

## The Discipline of Disturbance

~Other Speakers G-L: Denis Lyle:

In 1892 after a year of intensive work in Great Britain, D.L.Moody sailed for home, eager to get back to his family and work. The ship left Southampton amid many farewells. About three days out into the ocean, the ship ground to a halt with a broken shaft and before long it began to take water. Needless to say the crew and passengers were desperate, because nobody was sure whether the vessel would sink or not, and no one knew of any rescue ships in the area. After two days of anxiety, Moody asked permission to hold a meeting, and to his surprise nearly every passenger attended. He opened his Bible to (Ps 91) and holding onto a pillar to steady himself he read, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Moody later wrote, "It was the darkest hour of my life... relief came in prayer. God heard me cry, and enabled me to say from the depth of my soul, Thy will be done. I went to bed and fell asleep almost immediately". Well, God answered prayer and saved the ship and sent another vessel to tow it to port.

Psalms 91 became a vibrant new Scripture to D.L.Moody, and he discovered, as you and I must also discover that the safest place in the world is in the shadow of the Almighty, "under His wings". Do you recall that it was Boaz who used this lovely metaphor when welcoming Ruth to Bethlehem and recognising her personal faith. He wished that "the Lord would recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust". (Ruth 2:12) Now it is a similar metaphor to this one that I want to draw to your attention this ...!

You see as Moses searches for some way to describe God's dealings with Israel, he instructively compares them to the dealings of a parent eagle with her eaglets in the nest. His words take us immediately in thought to the desert of Sinai, where for 40 years Moses was engaged in shepherding. And in all probability it was while he kept his lonely vigil out there in those desert wastes that he received his first instruction as to the haunts and habits of the eagle. And now as he reviews the past dealings of God with His people, he instinctively compares His discipline to that of the mother eagle. Now the eagle is in the bird world what the lion is in the animal world.

Its remarkable strength and ability to revive: (Ps 103:5)

Its majestic flight path: (Prov 30:19)

Its ability to soar above the storm clouds: (Is 40:31)

Its great speed all merit comment. (Lam 4:19)

It's not surprising therefore that Moses runs an analogy from it to the Lord. "As an eagle... so the Lord". We are told by the experts that when the time has come for the young eaglet in the nest to learn to fly, the parent bird at first tries to coax the youngster into flight.

If this method fails, the mother then resorts to what may seem to be much harsher treatment. The mother bird will force her offspring off its perch on the nest out into the air. And by this discipline of disturbance she accomplishes her desire and design... the first flight of the eaglet. Now, says Moses, laying hold of this wonderful picture that's how God has acted toward His people. When they were settled down in Egypt, God stirred their nest through persecution until they were ready to leave that country for the Promised Land. My, does God still not deal with His children in the same way I want to talk to you this... about The Discipline of Disturbance and I want to base my message on these words, "As an eagle... so the Lord."

### (1) THE REASONS FOR DIVINE DISTURBANCE

Why does God disturb our nest? Ultimately God uses the discipline of disturbance that we might fly.

III: E.C.Boulton sums up the divine purpose in a single sentence: "He has planned for us the life on the wing".

God wants us to "get off the briar and get on the wing". He wants us to rise on the wings of faith toward a fuller and higher life. Thus He stirs our nest. I wonder is this our understanding of the disturbances: stirrings: and upsets in our lives? Or have we never seen disturbance as a divine discipline at all? Moses faces us with the fact that God never allows us to settle down in our nest. There was a time when Job said, "I shall die in my nest". (Job 29:18) But God permitted no such thing. For the Book of Job may be read as a discipline of disturbance by which Job was brought to a new place of fellowship with God.

III: George Truett once stated the truth in these words:

"If you have imagined that the ideal life is ease and rest and quiet, your imagination has been a vain one. The ideal life is marked by struggle and change and conflict and upheaval." "As an eagle stirreth up her nest... so the Lord". (32:11) Naturalists tell us that in the construction of the eagle's nest the floor is laid with sharp thorns: this is then covered with down: the top layer is nice and soft. The young eagles are comfortable as they squat there waiting for mother to bring them breakfast, then lunch, followed by tea and an early night. But the time comes when the Mother will no longer feed them. She will away the soft down. Her young will be uncomfortable, the thorns will prick them: they will move around until they fall over the side of the nest.

And as the experience of falling overwhelms them, they literally get into a flap. They will start to move their wings. And this is the purpose behind their mother's activity. She wants them to discover the power of their wings: to develop an ability in flight. So she forces them out of the nest. Do you what happens sometimes? Sometimes mother eagle will tempt her young by holding a piece of meat in her beak causing the young to

stretch so far they fall out of the nest. On other occasions she deliberately topples the young out of their haven. Why? Why does the mother eagle resort to such severity? What is wrong with the eaglet? Well, there is

**(a) A RELUCTANCE TO LET GO:**

A reluctance to let go, the old nest, the old home. After all, this is all the eaglet has ever known. Its world is its nest. Here were the Hebrews in Egypt. Some of them had become conditioned to their lives as slaves. Their memories had faded. They no longer recall the promises of God to the patriarchs. (Gen 12:2) They had been tipped out of their situation. Their nest had to be stirred.

(1:27) My, sometimes God disturbs us because of some reluctance to give up the old nest. Ill: Theodore Cuyler wrote: "God sees that you and I are all the time determined to nestle down among our creature comforts. We build these earthly nests for ourselves, and fix our affections on them: then settle down in them". Christian... have you not sometimes slumbered in your nest? Have you not had the experience when all has been well with your world and you're warm and contented as a kitten who has had his fill of milk?

But suddenly the nest is torn apart. You felt the thorns: you are knocked into the air. The Divine Eagle has swooped over you and given you a push. My, has God been stirring your nest in recent days? Has affliction: sickness: sorrow: grief: pressure: pain: distress: disappointment: misery and misfortune crossed your pathway? Do you recognise that God uses these things to stir your nest? Because there is (a) And then there is:

**(b) A RESISTANCE TO STEP OUT:**

You see it may not be a reluctance to leave the old nest that keeps the eaglet from flying. It may be resistance to the idea of launching out into that untried, unknown void... the atmosphere. The eaglet, after all, has never been out there before. My, how often we are kept back from God's best... and how often God has to bring the discipline of disturbance into our lives because of our resistance to launching out into His will for us. Are we not just like those eaglets? We flutter: we fear the unknown: we're apprehensive about stepping out.

We sit on the edge of things and suddenly the Divine Eagle swoops low and we're pushed out. The nest has to be disturbed. (1)

**(2) THE RESOURCES IN DIVINE DISTURBANCE**

Now the chapter from which our text is taken is actually a song of praise. (31:30) And it is this fact that led George Matheson, the poet-preacher of Scotland to write: "What a startling thought... that the breaking up of the nest is an act of God's benevolence". Ills: Someone once asked Haydn why he wrote such cheerful music. Do you know what he said? "I cannot help it. I think of the goodness of God, then the notes fairly dance from my pen". My, in Divine Disturbances we see the goodness of God. For look at the resources we have. For one thing we have the:

**(a) KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S PLAN:**

For God's dealings with us are not arbitrary. He is not capricious in His care of us.

My, God is working towards a plan and that plan is simply to bring me closer to Himself. Do you recall that it is God Himself who asks His people Israel to remember "what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself". (Exod 19:4) "Unto Myself". My, is this not the plan that God is working out for us through the Discipline of Disturbance? The poet said:

"I thank Thee for the wing of love

That stirred my worldly nest,

And for the stormy clouds that drove

The flutterer to Thy breast."

**(b) ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE:**

Here I am pushed out of my nest. I've never used my wings before. I panic. I'm falling through the air. All my security is gone. I long for it again. Oh, that I could get back to the nest. (Num 11:4-6) My worries increase. I've never been so frightened. Never been so certain that I shall destroy myself. Tell me: have you known the experience of spiritual panic? I reckon if you haven't you're unique. I've known it. In every major decision in my life! But come back to my little eagle friend again. He's falling too. His mother pushed him out. But is the situation as dangerous as it looks? For besides the attempt of this little chap to move his wings there is another noise we hear.

Do you know what it is? The fluttering of mother bird's wings as she swoops around. For as the little chap steadily falls so she descends. Her eyes are always on him. Her presence is always near. Do you see that word "fluttereth"? It's the same word that is used in (Gen 1) about the Spirit of God "brooding", on the face of the waters (Gen 1:2) Oh, how close the Lord comes to the believer whose restfulness He has disturbed! My, is this not your testimony? Had you ever trouble which you took as from God, that did not bring that hovering presence nearer? Until you could almost feel the motion of a wing and be brushed by it as it passed above your head. My, God is never nearer to us than when we are on trial. And if the nest goes always remember that the Nest-Builder is at hand. So we have the (a) and (b)

**(c) GUARANTEE OF GOD'S POWER:**

One man who was watching an eagle train her young observed how the eaglet was tipped out of the nest. It moved its wings but was not able to prevent its fall. Lower and lower it went with its head pointing downwards towards the ground. Disaster seemed inevitable. But then the mother eagle swooped: hovered right under her

offspring: her majestic wings were spread out to their maximum and the little fellow landed on them and regained his balance. Do you what that is

Sustaining power! And "as an eagle... spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings so the Lord". (32:11) My, do you see how God cares for you in the midst of the discipline of disturbance Do you recognise that underneath and round about are those of wings of Divine Power to lift you up: to bear you up: to take you up

Do you know something Never, never once in the whole world's story has it been placed on record that a little eaglet in learning to fly has been permitted to fall to its destruction by the parent bird. NEVER! And,

" as the eagle... so the Lord". My, if God is stirring your nest will you remember this Those wings of power are there to protect you: to guard you: to shelter you

" Under His wings oh, what precious enjoyment

There will I hide till life's trial's are o'er,

Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,

Resting in Jesus I'm safe evermore."

### (3) THE RESULTS OF DIVINE DISTURBANCE

Why did mother eagle disturb the nest So that the young might fly. And God wants us to "get off the briar and get on the wing". Thus we notice that the results of divine disturbance are two-fold.

#### (a) A HIGHER LIFE:

Did you notice that God disturbed Israel so that He might lead them (32:11-12) For the nation of Israel He was leading them to the Promised Land to the place where they would be under His leadership. And for the believer He has a purpose in leading us. The NT tells us: "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, set your affection on thing above not on things on the earth". (Col 3:1-2) "Your affection on things above". Is that not why the Lord sometimes stirs our nest Perhaps our affections are on things on this earth. So few of us can really cope with material abundance. Our nest is stirred up, our security is removed. The Divine Eagle sweeps down and we are sent out flying whether we like it or not. WHY So that we can climb higher towards Him.

III: Stanley Jones says that he once saw an eagle in the Himalayas when the storm struck it. "I expected it to be dashed to the earth by the fury of the elements. Instead that eagle set its wings in such a way that when the storm struck it, it rose above and cleared the storm. It used the strong winds to go higher". Is that not what the Lord would have us do To triumph over life's circumstances: to use our wings so that we are not tied to material things: nor stumbled by life's difficulties... to fly higher and higher and higher setting our affections on things which are above. (a)

#### (b) A FULLER LIFE:

A life "filled with the knowledge of His will". (Col 1:19) Will you have a final look at that little fellow standing on the edge of its nest Now what is it that mother bird is demanding of her offspring Is it not utter abandonment of itself to the atmosphere Is it not this utter abandonment of ourselves that so often we refuse to give to the Lord My, thats why God disturbs us and brings us to a place of utter abandonment to His will... so that we might have A FULL LIFE!

III: In His biography of AB Simpson A.W.Tozer tells of Simpson's decision to resign the church he was pastoring and begin the work of evangelising the multitudes of New York City. His closest friends considered this launching out, this utter abandonment of himself to the Lord, "a piece of rare folly". They felt he was stupid. He had been well supported financially by his church: now he had no income whatsoever and a family of seven children to support. Yet that was what God was wanting A.B.Simpson to do and he did it. Its interesting to note that Tozer's biography of Simpson is entitled "WINGSPREAD". (a) (b)

" As an eagle... so the Lord". III: A naturalist tells us of an experience of his in which he learned the value of disturbance. Observing the chrysalis of an emperor moth, he decided to accelerate the emergence of the moth. Cutting the chrysalis, he freed the struggling moth. But it was a tragic mistake. That moth, needed the struggling: the battling: the agitation, in order that its wings might become strong for flight. As it was, the moth soon died. Is it not the same with us God stirs our nest so that we might rise on the wings of faith to a fuller: stronger: higher life. "As an eagle... so the Lord". May the lord continue to disturb us when we're comfortable, and comfort us when we're disturbed. And in it all work out His plan for our lives.