

**On Wings Like Eagles**  
*The Gospel According to Isaiah*  
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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 40  
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Our Scripture portion today is from Isaiah 40. We've come to the end of Isaiah 40. If you're using the church Bible, that can be found on page 60 and I'm going to be reading verses 27 to the end. Isaiah 40:27 to the end.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Do keep your Bibles open with you at Isaiah 40. Every now and then something happens in life that gives us pause for thought. It may come from the outside; it may be something we see in the news, a global financial crisis perhaps or a natural disaster as has just occurred or a terrorist attack. Or it may be something more personal: a diagnosis, a broken relationship perhaps, a lost opportunity. What these crises, whether they're international or national or personal do is they demonstrate just how complex, how baffling, perplexing, overwhelming and confusing, life can often be. Sometimes it seems as if information is bombarding us from every source; that our expectations for life are cranked up by the media only to be smashed on the rocks of reality. Most people face those challenges and those questions without any sense or even any desire for the presence of the divine, or even a sense of ultimate meaning and so they have no further complications. They just face the crises. They ask the questions into the air or in their own minds to no one in particular and that's the end of it. They don't believe in God therefore they don't have the complication of the presence and active work of God in the world.

But the believer does. The believer's problem is that in the Bible, which is God's word, there are many great and precious promises to God's people and yet no matter how often we read them, no matter how frequently we quote them, no matter how much we need

their comfort, two dark questions keep creeping over the mind of the believer. Those questions concern God's power and God's goodness. Is God able? Does God care? The first question is asking: does God have the power to do what he says and deliver what he promises? It looks at the dreadful realities of life that parade across our screens and that enter our living room and bedroom and makes us wonder, "Does God have the power to change anything?" The second question is a question that has more to do with our own personal feelings. The question is this: if God is as big as I think he is or as he says he is, does God care for me? I cry this out in the midst of my physical or emotional weakness, "Does God care for me?"

Isaiah in Isaiah 40 is answering those two questions for God's people not only in his own day. He leaves all current issues to one side. He is speaking to the people of God generally down through history to this moment, to this congregation, to this day and his answer is that God, first of all, addresses the question, "Is he able?" by pointing to the universe around us. Who is wise enough? Who is powerful enough? Who is skilled enough? Who is big enough to have constructed the universe that we know about by his word? By his word in a nanosecond of time? Who has done that? God has done that.

If you got to verse 25, we didn't deal with that verse last week so just in passing notice it. God is asking us a question. He is saying to us, "To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One." The Lord is urging us to do something which people have done from the earliest days of this planet. He is urging us to go outside one night, lie on your back and look at the night sky. "Lift up your eyes," verse 26, "Lift up your eyes on high and see and ask yourself this question," the Lord is saying, "who created these? Who created these things? Who is the one that makes sure that every night you go out and lie down and look up in the night sky and you see them all there as they've always been there? Who brings out their host by number and calls them all by name? Billions of stars by name, by the greatness of his might, because he is strong in power not one of them is missing." In other words he is pointing us to the night sky and from the earliest days of humanity, nothing has been more awesome or humbling to humanity. Nothing has underscored humanity's remoteness or smallness than the stars in the sky by night.

The Babylonians, they dealt with it by believing that the stars determined the course of human life on this planet. They looked at these heavenly bodies and they worshiped them. Today we look at the night sky and we have more information than they had. We have more cause for awe and wonder and bated breath and being silenced in the presence of the majesty of the night sky than the people in the Babylonian era or the people in early Genesis. We know more about the sheer enormity. Look at our little Milky Way with its 104 light years across and with its over a billion stars and our galaxy is only one of hundreds of billions of galaxies. The night sky is enormous. We haven't yet plunged the depth of it or the distance of it.

The night sky is meant to make us ask the question, "Who created all this? Who created it by a word?" Our research uses light years to describe distances. Going at our speed between A and B in our universe, "Who created this from nothing?" And the answer is

that our God created it and manages it. He knows exactly every detail. He oversees and superintends every detail of the existence of the universe and here is God's answer to his people, "Am I able? You got out there, look at the universe and think this: what you see as massive time, what you see as massive distance, was created by a God that does not exist in time and does not have any created existence. I made it and put it on my shelf. It is to be me nothing more than a created thing. It took me no time at all to make it all, the raw materials of the universe." That's the God who is your God. Is he able? Go out tonight and look at the sky and ask yourself, "Is he able?" He is able to do more than you could ever ask and imagine.

He comes and he speaks to these people. The early part of this chapter has been about the good news of the Gospel, the comfort that God is going to send by sending the Messiah and what Isaiah predicted has come to pass exactly and in detail the way in which the prophet had predicted it and proclaimed it. That is just one little thing that has happened that underlines the fact that this God who is speaking to us is able to accomplish all that he says he will do. He is able. "To whom then will you compare me?" he says. "Is there anything that you can imagine, is there any power, is there any mechanism, is there anything in the universe that can compare with me?" The answer is: what can compare with a God for whom the universe was a mere moment's work?

When the framers of the Westminster Confession, that's our confession of faith here as a congregation, when they were working on the shorter catechism, they were struggling to find a succinct answer to the question: what is God? So they decided to adjourn for the day, it was tea time, they were English so they were going home for tea. As they closed in prayer, one of the delegates who closed in prayer addressed God in these terms, "You who are a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in your being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." The rest of the delegates thought, "That's it." The next day, here's the answer to question 4 of the shorter catechism. What is God? God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Now, this view of God, beloved, is breathtaking. It puts him at the center of the universe. Everything else revolves around him. He is bigger than the universe. There is no place where God is not and we are utterly dependent on him for life and breath and everything as Paul says. We have to have these elevated thoughts of God. God has to be foremost in our thoughts, in our thinking. He has to dominate our thinking. When we have thought the most about God, we're only scratching the surface of a piece of ground somewhere a million miles from where God himself really is. He is bigger than anything we can conceive. He is able.

He is able but no sooner are we convinced that God is able, that God is big, that God is great, then we are then left with this other question: but does God care? How can he possibly care? If he is running the universe, managing the universe, how can he possibly care for me? And it's that that he's addressing from verse 27. He does so by doing three things: he confronts our doubts; he jogs our memory; and he renews our strength.

Look at the way it unfolds. First of all, he confronts our doubts. He is listening to his people, do you see? He is listening to his own people. The name Jacob and Israel belong to the same individual who was in the line of Abraham, Abraham's grandchild, grandson, and Jacob, who is renamed Israel, is part of the covenant people of God and if you're a believer this morning here, even though you're not related genetically to Abraham, nonetheless if you believe in the Lord Jesus, you are a child of Abraham. So he's addressing the people of God, the covenant people of God.

He is addressing them. God has been listening to them. He has been listening to his own people and this is how his own people have been speaking. Maybe you have spoken like this. Look at the ways they have been talking, "My way is hidden from the LORD." What does that mean? It means that here are some people who think that God does not see how they are doing in their life. They're complaining, you see, they're saying to themselves that, "My little life is not something that God takes notice of. He has other things that are big that he must look after. He is very concerned about what the governments are doing perhaps, or he's very concerned about what the united church of the Lord Jesus throughout the world are up to. He is very concerned about galaxies and so on. He has got a lot more to think about than he has about me and my little way. My way is hidden from the LORD." Have you ever felt that God hadn't noticed what you were going through? Hadn't been observant of the things that you have been facing in your life? Ever felt that somehow or other your little life, as you see it, did not count with God? That's the question. It's a question of bewilderment. "How can these things be happening to me? My way is hidden, shut up, so that he just could not see and so therefore how could he care if he can't see what's going on in my life?"

I want you to notice that these are things, these two things that we're going to look at, are things that the people of God are always saying. In fact, in the Hebrew the sense is this, "Why do you keep on saying?" That is they had said it, they were still saying it and they would continue to say it. These are things that you are saying in your mind, "My way is hidden from the LORD." Then the second thing that we're saying, "My right is disregarded by my God." Here is a definite complaint. Here people think, "Well, you know, I believe in God. You would think that there were some perks involved in believing God. You would think, here I am and that nobody around me in the place where I work or in my family nobody else believes in God and yet here I am, I believe in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ and you would think that perhaps life would be a bit easier for me than it is. You would think that things would be going better for me than they are. You would think that I would have less questions than my friends have or that there would be more answers to my prayer than I ever seem to see. You would think that I would be healthier than everybody else or at least that I would have a sense of peace and assurance when I'm not so well that things would ultimately be well. You would think, wouldn't you? You would think that as a believer things would be better for me. Now, here's my problem: my right, what I think I've deserving, what I think should be happening to me, what I think is what I deserve as a believer, that is being disregarded by God. He is not doing what I expected." Here is someone who you see is frustrated with God. Frustrated with him.

John Knox, a great Scottish Reformer, put it like this, "By what means Satan first drew mankind from the obedience of God, the Scripture bears witness. Here it was: he poured into their hearts that poison that God did not love them." What John Knox was saying is: the poison of hell in the mind of the believer is this, that God does not love them. Satan is regularly accusing God to our minds. He is an accuser. He is regularly pointing out the things in the world that are going wrong on the macro stage of world history and he is saying, "Do you see what God permits to happen in the world? God does not love you." He points to the things that are going on in your own life, in your own experience. The things that have gone wrong. That broken relationship you thought was perfect that has now ended. That health scare that you have that you're struggling with, that's keeping you awake at night with anxiety and he's saying to you, smuggling into your mind this question, "How can God care for you?"

Have you ever experienced that? That's what these people were experiencing. These are the people of God. These are their doubts. These are their questions. And, you know, there are various ways that we ask questions. Sometimes we ask questions because we want the answer. We want some kind of answer. We want pointed in the direction of the answer even if an answer cannot be given to us. But there are other times we ask questions and, in fact, on those times, we're not wanting an answer so much as we want to justify our unbelief in God. Some of you are here this morning and you don't want answers to questions, you just want reason to justify the fact that you don't believe in God.

Well, God is very patient and he reveals himself to us and he reveals himself to us as we are. That's the reason for the repetition there in verse 27 of the name of this man, Jacob. Jacob was renamed by God, Israel. You may know the story. The name Jacob means "deceiver," and that was really the level of his life up until the time that he had an encounter with God. Jacob had been given great promises. God had made a promise that it would be through Jacob that his inheritance, his blessing would come down from his grandfather Abraham to you and to me this morning as believers. Jacob, along with his mother, decided that rather than wait for God to keep his promise, they would take matters into their own hands. They did that and they caused one disaster after another. They bred distrust. They bred despair and deceit and lying and so on and there was a terrible family life as a result of those things until Jacob had an encounter with God. God appeared to him as a created being like an angel. He appeared to him and he started to have a wrestling match. That was because Jacob, you see, could not reconcile himself to the will of God for him. He was struggling with it and so it was as if this was reenacted, as if God was coming down to his level and saying, "Come on then. Bring it on, Jacob." And Jacob in his foolishness brought it on and so there they are, God in some incarnate form, a preincarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus most likely, wrestling with this man Jacob.

One of the lessons that you discover as you read the story is this: that when you start struggling and wrestling with God, God doesn't play fair. Everything is going well. This wrestling match is going on. Perhaps Jacob is beginning to think, "I think I'm going to win! I have a change of winning!" And God merely touches him on his hip and he is

reduced to a crying little mass of human pain and weakness and he limps for the rest of his life. And what God is telling this man is he raises him up, as God lifts him up, the one he was wrestling with lifts him up and then restores him to fellowship with God and gives him a new name indicating that he is a new man with a new name and a new relationship with God, God is saying, "Now that you have seen your weakness, now that you have faced up to the truth about yourself, now you've seen that, you can't go on in your own energy. Now you can know my strength, my super strength, working within you."

You know, we are all this morning like Jacob. We all of us have two names. We are all of us believing people this morning in this room. In the language of Martin Luther, "simul justus et peccator," at one and the same time sinful and justified. We have our Jacob name and we have our Israel name. We have our name, as it were, as a sinner before God in our unrighteousness, doing our own thing, resisting him; and we have our new name as a believer, as a Christian, and we are both at the same time, we are struggling with both of these things at the same time. We believe and we don't believe. We love God and we don't love God. We respect his word and keep his word and love his word and yet we disobey his word and despise his word and question his word. That's the way we are. That's the way we are. He talks to you as you are, not as you're going to be when you get to heaven and he challenges us. Do you think your way is hidden from God? Isaiah has already said in this chapter in verse 3, God is building a highway in order to come for you and in order to bring you into his presence. He is building the way. He is carving out the way. He is leveling the mountains. He is raising up the valleys. He is laying the way for you. It isn't just that your way is not hidden from God, God is preparing the way and he will bring you home in the end.

So he confronts our doubts, secondly, he jogs our memory. Look at verse 28, "Have you not known? Have you not heard?" You see, his answer is to question us about the character of God and you see how these questions are framed in the singular. He is asking us now as individuals, "Have you as an individual not known? Have you as an individual not heard?" He's talking to the people of God and he's saying, "Well, what have you learned since you became a believer? What have you learned in these years?" Some of you have been to this church for a long time. You have sat under various ministries here and in those ministries you have heard the word of God taught, preached from this pulpit over and over again. You have learned from the word of God. Others of you have come from other churches but you've been in churches before and since you became a Christian, the word of God has been taught to you. Have you not heard? Have you not known, is the question?

Remember what you have heard. God's people have God's revelation. That revelation is in Scripture and his questions, you see, are a rebuke to our slowness to believe the revelation of God's majesty. Looking at this chapter as a whole, I think that what these two questions address is the revelation that comes to us in the two books that God has placed in our hands. To use John Calvin's language: he has placed in our hands the book of nature and the book of Scripture. The book of nature is constantly telling us how great, how powerful, how amazing, how infinite, how transcendent, how big God is. Romans 1, the invisible qualities of God: his power, his Godhead, are to be seen in the things that

have been made. The book of nature. Read it. Study it. See in all of the discoveries of astronomy, the amazing things that God has made.

When I was a little boy, we used to visit a couple who lived in a place called Motherwell, not far from Hamilton where I grew up in Scotland and this couple, we knew them as aunt and uncle. They weren't relatives but we called them aunt and uncle. Uncle Sandy, he was a lecturer in astronomy. He was an astronomist by profession but also by obsession and I loved going to their house because we would go, we would arrive in the afternoon for afternoon tea, very, very Scottish. One of those things I've been delivered from, tea and cakes. Then later on we would have proper dinner but in between the two events, I always loved it, because it always happened this way, we would be sitting around being very polite and so forth and then Uncle Sandy would say to me, "Would you like to come upstairs?" I would say, "Yes, I would." So up the stairs we would go and my brother would follow and up we would go to his little study right at the very top of the building. We had gone in the winter, by now it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon which meant it was pitch black in Scotland, as it does, and you could see the night sky. He had this great telescope and he would make the night sky live. I can remember to this moment the excitement of his descriptions of the stars and the galaxies.

That's meant to humble us. It's meant to make us feel at awe. The book of nature tells us something about God. Do you not know? Have you not heard? And the book of Scripture tells us more. It tells us how that came into being. It tells us how that is governed. It tells us for what reason it has been created. In order to show us something of the greatness of God and the book of Scripture tells us how we may have a personal, personal, intimate, vital relationship with God. Have you not known? Have you not heard?

What does the book of nature and Scripture tell us? It tells us that he is the everlasting God. What do these great distances and light years tell you? That God made that and that God is everlasting. I mean, eventually if you stay on the space shuttle long enough for however many millions and millions and millions and millions of light years it takes to get somewhere, you're bound to hit something sometime, but in God there is no end to the eternity of God. He is everlasting whereas you and I are locked within the space time continuum we find ourselves. We live within the narrow limits of the now, this moment. But God is the everlasting God literally. The God of eternity is the Lord. He is not circumscribed by time. He does not exist in time. He created time for you and me. For you and me but he is beyond that.

He is the Creator of everything. The Creator of the ends of the earth. Understand these two things: he is everlasting therefore not limited by time; he is the Creator therefore not limited by space. He is not part of the creation and he can multitask without getting tired. He does not faint or grow weary. Literally it says in the Hebrew, "He is not wearied by weariness." Building the universe took him a word. He didn't have to go home and recuperate. He did not get tired like you guys do when your wife asks you if you have a garden to go and get rid of the roots of that big plant that was there and you go out there and you do your best to get the roots up, and then you have to go and have a nap afterwards. They don't understand why we need to go and have a nap afterwards because

we've exerted all that energy. It's because they're, I'm talking about wives here, they have absolutely no end to their energy. They don't understand what it means to be a man and to have only limited, finite resources.

So God does not need to go and nap. He does not faint or grow weary. And his understanding is unsearchable. We actually never, ever get to know all there is to know about God. The Bible doesn't even tell us all there is to know about God. It tells us all we need to know so that we get a correct and accurate reading of who God is, but we will never, ever fathom the depths of God. We will spend eternity finding out more about God.

And remember the gentleness of God. "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength." He has an excess of energy and he delights to give that energy to his people. No one and nothing is too small or unimportant for him to be worthy of his care and attention. He delights to give to his frail creatures like you and me his strength. If you go to the book of Hebrews, for example, and there in the book of Hebrews you read about great characters like Barak and Gideon and Samson and others and we're told there that those people, for all of their weakness and every one of them had a weakness, for all of their weakness were made strong out of weakness, Hebrews 11:34 says. It was the experience of the apostle. In the midst of his sufferings and illness and persecutions, he pleaded with God to get rid of some pain, some ailment that was troubling him, that was debilitating him, that he felt was interfering with his ministry and he prayed God, "Please take this away," and God wouldn't take it away. But God said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness."

So, you see, what God is doing is jogging our memories. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Don't you know the stories? Have you not read what I've done in the past and with other people just like you?" Your thoughts of God are too limited. They're too narrow. "Please, will you reckon with my limitless power and wisdom? Please, will you not imagine that because you are limited and weak that somehow or other God must be too?" This is the kind of thought and thinking that lies behind what you theologians will know as process theology or others of you might know as open theist theology, the kind of idea that God is only a reactor. He reacts to events and to things and to people's choices. He is waiting to see what you're going to do today so that he will know how he can devise a plan in order to counteract what you are going to do today. No, that isn't the God of the Bible. That's the God of people's imagination. That is an idol. That is a mental idol in the minds of theologians who have now abandoned the God who is there. God is a transcendent majesty and we need our memories jogged regularly. We need to relearn our theology proper, that is, our knowledge of God, and we need to keep our experience of God up-to-date.

Well, here's the last thing: he renews our strength. God has made a provision for his people. Look at verse 30, "Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men," that is those who qualify for military service or for athletic work, young men, "shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength." God offers to his people, to you, to me, to this church, to us today, spiritual renewal and this renewal

comes about when we admit our utter inability to help ourselves. Verse 30 draws out this contrast between God and his people. We had this great statement about the ability of God, now we're having a statement about our inability. You see, we are not everlasting. We are not the creator. We faint and grow weary and eventually we die. That's the reality. We have our own emotional, physical, mental, spiritual limitations. We are not God. That means we cannot save ourselves. That means we are not the solution to our own problems. You see how he singles out youths there. Youths in spite of their strength and vigor, they will faint. The young men, those who go into military training, the strongest of all perhaps. They too shall fall and that's not just fall because we are sinners, it means even in the energy we have to live our lives from day to day, we are frail figures as well as sinful people.

And what is the answer to our human weakness and limitation? What is the answer to that? Well, it's looking to God and waiting for God. "They that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength," and I suspect that this is where we often make our mistakes. Waiting involves patience. I didn't realize how impatient I was until I came to America. I mean, in Britain life is completely frustrating all the time trying to get anything done. That's just the way life is there, but I thought coming to America, everything would be so much better. I mean, there are Americans here and Americans are the best and brightest of all the European nations and Latin American nations put together all in one place. Guess what? Do you want something done by phone? You have to wait just as long if not longer. You want to get anything done somewhere else, I'll tell you, the lines. You have to wait in line and you wait and you wait and it's so frustrating. I'm more impatient because I had higher expectations, that's the problem. Impatience is obviously a characteristic and nobody else can keep up with me. That's my frustration.

Patience is difficult but patience is absolutely vital to the Christian life, do you see? We want everything done in our time, in our way. I know that for myself but I think it also applies at many levels to us as believers. We have questions that we want answered. Some of you are involved in scientific research and so on and that scientific research has raised questions. It has probably raised questions about the Bible, about the early chapters of Genesis. You have questions that you cannot resolve in terms of all that you are being fed from the scientific quarter today. What are you going to do with this? Well, you either capitulate and you think, "Well, the Bible is wrong, they're right." Or you try to make the Bible say what it doesn't say. Or you wait for the Lord.

Now, I know that's embarrassing and I know that's difficult and that is the trial of faith. The trial of faith in every generation is to wait for God. Let me give you an illustration. Dr. Sangster was one of the great Methodist ministers in England and was Minister of the Westminster Central Hall just opposite the House of Parliament in London for many years and Dr. Sangster had a little brother who died when he was six. This little boy was so badly mentally and physically deformed that he would make grown men turn away their face. They could not look on this child. Dr. Sangster said about his brother, "I wondered about it as a boy. I wonder about it as a man, but I know that when I see God, I will be happy with his explanation."

I ask you in some of the questions that you're asking, some of the issues that you're facing: are you prepared to wait for the Lord? You see, this is where faith kicks in. We are to walk by faith. By faith. Not sight. Get it. If I knew all the answers, if I could resolve all the questions, I would be walking by sight. This is the real issue for the believer. We are tempted to short circuit it and solve the issue for ourselves to our own mental satisfaction and sometimes in doing so, we abuse, misuse or downright deny what Scripture says. Don't do that. Wait for the Lord. Wait patiently for him.

What does waiting mean? Patient waiting? Restful trust. Confident hope. Waiting involves receiving his word, meditating on his majesty, reflecting upon his glory, pondering his power, wondering at his wisdom until our strength, our reserves of energy, mental, spiritual, physical energy are restored as these great realities begin to burn into our minds and hearts. Waiting is when I cast myself on him in complete confidence. "I will trust in you. I will trust in you," we say to God. Do you trust him?

You say, "Well, that doesn't really satisfy me. I'm always under pressure to answer these questions." God is asking you questions here. Are you listening to God asking you questions here? "Why do you say and speak thus, O Israel? Have you not known? Have you not heard?" This is the God who has made you who is speaking to you in these terms. This is your Redeemer who is speaking to you in these terms. He is challenging you, "Do you have the answers in yourself?" No, you don't. "Do you have a reason that is not fallen?" No, you don't. "Are you not a finite being?" Yes, you are. "Is God infinite?" Yes, he is. It's above your pay grade to ask some questions, do you know that? Because you would never be able to take in the answer.

Our minds are to be renewed as increasingly we cast ourselves and our minds on him. Isn't that what it says? This God is the God who is there for us. His strength is sufficient for every task and every trial. In the New Testament, the writers meditate on the teaching of Isaiah 40 and they say this about God, "He is able to do far more abundantly than everything you could ask or imagine according to the power at work within us." Paul can say to people, Christian people like you and me in Ephesus, "Be strong in the Lord and in his strength." The apostle could testify, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And you'll be able to say that too. Paul could go on to say this, "For the sake of Christ, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, calamities, for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Here is God's word to us this morning, my dear beloved people, it is as you wait for him. Like that little eaglet pushed from the nest, falling, freefalling in space, does it ever enter the head of that little eaglet, "Maybe I'm going to hit the bottom of the canyon floor and splat"? Sorry for spoiling your dinner. And as the eagle freefalls, so the great eagle comes swooping under, captures it on its back, carries it up and onwards to safety. Let me say to you, child of God, if you feel you're freefalling this morning, the eagle's wings of God's love will not let you down. John Calvin, in a magnificent statement, puts it like this, "Let us therefore flee to the Lord, that is, run to him, who after we have encountered many storms will in the end conduct us safely to the harbor for he who opened up a path and commanded us to advance in that course in which he has placed us, does not intend to

assist us only for a single day and then forsake us, leave us in the middle of the way. No, he will conduct us, he will bring us, he will carry us safely to the goal, to the New Jerusalem, to the city of our God." Wait for the Lord. Wait patiently for him.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we pray that this morning you would so write your word in our hearts, so comfort us by your Holy Spirit, so strengthen us, Lord, with your mighty strength that even as we have waited before you this morning in this room, heard your word to us, that we would conscious that we have met with you and that you are with us and that you will not forsake us and that you will never let us go. We pray in Jesus' strong name. Amen.*