

**Free to Fly**  
**Isaiah 40:28-31**  
**Everton Hills**  
**5 November 2017**

**As a child, I always imagined that one day I could fly.** Not in an airplane; those things where, if the engine stops in mid-flight, you can't easily get out and give it a push start. No. I imagined that one day, I would be able to soar across treetops, through canyon, and skim across the waters... effortlessly, and free.

**What have been your dreams?**

Even now, when I have a moment to day dream, I can picture myself again, with my head in the clouds... only to awaken with a start, to realise that gravity still has control... and probably even more so now, than as a child. **But the thought of flying free, wow.**

The fact is the closest I have ever gotten to that was scuba diving... being able to do tumble turns and float weightlessly... although it wasn't totally free – as I needed to be aware of dive charts as to how long I could stay underwater to avoid the bends.

While it's nice to imagine flying free, the fact is we can't do it. No matter how old you are. Students need to learn. Parents need work. Older people need to reminisce – or whatever it is that they do. And so even in retirement they are not truly free.

And, let's be honest, the fact is, we all carry a little bit too much cargo.

When I say that, I don't just mean the cargo associated with the consequences of gravity that you notice on the bathroom scales. I mean that we all have worries, and concerns, and issues, and histories, and disappointments that stop us from getting off the ground; perhaps it is the fear of having a job, or holding a job. Perhaps it's associated with something that has to do with your family; how your kids are going to grow up, whether they get a job or get married, or are happy, or whether they will even remember you. And if you have older parents, you might wonder about their health, or your health. And then there is the grief associated with loss – and how we will cope, or might cope, or the guilt of things that may have been said or not been said... the list goes on.

On my office door at the Senior Campus I have a sign that I think sums it up well, ***“If you have troubles come in and tell me about them. If you don't, come in and tell me how you do it.”*** I am yet to have someone come in and tell me how they do it!

So this morning, as we commemorate Memorial Sunday, I want to share with you one of my favourite passages in the Old Testament. It's a passage that shouts a promise... that if true can help me fly free in all circumstances. And help you fly free too.

It's written in Isaiah 40... and the promise is simply this...

***“...those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31, NLT)***

Now to understand the context.

The prophet Isaiah was writing to the people of Israel during a time where they felt very little freedom. The surrounding nations were constantly breathing down their neck and threatening war and captivity and a return to the slavery from which they had once escaped.

If you have ever tasted freedom from an addiction, or freedom from a problem, or freedom from a particular haunting worry, you know you never want to go back!

But that was the fear. That was the threat.

And it wasn't simply a physical fear. It was an emotional and psychological one too. They were looking at their situation, looking at themselves and saying, God doesn't care.

***“My eyes grew tired of looking to heaven for help. I am in trouble, Lord. Help me!”***  
***(Isaiah 38:14, NLT)***

Effectively what they are saying is “God doesn't really care about me! How can he? Look at all this bad and difficult stuff that is happening all around us. He's not really in charge of anything!”

Have you ever felt that way?

In the midst of your grief?

In the worries about the seeking of a new pastor?

In the daily concerns that you face in your life?

Do you see what was happening here to the Israelites? They begin to think that their problems are bigger than God himself! They have failed to trust and believe that the God of Creation, the God who made life out of chaos, **who built a universe out of the formless, nothingness,** wasteland (that's what Genesis 1:2 actually means), can actually transform their situation.

You see the problem is, more often than not, when problems come our way, we exchange our faith in God, and in what God can do, or in the peace that God promises to provide when things are tough, and we exchange that for the mindset that says “I am in control, and I have to sort out my own destiny.”

To a degree, that is certainly true. God has given us rational minds to make rational decisions. For example, we know that if we are digging a hole in the wrong spot, it doesn't matter how big we dig the hole, it will still be in the wrong spot. And the problem with that is that as we dig, as we try to correct, as we try to force whatever it is that we are trying to fix to happen, we inadvertently place a bigger burden on our shoulders. And love gets tough!

At what point, do we need to trust God... and have faith in God's promises.

#### **Kids Talk**

What's this? A 50 dollar note.

How do you know? It could be a fake.

How would you find out? You have faith and act on its promise of being worth \$50.

That's what faith is. Acting on the promises that God has given us. When we do, we learn that trusting in God makes a massive difference to our lives.

You see, that is where Israel was at, at the time Isaiah wrote. They couldn't see that God could be present in the midst of their suffering and fear. And so they dismissed him. Like that \$50 dollar note, it was like they put it in their pocket, and went back to the streets to beg.

And to Israel, and to us, in whatever situation we might find ourselves in, Isaiah says...

***“O Jacob, how can you say the LORD does not see your troubles? O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights? Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:27–31, NLT)***

In other words, “look beyond what you see, and notice that God is still very present.

He was present last Wednesday when the Ladies Fellowship gave a surprise morning tea to our college staff as they grieved a colleague.

He is present as different people stand up within our community and help to lead and encourage and share God’s grace during a pastoral vacancy.

He is present in each of your stories as you wrestle with whatever burdens, whatever fears, what worries you have.

He is present even in the midst of our grief, as we remember loved ones.

In short, he is present in all circumstances.

God wants you to fly. He wants you to soar on wings like eagles. And he does that as we increasingly learn to trust in him, in all circumstances. How do we grow in that trust? It begins as we start trusting him in the small things... and before long, we notice that he is trustworthy in the big stuff as well.

Will you still have problems? Yes. But we don’t face them alone. Because God is with us. And that makes all the difference.

*“Those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31, NLT)*

My childhood dream of flying is not that far from the mark. While I might never grow wings, nor will I ever wear a wing suit, I am still learning to fly. **When we fly by faith, we live free!**