

## **On the Wings of Eagles**

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?  
... those 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. Isaiah 40*

*That evening, at sundown, they brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases. Mark 1*

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? God does astonishing things. In the Scripture above from this past Sunday, we learn that God transforms all things. As children of God we can rejoice in the truth that no difficult situation we might find ourselves in is greater than God's power to redeem us. In those times when we are passing through a spiritual wilderness, God guides us safely back home. *In our search to find meaning for that which has no meaning, we can blame God and become blind to God's mercy. But even then, God still does astonishing things. No matter the situation in our life, God is there in the midst of us.* Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? *God is, in every moment, ready to bring hope and reconciliation into the midst of our brokenness.*

*God's reconciling and transforming work is evident all over the world. Read between the lines of doom and despair that passes for news and you will see stories of mercy compassion---An ordinary man in the Midwest raising money to build accessible housing for returning war veterans. A housemaid in Mississippi endowing a scholarship so that others might have opportunities she did not. A group of churches joining together with social agencies to provide overnight shelter for those working hard to reclaim their lives from places of hopelessness.*

*These are stories of God at work in the world. These are places of hope. Through the power of God, nations, communities, and the individuals who constitute them, are transformed by God's redeeming power. Now as well as then, says Isaiah, God restores. God delivers us from despair. God opens the eyes of the hopeless. God opens the ears of those in despair so we can hear God calling us home from the pain of abandonment and exile.*

*In this past Sunday's Gospel, Mark points us to Jesus, the Son of God, as the one who brings Isaiah's prophetic words to fulfillment. In Jesus, Mark tells us that the sick and wounded in mind, body and spirit are healed and restored to fullness of life. What is broken is being made whole. What is crippled by affliction is being healed. Mark draws us a clear line between the present and the words of hope delivered by the prophet Isaiah.*

*In addition to the powerful words of God's prophet, Jesus tells us about the nature of God in the way he lives out his life. In Jesus we bear witness to God's compassion for the broken and wounded, for the lost and the floundering. Jesus Christ makes us aware of a power beyond ourselves who nevertheless works in our midst to alleviate suffering.*

*Jesus goes to those out on the edges of life, those whom society finds untouchable, and he lays his hands on them to remind them that they too are beloved of God.*

*Jesus heralds the coming Kingdom of God by calling simple fishermen, eating with tax collector's and sinners, healing and affirming women, casting out demons, and exhorting us to "really hear" and "really see" because things in this world are not always what they appear to be.*

*God is doing astonishing things. God was and is at work transforming all of our lives.*

*God's Word is a continuing reality that flows right into today, to this place, here and now. This is God's greatest intention for us. God invites us to be a living and breathing container of Christ's love. God invites us to bring the reality of Christ's love to the places where there is distress, injustice, affliction, or anything that is contrary to God's purpose and vision for a transformed humanity.*

*As Followers of Jesus we are invited to continue the work he began; to shape our lives to his. We all share in this call to take God's message of hope into the places where people are unable to hear it for whatever reason. We are to take this message to the places where people have no voice, both to the poor and the powerless and to those we know among our own family and friends who have been silenced by some form of crippling despair. We are called to help restore people to life, to community, to hope.*

God gives life and that is an astonishing and transforming fact. The prophetic vision of Isaiah calls to us in those places where lives are exiled and broken. Isaiah's message of hope to a people in exile becomes the message of hope to all: God is the source of all life.

We will never utter a cry of despair that isn't shot straight into the heart of God's limitless compassion. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? God is doing astonishing things.

Grace and Peace, Stephanie+