

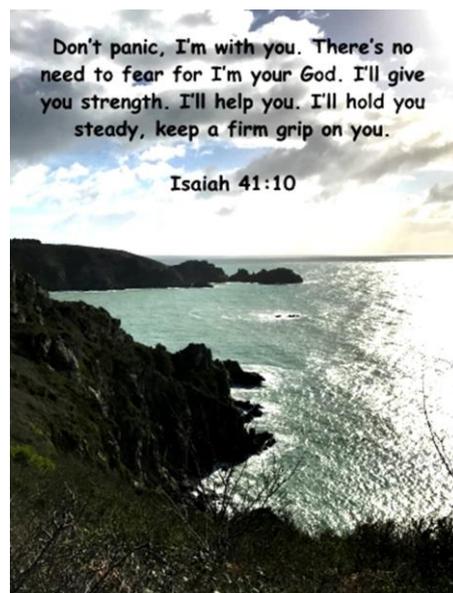
On eagles' wings

A few weeks ago, our house-group spent an evening sharing verses from the Bible that have been really important to us since the lockdown began. Verses that have spoken truth and comfort into the situation that we unexpectedly found ourselves in, and alongside the verses, we shared a little of what we felt God had been saying to us in these very strange days.

One of the things that never ceases to amaze me is that despite being written so long ago, the Bible continues to be so relevant to today – and how, if we're just willing to stop and listen, God is able to speak deeply into current situations.

One of the passages that was chosen on the night that we shared together, was one of my all-time favourites from the book of Isaiah:

'He energises those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles. They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind.' Isaiah 40:30-31, The Message



I've always loved that very visual image of an eagle soaring high above everything, and after many years of reading and re-reading that verse, I decided to find out a little bit more about the eagle, recognising that there would be significance in that particular image being used.

This is what I discovered:

An eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks, and so it 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. While the storm is raging below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle doesn't escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the very winds that bring the storm.



What a fantastic illustration, of not only being able to rise above the storm, but to be able to use it to lift us higher. I don't believe for a minute that it means the storms won't touch us, but I do believe that it means the storms don't need to defeat us. The storms of life come to us all at different points in our lives, be it storms of sickness, tragedy, failure, disappointment – the list goes on. But if we are willing to wait on God, to allow Him to minister to us, to comfort and strengthen us, then, certainly in my own experience, it is possible to come out of the storms, stronger and more able to support others who are struggling, because we know instinctively what they need. Having ridden the storms, we are more able to help others.

What is your greatest challenge right now? Don't try and dismiss it – acknowledge it, allow God to meet you there, and then let it lift you higher. And if you're in a good place right now, perhaps look for someone that needs that love and encouragement to lift them above the storms of life.

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. Henri Nouwen

Bev Jones

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