



Isaiah 40:27-31  
 Pop Spirituality  
 “Fly Like an Eagle”

Rev. Brian North  
 May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Pray. I’d like to start this morning off with a little multiple-choice Bible pop-quiz. Are you ready for that? Where can you find these verses:

**Feed the babies, who don't have enough to eat**  
**Shoe the children, with no shoes on their feet**  
**House the people, living in the street**

**These verses are found in:**

- a) Psalms
- b) Isaiah
- c) Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount”
- d) James
- e) None of the above

The correct answer is...“none of the above.”<sup>1</sup> These are words from a 1976 song by The Steve Miller Band, titled, “Fly Like An Eagle.” Nine songs by the Steve Miller Band have made it into the Billboard top 25, including three songs that hit #1; this song made it to #2. The band has sold 60 million albums worldwide. And, there’s a cool former Northwest connection with him. At least, I think they’re all “former” connections – one of them I just found out right before the service started, that Steve Miller used to own a home in Medina. But he also owned a home for a few decades in Friday Harbor (not literally “in” the harbor, of course, but on San Juan Island, near the town of Friday Harbor 😂). He sold it in 2019. He also owned a home near Sun Valley, Idaho, from 1987 to 2018, which means I was practically his neighbor when I was a ski bum there in the mid 1990’s. Though, to be clear, he and I did *not* live in the same neighborhood.

So, here are the lyrics to “Fly Like an Eagle”:

**Time keeps on slippin’, Into the future**  
**Time keeps on slippin’, Into the future**

**I want to fly like an eagle, To the sea**  
**Fly like an eagle, Let my spirit carry me**

**I want to fly like an eagle, Till I'm free  
Right through the revolution**

**Feed the babies, Who don't get enough to eat  
Shoe the children (Yes, "shoe" is used as a verb here. Poetic license!)  
With no shoes on their feet  
House the people, Livin' in the street  
Oh, Lord, there's a solution**

That's it. Those are the lyrics to the whole song. They convey a message that life is short, and the way to really soar in life is by helping those who are helpless or going through hard times. As we've done the last two Sundays, I want to share a performance of the song with you. This is from their 2011 performance in the televised PBS concert series called "Austin City Limits." (**Video Here**) (Click [here](#) if reading online – start at 52:00 and we ended at 55:30, though the performance goes longer.)

That's almost a song we could sing in church. It's that close to Scripture. Probably the only thing I would quibble with is the line that says, "let my spirit carry me" because the Bible tells us that it's not *our* spirit that carries us along, but the Holy Spirit who does that. But Steve Miller's desire to "fly like an eagle" comes right out of the Bible, though as with all the songs in this series, I'm not saying he was intentionally conveying a biblical message. But listen to these words from the prophet **Isaiah, chapter 40:27-31**, God's word to you and me this morning:

These verses were written as a reminder to the people of Israel about who God is and what he does for them. And at the time they were written, the nation of Israel was captive to Bablylon. That's why we get the question about feeling hidden and disregarded by God in verse 27. **They're in a state of chaos and turmoil, pain and anguish, and asking, "Where is God in the midst of this? Why are we ignored?"** Perhaps in the midst of our own personal Babylonian experiences where we are feeling down and out and defeated...perhaps some of us have asked those same kinds of questions. The response that's given to the question is a reminder that God is with them even in the midst of their suffering. He has not forgotten them. And then it

encourages them to remember that on their own, they will grow faint and weary...but for those who wait on the Lord, he will renew their strength and they will “soar like an eagle” as the passage says...and as Steve Miller sings.

Now, this begs the question: How does God do this for us? There are a number of ways, and we’ve talked about some each of the last couple weeks in this series. **1. God strengthens us through his Word.** The Bible is full of verses that give us encouragement, hope, and strength to face the day before us – such as this passage that we just read. **2. God strengthens us through the fellowship and support of other believers.** When we’re in the midst of a challenge there’s nothing better than another person who loves Jesus to share our burdens with, to comfort us, to pray for us, and to help us through that season of life. **3. God also strengthens us through prayer.** When we pray we are reminded that God is there, that he hears our prayers...we are convicted of our own sin and waywardness...and reminded that God loves us, never leaves us, seeks to keep working in us to draw us close to him. Some of us this morning simply need to hear that truth: that God loves you and is with you in the midst of whatever you’re going through or struggling with. There is grace, forgiveness, healing, and he will lift you up like on wings of eagles.

There is another way that God strengthens us and lifts us up like on wings of Eagles. And we’re reminded of it in the verse of his song. Steve sings that he wants to “fly like an eagle” in the chorus, and then he sings:

**Feed the babies, who don't have enough to eat  
Shoe the children, with no shoes on their feet  
House the people, living in the street**

When we reach out to others and aid them in their time of need, God lifts us up like on eagles’ wings. Probably many of us have experienced this truth: Helping others in the name of Jesus lifts, strengthens, and blesses *us*, even though we do it to bless others. A recent article in Psychology Today said this: **“We often think of volunteering, for example, as something we do to “give back” or to fulfill some moral obligation. Yet, when you engage in selfless service, you’re not just improving someone else’s life—you’re rewiring your brain, nurturing your well-being, and rediscovering a**

**sense of purpose” (Psychology Today, 1/13/25).** The article goes on to say, “Engaging in behaviors that help others releases neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, which are associated with feelings of happiness and reduced stress.”<sup>2</sup> This is how God has made you and me! Helping others is a blessing! So, are you feeling like a wounded eagle, unable to fly? Stressed out or worried? Then try something counterintuitive: spend some time caring for babies, kids in need, the homeless, single moms, young adults trying to find their way forward in the world. It will lift you up like on wings of eagles.

Now, it’s nice of the Steve Miller Band to help us see the connection between flying like an eagle and serving others and Psychology Today to affirm the personal benefits of helping others...but Jesus talks about this, too. In Matthew 25:34-40 Jesus talks about his kingdom and who will be invited in, using a made-up story about a King and his Kingdom:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ **The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:40).**

And then Jesus goes on to teach that the ones who do this are lifted up to eternal life. They are lifted up on eagles’ wings in the heavenly kingdom. Why? Because of how they lived out a Christ-like faith: feeding, clothing and generally caring for people in need. This is demonstrating personal discipleship to Jesus, and it blesses Jesus when we do it.

And so, we see that: **When we allow ourselves to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that desperately needs his care and loving touch, we experience what it is to fly like an eagle.** We can live out those words from Isaiah and be lifted up by him as on eagles' wings. And we can experience that not only in the eternal kingdom of God, but right here and right now as well, as we help carry out God's will on earth as it is in heaven. God will strengthen us and lift us up as we share his love with others through these tangible and needed ways.

Many of you know that each year our church helps families in need in our community with Thanksgiving gift cards. We partner Rose Hill Elementary school for this. The counselor there passed along some "thank you" messages from some of the families after the last Thanksgiving: **"I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Rose Hill Church for their kind support and assistance especially at this thanksgiving period, it will help us a lot for this holiday season. God bless you and everyone who has contributed to making this happen for us"** (Gift Card recipient family).

"Thank you so much for your support and attention. I am very happy to hear it. God bless you."

"Thank you 🙏 Really grateful!"

"I wanted to thank you for this gesture, since for me and my family it is a great help. We are very grateful for taking into account my son. Many blessings."

**"Hello, I wanted to thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for the support you have given me, my children, and thank you for the help you have given me. May God bless you. Thank you very much"** (Gift Card recipient family). Those are their "thank yous" to you and me for that ministry, and they are so encouraging, right? But we did this to encourage *them*. We may not always hear those thank yous, of course. For instance, with the laptop backpacks we're collecting for foster kids, we may not get thank yous from foster kids or their foster families. That's ok. Jesus's response is enough, because what we do for "the least of these" blesses Jesus.

And that lifts us up like on wings of eagles, knowing that we have blessed a bunch of families in the name of Jesus.

You know, Jesus didn't teach just for head knowledge, like high school calculus or trigonometry is for most students. So, following Jesus isn't calculus, and we should all praise God with a hearty "amen" for that. **Jesus teaches so that our knowledge would lead to action; so that we would live like him as we follow him in discipleship.** That's actually what it means to follow Jesus: to live as he did, which means the message has to get into our hearts where we can have compassion and mercy and love people as Jesus does. Jesus' sense of compassion and care was one of the things that brought people to him. He was different in that regard than other people. And we're called to be Christ-like in that regard. We're not perfect at it, for sure. None of us are. But we don't give up on it when we fall short, and Jesus doesn't give up on us. We're still invited by him to keep following...to live like him, putting into practice his teaching and the ways of Jesus: feeding, clothing, caring for, visiting, and helping those in need. This is what Jesus' followers do, because it's what he did...all the way to the cross, where the depth of his care and love is demonstrated most fully.

To keep us on the path of following him and mounted up with wings like eagles, we want to read the Bible, be in worship and fellowship with others through the church, and get on our knees and pray...but maybe, just maybe, the Steve Miller Band can encourage us, too, just as Jesus' parable does: "Feed the babies, who don't have enough to eat; Shoe the children, with no shoes on their feet; House the people, living in the street." You'll bless others, you'll bless Jesus, and you'll be blessed as well. We do it all, not for our glory, but to the glory of God the Father through Jesus the son by the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us. Let's pray...Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> I did have one person come up to me after the service and say, "You know, those verses really are in all of those places you listed." True! Maybe not verbatim, but the basic message definitely is. And that's a main point of this sermon series: being open to, and even on the lookout for, Biblical truth in everyday life. However, those exact words are from the song.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-power-of-experience/202501/selfless-service-help-others-to-unlock-your-own-fulfillment>