

The Danger of Lodging in the Wilderness

(notes from sermons by Bob Dobson)

God has blessed me to travel all over the country, and out of the country, to study eagles. I've studied the Australian eagle, the Philippine eagle, the great American bald eagle, and the golden eagles of the West and the South. Lord willing, later we'll be going to study the black eagles of Africa. God has really blessed me with this study. Nothing has ever enriched my heart and christian walk with God, as much as the study of eagles has.

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 32:9-14. "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found Him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." In verse 11, I want you to notice the scripture, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings;" Then, also, my favorite verse in the Bible, Is.40:31, "But 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 faint."

Friend, 32 times the eagle is mentioned in the Word of God. When you study the Word of God, you'll find that the eagle is dear to the heart of God. It's mentioned more than any other bird in the Bible. It's a blessing when you notice that God compares the christian life to that of an eagle. He says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles."

You can't fly with eagles, cluck with chickens, and walk with turkeys. It's good to know that you can mount up with wings and soar as eagles in your christian walk with God.

As a matter of fact, my friend, the eagle is the king of birds. He is what the lion is to the animal kingdom. He's the king of his kingdom, and there is no other bird on the face of the earth like an eagle. No other bird has the honor, the heritage, and the habits that the eagle has.

Now, my friend, there's some interesting things I'd like to share with you about the eagle. Hundreds and hundreds of hours have been spent in the preparation of these messages. In studying the eagle firsthand, I've handled hundreds of eagles. I've been to eagle farms where men have dedicated their lives to saving this great bird.

The eagle, when he's grown, is 7 to 7½ feet across his wingspread. He can fly faster than 137 miles an hour on an outward sweep. On a downward sweep, he can move faster than 180 miles an hour.

He's from a family called falcons, consisting of hawks, eagles, condors, and falcons. But even in his family he is distinct from all other birds, even from the falcon group.

Did you know that scientists say that, made up of flesh, blood, and bones, there's nothing as strong as an eagle is? An eagle can grab the back of your hand with his talon and crush every bone across the back of your hand. I wear steel mesh gloves when I'm handling an eagle, because of the damage they can do. When I was in Australia I saw an eagle that weighed 22 pounds pick up a kangaroo that weighed over 100 pounds, and travel with him over a mile. That should tell you something about the power they possess.

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It's interesting when you look at all this, and then look at the eagle and study him in light of the scriptures.

There's no other bird that makes his home like an eagle does. Did you know that, in the bird world, the eagle is the only bird that the mama and the daddy raise their little ones together? The home nest is always where they stay, but they make a special nest for the baby to be born. They'll go out and gather large limbs and build the bulk of the nest for the little one to be born in. Then they'll go out and gather small twigs and mud, and pack and line that eagle's nest. They will kill a rabbit or a squirrel (if in the South or the West, sometimes groundhogs) and take the hide and line the nest. A baby's nest is always fur lined. In the Philippine Islands, they used monkeys to line the nest. In Australia I found kangaroo hides.

The day comes when it's time for the mother to lay the eggs down in that nest. Immediately when the eggs are placed in the nest, the mother will sit there and incubate the eggs, and put her feet out to the male eagle. He will join talons with her. Then he'll sit there and love her while she's incubating the eggs. Then she crawls off the nest and he crawls on the nest. He sticks his feet out to her and she joins talons with him. There's an atmosphere of love there. The eagle is the only bird in the bird world that does this.

The day finally comes for the baby to be born, and when he's born he's more mouth than anything else. His mouth is wide open and he's hungry and screaming and hollering. He wants something to eat.

The mama or daddy will always stay with the nest and the other one will go out and kill fresh meat.

An eagle is a meat eater from the day he's born to the day he dies. He eats nothing but meat. They'll eat fish, poultry, and all kinds of meat.

They will bring the meat back to the nest, and that mama and daddy will chew that meat up real fine before they ever put it in the baby's mouth. Some of you mothers are going to know what I'm talking about. I can remember before Gerber and baby foods came along, mothers used to chew the food for them. That's love. They don't want those babies to choke on anything. (It would do you and me good to chew some things over before we give them out to everybody else.) They chew that meat and put it in the baby's mouth, and immediately he quits hollering. He's filled now, and sits there in the comforts of the nest.

Everything's just fine now, until a storm comes up. All of a sudden it begins to thunder and the lightening begins to strike. The little eagle gets scared. He begins to scream and holler. His mama and daddy are always close to the home nest, watching. They'll fly over the nest and form a canopy over the baby's head with their wings to protect him from the storm, and to comfort him till the storm passes by.

I'm glad we have a God in heaven who fed us when we couldn't feed ourselves, protected us when we couldn't protect ourselves, and loved us when we were unlovable. He was there to comfort us till the storm passed by.

An eagle is not wasteful. When killing an animal they will consume every bit of the meat, drink every bit of the blood, and get other eagles to help them. They use the bones in their nest, and the hide to line the nest. They don't waste anything.

In Alaska I saw two eagles bring down a 16-point buck deer by themselves. They killed him, and then other eagles came and they skinned it out. They ate every bit of the meat.

They always make their homes in the highest crags of the mountains, in the highest clefts of the rocks, and in the highest trees they can find.

An eagle's always born on or near a rock. And that rock is always his rock. He will always claim a rock and will never change rocks. When he needs comfort he goes to the rock. When he needs cleansing he goes to the rock.

When he wants to get rid of anything that's hindering him he goes to the rock. An eagle will never, ever change rocks under any circumstances.

In Lafayette, Georgia, they turned four golden eagles loose. These eagles had been born inside a building, they'd never been around another eagle. When they turned them loose in the woods, the first thing they found those eagles doing is hovering up to a rock. They went to that rock and were rubbing against it. They were claiming that rock as their rock.

I'm glad God puts it in man, to know there's something we need in our lives, and it's the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm glad we have the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all our needs are met in Him. We need to seek Him.

At about 12 weeks old it's time for the little eagle to learn his identity. It's time for him to learn he's not a chicken and he's not a turkey. It's time for him to learn to fly. He sits there and gets tired of the nest, so he wanders out on the rock. His mama's been watching him for days. She knows it's time for him to learn what he was made for. While he's out of the nest on the rock, his mother goes to the nest and throws every bit of the fur, the hair, and everything that's soft over the cliff.

The little eagle goes back in and plops down. Now those little twigs and limbs are sticking in that little eagle. He's had a fur-lined nest. He begins to sit there and wiggle and squirm. He sits there and finally gives it up.

He climbs up and walks out on the rock. This time his mother comes back, gets every one of those little twigs, limbs, and the mud, and throws it over the cliff.

The little eagle goes back this time and sits down and all that's left is large bulky limbs. It's above his head, and he looks over at his mama and daddy as if to say, "It's not like it used to be."

My friend, it'll never be like it used to be when God begins to stir your nest and gets you ready for service, and the perfect will of God to be done in your life. When God stirs your nest, it's not a pleasant place to be.

This time when he climbs out on the rock, the mama completely destroys the nest. She throws every bit of those hard bulky limbs over the cliff. No nest anymore.

The little eagle is in for a long, hard night. He's never had to sit on a cold rock all night long in the mountains. As the sun goes down and the cold moves in, he begins to shake. All night long he sits there on that cold rock, and he shakes and shivers. His mama and daddy have been sitting over on the home nest watching him very carefully. He shakes all night long. The next morning the sun comes up and he's still cold.

His mother will crawl over there beside him. She'll turn and look at him and hold her head, as if to say, "Climb on, Boy. Climb on."

The little eagle climbs up in his mother's feathers on her back and he says, "Oh, Mama! You're warm. You feel so good. I've been on that cold rock all night."

About that time she looks at him and says, "You better hold on, Boy." She jumps off that cliff with the little eagle on her back. He digs his little claws into her feathers. He's sitting on her back riding in the wind. Everything is going fine until she makes a turn upward like a rocket, straight up.

He's hanging on with everything that's in him, saying, "Mama, I can't hold on much longer. What are you trying to do to me?"

About that time she flips upside down. He's hanging upside down and finally has to let go. He's headed straight down, turning end over end as fast as he can go. He's scared to death.

But what that eagle doesn't know is that his mama can fly faster than he can fall. Just before he hits the ground, his mama flies under him and he lands safely on her back.

4 Great was the day in my life, when I realized I had a God in heaven who could move faster than I could fall, in any situation in my life.

Now, you thought he dug in with his claws before but he brings blood now. He gets his claws in her back and he says, "Mama, back to the rock, please! I can't stand this. Back to that rock."

She takes him back to the rock and when she lands, the little eagle gets off his mama's back and he marches around as if he's saying, "God bless you, rock. Hallelujah, for this rock."

He's in for another long, hard night but he's not going to complain or gripe about anything. He just sits there all night long and shakes.

His mama moves in the next morning, sits down beside him and holds her head as if to say, "Come on, Boy, it's flying time again. Let's get on."

He's sitting there with the wildest look. "I know what you did to me yesterday. Why are you...? I'm not touching you this time..."

But his mother keeps beckoning him, and he knows to obey his mother. So he climbs on her back.

She takes him out again, does the same thing, turns upside down, and drops him. But this time, and I don't know why, but always on the second time the mother eagle will soar above him. She'll scream and holler with everything that's in her, as if to say, "C'mon, Boy, put those wings out and fly. You're an eagle. You can do it." Just before he hits the ground she'll catch him again.

By the way, the male eagle is always flying above them. He's there for protection. They do everything together.

Day after day she will carry him out. One day she carries him out, and drops him. He's going straight down, but he looks up and sees his mother with her wings out, like a jet airplane above him. She's gliding. He says, "Well, there's one of those things, and here's another one, I might as well try them out." He begins to flap his wings. He looks up and says, "I'm not falling anymore. I'm flying."

About that time God sends a big gust of wind to hit him right in the face and he throws those little wings behind him, like he saw mama do. He realizes that the wind, when he yields to it, just carries him higher. It helps him see farther down the valley in front of him.

You see, an eagle flies only 10% of the time. They glide 90% of the time. They have learned to yield to the wind, and let the wind carry them.

When you and I learn to yield to the Holy Spirit of God, we'll find out it doesn't take as much human effort. It'll carry us, my friend. When we yield to the Holy Spirit, it'll carry us higher, and help us to see farther down the valley in front of us.

As he's up there gliding around, his mother and father fly together in the air. They join their feet together again, and float out there with their wings out like a canopy. You'll hear little screams and yells come out. They're rejoicing because he's finally learned to fly. He's finally mounted up with wings. They know he'll never crash into the rock. They know that day after day he'll get stronger and stronger. He'll learn what it's all about to be an eagle.

There are some things the little eagle learns immediately when he starts flying. He realizes he doesn't have to live in the storms; he can soar above the storms. He realizes that when he yields to the wind it will carry him above the clouds. While others are in the haze, fog, thunder and lightening,

those strong eagles are always above the clouds.

I've learned in my life, when I yield completely to God, there's a lot of storms I don't have to go through.

An eagle's eyesight is 100 times better than yours and mine. He can sit on a mountain and see a rabbit hop 2 miles away and go pick him up. I've seen this happen.

He's up there with all that power, but birds will come in groups and try to attack the eagle. I've seen 3 or 4 condors at a time trying to attack the eagle. They're jealous of the power he has.

But do you know what he does when the enemy comes in a pack? God gives an eagle a built-in set of sunglasses. He's got oscillating, green lens. He just rolls those green-tinted oscillating lens in and looks straight into the sun. He can stand the heat and the rays of the sun. That's his source of strength to begin with. He mounts up with wings and soars straight toward the sun. The enemy birds get blinded by the light and have to turn and go back. They can't stand the light.

I'm glad that when the devil comes on the scene we can mount up with wings and soar to the Son of God. The devil is blinded by the light, and has to turn and go back.

In the middle years of an eagle's life he goes through a time of depression. It's called the moping period. He's strong and powerful until this hits him.

How does he get into the moping period? He quits utilizing the power God has given him. He comes down to this earth and stays too long. He walks around like a turkey, or like a chicken, and the first thing he knows his power is gone.

Where before he flew above the storms, now in that time of depression, the rain beats on him. The wind blows and beats on him. His feathers get ruffled. He loses his beauty and his integrity. Instead of sitting with honor and his head held high, he sits with his head lower and lower every day, more and more depressed.

All through this there's something inside him that says, "You don't have to live like this! You're an eagle. You know what it is to fly above the storms. You know what it is to have power."

But it's up to him whether he gets up or not. He can live or he can die. In all the trials, storms, and the things he has to face, it's up to him.

If you're in depression and discouragement, you're the only one that can help yourself. You've got to want to get up or you'll stay down. In the depressing times we're living in there's enough to keep you down, and you'll stay there if you don't put forth an effort to get up.

The ones that get out of that moping time are stronger and quicker than they've ever been before.

An eagle lives to be from 60 to 100 years old. The older an eagle gets, the more beautiful he becomes.

On the eagle farm I went to, I saw an eagle that was 127 years old. The keeper told me, "Walk right over there. I want to show you something." When I came back, there were two eagles in the cage. He said, "Look at them." He took them out. I had steel mesh gloves on and I took one eagle in each hand. He said, "Tell me which eagle is which. The old eagle is in one of your hands, tell me which one it is."

I looked closely at the two eagles, and said, "These eagles are identical. You pulled a trick on me."

He replied, "No, sir. The eagle in your left hand is 127 years old. The one in your right hand is 16 months old."

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I asked, "How can this be?"

He said, "An eagle sheds his feathers every year and puts on a brand new set. He goes to the rock and cleans up. He maintains his beauty on the rock."

I thought, "Glory to God. One day this old corruption is going to put on incorruption. This mortality is going to put on immortality, and it matters not old or young you are, we're all going to have a glorified body."

I looked at those eagles. He said, "Look in their eyes." I looked in their eyes and he said, "Tell me what you see."

I said, "I see a wild, faraway look."

He answered, "You're close. What you see is a longing to be free. That's why he soars above it all so much. He was made for the heavens. He wasn't made for this world."

Friends, this world is not our home. We're pilgrims and strangers here. One day Jesus is going to come and we'll go to our eternal place of abode.

There once was a farmer that caught an eagle that was wounded. He put him in the chicken pen with his chickens. He had a top over the pen.

The eagle walked in and watched the chickens pecking corn. He was disorientated by it all. You see, he was a meat eater. He didn't know how to peck corn. He'd never eaten corn. He saw them scratching and digging for worms, but he didn't know what they were doing. He was an eagle, not a chicken. He went into the coop, got up on the roost and locked his feet around it.

Day after day his head dropped down. It looked like he was going to die. The farmer held grain up to his mouth and tried to feed him, but he wouldn't eat. It looked as if he was going to die, in spite of everything they were doing.

He was sitting there with his head down one day. Weeks had passed and the farmer opened the gate to go inside. When he did he heard a call and a scream like he'd never heard before. He looked up and there were two great eagles circling above the chicken pen.

The eagle looked up. Before they had called, nothing had moved that eagle. He perked up his head and jumped off the roost. He ran out into the yard, looked up, and saw those eagles flying around. He jumped and lunged with everything that was in him, hit the top, and came back down. Again he jumped and lunged with everything that was in him, and came back down.

The farmer pulled the door open and said, "Come on out of there, Eagle. You're not a chicken and you're not a turkey. This is not your home. You were made for the heavens and the stars. Come on out, and fly to your place of abode."

The eagle ran out, jumped and caught a gust of wind, and soared away with those eagles.

One day a call's going to come and we're going to fly away to another world. We will be caught up with the Lord in the air, and mount up with wings as eagles.

But I want to be an eagle while I'm here. I've made up my mind I'm going to enjoy what I've got. I will witness and serve Jesus. You don't have to be down. You can get up, my friend, and mount up with wings as eagles.

A Cherokee Indian named Tacoma had heard about the eagle message. He came to one of my meetings to meet me. He said, "I have studied the eagle all my life. As far as I know, from listening to you, you know more about eagles than any white man I've ever seen."

"If you would, I would like for you to come with me at 5:30 in the morning. I would like to take you into Indian Territory, and carry you to a place we Indians know as Eagle's Bluff. You'll see more eagles than you've ever

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seen at one time in your life, flying free. You'll see some eagles in the moping period."

The next morning at 5:30 I was ready. A lot of people ask me, "Where's it at?" You'll have to find Tacoma and let him carry you. We took a right on the Blue Ridge Parkway and then out back into Indian Territory. We went on one lane roads and trails. This was a special place that only Indians know about. He had to get special permission to take me there.

The view was breathtaking when he brought me to the top of a cliff. Below us looked like a gigantic bowl. It was completely surrounded by rocky mountains and cliffs, and down on the bottom was nothing but a vast wilderness of trees. On the top of the mountain within 15 minutes I saw 33 eagles flying. I was in "eagle heaven".

Tacoma saw that I was taken up by the view and said, "Brother Bob, it's time for us to go down. What I want you to see is down in the bottom."

I looked off that cliff that went straight down and asked, "How are we going to get down there?"

"In that," he said, pointing to the jeep. "I know how to drive it to the bottom."

I learned what watching and praying was all about. I hung onto the seat, and watched and prayed all the way to the bottom. It felt like the jeep went straight down, many times, and finally we got to the bottom.

When we got down we walked for 2 to 2½ miles into the wilderness. We came to a spot I'll never forget.

I looked out in front of me and there were 5 eagles sitting on the ground. They were in the moping period, I knew when I saw them. All their feathers were ruffled and their heads were hanging, just as if you took a chicken and wrung his neck and threw him out in the yard. They were nearly dead. I had never seen eagles that far gone before.

During this moping time an eagle has a calcium deposit that builds up around his beak. It covers the holes on each side of his beak that he breathes through. During this time his feet swell and burst and bleed because he's walking around like a chicken, or like a turkey, which he was not intended to do. His feet were made to catch animals and to dwell in the rocks and there he's walking around in a different environment.

I asked, "Tacoma, how did they get like this?"

He answered, "They quit utilizing their ability to fly. They quit utilizing the power God has given them. They came down here and lodged in this wilderness too long. They got to liking it and stayed, and the first thing they knew, their power to get up and fly was gone.

I thought, "Oh, there have been so many Christians that same way, who at one time had power with God, but they came down and lodged in the things of this world. They became entangled in those things and it took their power away, and they can't get up today.

We were looking at those eagles when Tacoma said, "Pick one up."

I looked at him and said, "I know what they can do to your hands. Do you have any steel meshed gloves?"

He said, "No, but they won't hurt you. They're too far-gone." He picked up one of those eagles and I could tell it could hardly stand for him to touch its feet because they were swollen and bleeding.

He handed the eagle to me. I took him in my hands and stood there and wept when I looked at him with his head hanging. At one time he had honor and power, but here he was so close to death and his head was hanging down. I picked each one of them up and just held them and looked at them.

While I was looking at them the Indian looked at his watch. He said, "It's

8. time for me and you to hide. We're going to hide right over here in these trees.'

I asked, "Tacoma, what are we hiding from?"

He replied, "We're not hiding for our safety. We're hiding for them. There's something you need to see that you're going to view in just a moment."

We went over to the trees and were sitting there when I heard the sound of wings. I looked up and there were 8 eagles flying above us in a straight line.

Tacoma said, "Look at those eagles and tell me what you notice."

I looked up as they flew over, and said, "Tacoma, every one of those eagles are old eagles."

He said, "That's right. Every one of those eagles has been where these are at. They got up from here and mounted up with wings. Now watch very carefully what you're about to see."

Every eagle I'd ever seen flying flew with his talons open, but every one of these had their feet clutched. I knew something was very strange. They dropped in right above the tree line where those 5 eagles were sitting and they began to drop something through the trees.

He said, "Go and look what they dropped."

I went over there and it was big chunks of rabbit and squirrel. They were dropping them fresh meat from heaven. Something that would give them strength to get up out of that wilderness, and not die in that depression and discouragement. They were giving them what they needed to get up out of there.

It was the eagles' choice what happened next. The meat was lying there on the ground. Two of those eagles crawled over to the meat and began to eat.

The Indian began to have a fit. He clapped his hands and said, "Yes, Eagles! You've made up your mind that you're not going to die down here. You'll eat that meat and get strength. You'll climb that mountain and get back to your rock. There you'll get rid of everything that's hindering you, and you will fly again."

About that time those other 8 got in a circle and began to fly around, screaming and hollering. I asked, "Tacoma, what are they doing?"

He said, "They're encouraging them to get up, mount up with wings, and not die in this wilderness of depression and discouragement."

While those two were eating the sun came out real bright. One of the eagles got over into the sunshine and put his wings out and began to flop around on the grass.

The Indian rejoiced, "Oh yes! He's practicing already! He's going to get out of here. He's not going to die."

But I could not get my mind off those other 3 eagles sitting there with their heads drooped low, not even making any effort to eat. I asked, "Tacoma, what's going to happen to them?"

He said, "They'll die right here in the wilderness. They won't make any effort to eat the meat that's dropped to them. The meat has been dropped day after day. I come back and check on them, and they haven't eaten the first bite yet. They'll die right here."

God has given you Jesus to drop you handfuls of purpose and strong meat from heaven. You can eat it and be strong and get up and mount up with wings, or you can sit there and reject it and die spiritually, my friend. It's up to you.

Tacoma took me out past the trees and said, "There's something I'd like to show you." We walked out past the trees, and there was a little graveyard with 27 graves.

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I asked, "Tacoma, what's this?"

He said, "This is a graveyard for dead eagles. I've buried 27 eagles here that wouldn't get up. They wouldn't put forth any effort, wouldn't eat that meat. I've seen a lot of them get out, but it's completely up to that eagle. He's got to eat that meat and get back on the rock."

There is a difference between a weak eagle dying and a strong eagle. The weak eagle will die looking toward his rock. He'll stand in the wilderness looking and gazing toward his rock with dreams and goals unattained of what he could've been. But an eagle that gets out of there will fly. When it comes their time to die, they will fly over to their rock and sit down on it. They cross their wings in front of them, and lean back into that rock. They look up with the most pleasant look you've ever seen in their life. They go out in victory, not in a wilderness of depression and discouragement. They fly the course God has for them. They accomplish, they attain, and then they go out in peace.

On Friday of that week the Indian came back to me. He said, "Brother Bob, I buried those 3 eagles this morning. They died."

"But I've got some great news. One of the other eagles has already climbed the mountain and got back on his rock. The other eagle was digging on the side of that mountain, headed out of there. They made their minds up they weren't going to die in the wilderness."

You know what they do when they get back on the rock? They'll put their head against the rock and grind the calcium that's on their beak, and get every bit of it off. It then turns to a powder. It'll never get on there while they're flying. It only gets on there when they stop flying. Where once there were long, sharp claws, they now have nubs. They break those nubs off so their claws can grow out sharp and powerful again. They shake all loose feathers loose. They beautify themselves. They cleanse themselves on the rock and they mount up with wings and fly again with honor, integrity, and power.

We were about ready to leave and Tacoma said, "Look at the eagles' eyes, please."

I looked at their eyes and they were real dry and scaly all around. I said, "Tacoma, every eagle's eyes I've ever seen, except when they're in the moping period, are always damp and wet."

He said, "I know. That's because a strong eagle will weep before his Maker. He'll weep before God. But they get down here in this valley of depression and in this wilderness, and they can't even cry for themselves, they get so far gone. They lose their tears and compassion and their care."

He looked at me and said, "It's time for you and me to head back to the top. I want you to see Tamegan before we leave."

I asked, "Tacoma, who is Tamegan?"

He said, "He's an eagle that was down here about 8 weeks ago. He was dying just like they were. But he began to eat the meat that was dropped to him. He got back to the rock and I want you to see him."

I said, "Tacoma, I have a little trouble with that. How are you going to know which one he is? We saw 33 eagles up there."

He said, "I know where his rock is. Besides that, it's his prayer time."

I said, "What?"

He said, "You'll see when we get to the top."

We got back up there and he pulled out a big telescope. He zoomed the lens right on the cliff where he knew Tamegan would be, and said, "There he is. Look at him."

I looked and he was sitting on the rock looking into the face of God.

10. Big tears filled his eyes and ran down around his beak and on his breast feathers. He just sat there and cried for about 15 minutes. I stood there and had a good cry with him. I rejoiced with him. He was crying and I was crying. Then he walked out to the edge of the cliff, threw his wings out and cried with his voice, and jumped off of there.

I asked, "Tacoma, is he doing what I think he is?" He said, "Yes, he's shouting the victory that he didn't die in that wilderness. He mounted up with wings as eagles and he's flying with power, dignity, and honor again."

As I stood there and watched Tamegan soar through the skies, Tacoma said, "It won't be but a few days now, his claws will be out sharp and powerful again. He'll sweep down and catch a rabbit and start skinning it out. He'll reach in their, get a fistful of meat in each talon, and head out for the wilderness to feed those other weak, sick eagles. He'll try to help them get up, and make them want to keep on keeping on."

In these times we're living in, "I've got a saying. I say, "I believe I'll just go on anyway." I believe I'll go on anyway, in spite of my troubles: troubles with my flesh, troubles with my finances, trouble with my fears, and troubles with my failures.

I believe I'll just go on anyway, in spite of my troubles, in spite of my tears: tears of persecution, tears of pain, and tears of parting. We need folks who want to keep on keeping on for God, in these days we're living in.

If you do quit, the devil will blame you, he'll burden you, he'll bankrupt you, and he'll bury you. So let's make up our minds to get back to the Rock, get rid of what's hindering us, and mount up with wings and fly for the honor and glory of God.

It's wonderful to know you don't have to live in depression. You don't have to live in the wilderness and in a valley. You can mount up with wings. So many people live in distress and defeat, but you don't have to, my friend. If you'll just get that meat from the Word of God, get back to the Rock, and commune, fellowship, and weep before Him, you'll find a power available to you that you never knew was there.

The eagle that's been through the moping period in the wilderness will never land in that wilderness again. He'll fly over it and drop meat, but he'll never go back to what almost destroyed him.

Oh, if we could learn that lesson, to stay away from those things that hurt us and harm us and nearly destroy us. If we could learn that God's on our side, and if God be for us who can be against us? It's Christ in us, the hope of glory. If we would claim that victory and be an overcomer, we could do something for God.

But you'll never do it as long as you're content in the wilderness. There are some wildernesses that are dangerous to lodge in. My friend, it's dangerous to lodge in the wilderness of unconfessed sin (Prov. 28:13, 1 Jn. 1:9). When you dwell in a wilderness of unconfessed sin, it cheats you out of blessings, day in and day out. It eats and gnaws on you. It's like a spiritual cancer eating away at the spiritual man. You will never get up until you get out of that wilderness of unconfessed sin.

And what about the wilderness of unused opportunities? How many golden opportunities present themselves to us every day on our jobs, and among our friends and family to be a witness, a worker, and a winner for Jesus? We have opportunities to share this glorious gospel with others.

You see, that's why the eagle is so different. He shares what he's got with others that are down.

I'm glad the Bible says in Isaiah 50:4, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to

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him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." I'm glad, folks, that we have that word in season for that man who's weary. We need to drop handfuls of purpose to those around us and seize those opportunities, and be effective for Jesus.

What about the wilderness of unkept promises? How many of you in a time of trouble and despair promised God you'd be faithful, but haven't kept those promises? You know it seems like we're more ready to do something for God when trouble comes than any other time. We need to keep those promises we've made to God.

What about the wilderness of an undedicated walk? What these people claim on Sunday and what they live during the week is completely different. Salvation is needed seven days a week. I'm glad God thought it, Jesus brought it, the Holy Spirit wrought it, the Bible taught it, and I caught it.

What about the wilderness of unweeping eyes? How long has it been since you really shed any tears over anybody? It takes tragedy to get some people to ever break their pride and cry. If we weep and sow in tears now, we will reap in joy.

Then in closing, think of the wilderness of an uncertain future. Those eagles were sitting there day in and day out, not knowing if they're going to die the next day or not. Are you lodging in the wilderness of an uncertain future? Do you need salvation through Jesus Christ?

I've made up my mind I'm going to soar with eagles.

"...Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2.