

Apr 25, 2021 Title: Revive Us Again PSALM 85: 1-7, Luke 24:44-49, Acts 2:33-47

Here we are. We hear the words "it is finished." Christ has Risen. From confess and repentance, experiencing the resurrection, an ever-renewing reality of the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

An ever-renewing reality of the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit offer takes us unaware. The psalm reminds us of our constant need for God to revive us, to make us aware of God's daily presence. It reminds me of a word by Fredrick Buechner in his autobiography "Telling Secrets. "Words wear thin after a while, especially religious words. We have spoken them and listened to them so often that after a while we hardly even hear them anymore," p830.

We are like the disciple walking on the road of life after a disaster and does not even realize Christ is walking right beside us. Revive us again, Lord. Renew our minds let us be aware of your presence.

Have you ever experience something that makes you stand up and take notice. Last week, it happened. Let me take you back six years to Mid-April 2015. Six-month earlier, Cindy fall, fractured her ankle resulting in a blood clot. My mother died. Cindy was on crutches at the funeral. A week later, she commented, you know we are not getting any younger. We need to build our house before we retire. We traveled to Ellijay, Georgia. The last model was the one we ended up building. Finding a contractor falls into our lap. Jordan only lived 1 mile away from our building site. When to school with his relatives. Signing the building contract in October, we hoped to start early. November and December was a snowy and rainy season. The good news was our land dries quickly. The cabin's foundation was dug and poured in mid-January. We moved in the first week of June. Now, mid-April 2015, I was going to the farm, looked over at the log home that had been closed in, and I could not believe my eyes. Flying due east, perhaps fifty feet off the ground, was a bald eagle. I rushed over to Jordan and his crew, and before I said anything, he said, did you see that balk eagle fly over your house. The following week, we have a visiting pair of red-tail hawks. They stayed, building their nest in an eighty-foot tree 200 feet away on the north side of the house. Now, mid-April last week, while walking the pasture, a young dark eagle fly due north, and the day afterward, two mating red-tailed hawks soar way overhead. God manifests

his presence in many different ways. When God speaks, moves, nothing is ever the same again. Revive us again, Lord.

We often want to get back to normal, to the same old, same old. But that's the whole point of Easter; there is no same old anymore. Everything is new. We may live in an unknown world, but we are still Easter people.

Easter people are transforming people. We hear and imagine Peter once proclaims Jesus as the Son of God, facing the consequences of his denial, hiding behind closed doors when Christ appears. Perhaps Peter tempted to lean back rather than looking forward. Then a rushing, churning, whipping, ruffling wind much as we have experienced during a northeastern thunderstorm. In the blink of an eye, the Holy Spirit transforms Peter and all who were present beyond their imagination. With boldness, with conviction drawing people to see, experience, bear witness of the giving of the Holy Spirit to all people. A transforming power that brought together different people to a common unity of heart and mind. The old has passed away, behold all things are becoming new. Revive us again, Lord, Revive us again.

That call makes us aware we are made new in the Resurrection in Christ and enabled to love like never before. "You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God" (1:23).

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, **but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles**; they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.

Eagles are magnificent birds, beautiful, powerful. Eagles fly high and seeing untold sights of God's creation. So can we. "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

Renewing one's strength on the mountaintop may be painful but needful. As we grow closer to God, we see that much of our lives are like an eagle. We discover we are weak in eating and applying God's spiritual food. We observe that our sharp beaks often

speak things they should not, and our lives are more weighed down than we ever imagined.

God's loving grace places us in his nest of maturity. Abundant grace resides there for us (Rom. 5:8). At times we soar, other times, we nest and grow. It is God's cycle of maturity.

"They will soar on wings like eagles" catches my heart time and again. I need God's renewing strength and uplifting in my life.

The following is from the Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee, in conjunction with Arizona Bald Eagle Management Program. They state:

In their five-year development to adulthood, bald eagles go through one of the most varied plumage changes of any North American bird. During its first four weeks of life, an eaglet's fluffy white down changes to a gray woolly down. At about five weeks, brown and black feathers begin to grow. It becomes fully feathered at ten weeks of age. In its first year, the dark-colored juvenile can often be mistaken as a golden eagle. The bald eagle progressively changes until it reaches adult plumage at five years. Its beak changes from gray-black to a vibrant yellow. The darker, more mottled plumage of a young eagle serves as camouflage, while the white head and tail announce that it is of breeding age.

As an eagle goes through different life stages, so do we. New feathers have already been planned for us, graciously provided by our heavenly Father in advance. Our youth is "renewed like the eagles." 1 John reveals we grow from children to young men to fathers (1 John 2:12-14). God provides for renewal (a plumage of change *per se*) of his children as they mature. God reminds us that our new plumage (new feathers of maturity) is part and parcel of our natural growth cycle "in him"; that he indeed is the one doing the work within us:

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you to will and act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

While God tells us that we already have feathers, we go through putting on newer ones as we mature in Christ. He also tells us that we should desire new feathers. Our salvation continues to grow. We have new desires - new desires to grow and be more like God (Rom. 8:5-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 5:1):

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, because of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Ephesians 4:23 . . .to be made new in the attitude of your minds.

Colossians 3:10 . . .put on the new self, renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Maturing Christians will mount up with wings of eagles as they grow in Christ; they will soar to new heights, be conformed into the image of God's Son, reborn, and resurrected in the last day with Christ. The good news is our desire to grow and change is evidence of our past salvation, present sanctification, and the future glorification in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:5-8; 1 Cor. 2:14). Paul wrote in Romans 8:29-30: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

In Philippians 1:6 that we can be "confident of this, that he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." John wrote: "Dear

friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be, has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

The life of an eagle reminds us as Christians: we are saved, are being saved, and will be saved. Our spiritual plumage is in a constant state of renewal and change. The one thing that does not change is that we are already eagles in that "if God is for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:35-39).

We don't love our way into a relationship with God. If that were the case, none of us would ever get there. None of us could love like we're called to love. It is beyond our abilities. But because of the relationship that Jesus handed to us through his suffering, we are purified to love. It is a response as a result of our relationship with God, setting our faith and hope in God enabling us to love. It is the outgrowth of that relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that makes us Easter people ready to go into the world. Revive us again, Lord.

I believe God has given us-Easter People-the body of Christ, the time during this pandemic to meditate, to reflect on the move of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Through the promise of Jesus, we are empowered to belike the first-century church. One heart, one mind, Easter people, disciples filled with the Holy Spirit. We know and show that all things have become new. Old things have passed away. Jesus walks with us. He talks with us. He shows us who we are-Easter people, of one heart, of one mind, of one spirit. When this pandemic is over, God will open the doors to the world for us, may our prayer, our hope, our call during this time comes from a song written for times sure as this. Revive us Again, O Lord, Revive us again. Put a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit in our lives. To God be the Glory