and let the Holy Mystery cover me with protective wings of comfort and love.

When we let go, when we open our hearts to God, the angels will bear us up on their hands. When we call God's name, whatever name we choose, we will be upheld by Love. When we call out to the Holy Mystery, the Ground of our Being, the Essence of Love then we will be lifted up on eagle's wings.

And who knows what will happen when we are upheld up by love, when we are healed by the power of the Holy Spirit! In the refrain to today's psalm we sang

“And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.”

We are all meant to shine, we are all called to live our lives to the fullest. We are all called to live through and learn from whatever comes our way so that we may be a beacon for God's love in this world.

I want to end today with a poem from one of my favourite books, *Seeing Christ in Others: An Anthology for worship, meditation and mission*. This book contains poetry and stories from around the world. This particular poem comes from New Zealand. It is called “On the Wings of an Eagle.” (page 207)

I want to be lifted up and carried away
on the wings of an eagle.

I want to be able to look down and see the futility of life
from the heights of freedom and endless space.

Just to know that life doesn't have to be that way.
That in life there are choices,
the choice to conform or
the choice to move beyond conformity.

To be able to continue to walk,
to soar through life chopping
and hacking away at virgin bush ...
making and discovering the roads
that have yet to be trodden.

Risking the darkness and danger of wild terrain.
to move beyond the desire to Retreat,
to return to old ways and boring routine.

To be happy to discover whatever there is to discover.
To keep moving forward,
hoping, praying for a new sense of Peace,
a new easier pathway ... yet not complaining,
continuing to accept God's sense of direction,
even down the deepest of ravines,

trusting and knowing that life can only be lived when one learns
to risk everything, including their life,
in order to discover the beauty that comes,
the honesty that comes from being totally vulnerable.

It's fine, these pathways are so risky,
God would never leave us on our own,
all alone.

This is Godspace, God zone
Just let go, allow yourself to be ...
to become...

- Feiloaigia Taule'ale'ausumai
Aotearoa New Zealand