

Soaring to the Heights



Mobilize

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Soaring to the Heights – Mobilize

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Contents

Introduction to devotional series “Soaring to the Heights”	5
Mobilize 1 – Job 5:7	9
Mobilize 2 – Job 9:25	10
Mobilize 3 — Job 9:26.....	11
Moblize 4 — Job 12:7.....	13
Mobilize 5 — Job 26:7.....	14
Mobilize 6 — Job 28:21.....	15
Mobilize 7 — Job 35:11.....	17
Mobilize 8 — Job 37:15.....	18
Mobilize 9 — Job 37:21.....	19
Mobilize 10 — Job 39:13.....	22
Mobilize 11 — Psalms 8:8.....	23
Mobilize 12 Psalms 19:1	24
Mobilize 13 Psalms 24:7	27
Mobilize14 Psalms 55:6	28
Mobilize 15 Psalms 57:10	29
Mobilize 16 Psalms 68:13	31
Mobilize 17 Ps 68:18.....	32
Mobilize 18 Psalms 68:33	33
Mobilize 19 Psalms 75:5	35
Mobilize 20 Psalms 84:3	36
Mobilize 21 Psalms 89:6	36
Mobilize 22 Psalms 89:37	39
Mobilize 23 Psalms 90:10	40
Mobilize 24 Psalms 102:7	41

Mobilize 25 Ps 103:12	43
Mobilize 26 Psalms 108:4	44
Mobilize 27 Psalms 147:8	45
Mobilize 28 Psalms 148:4	47
Mobilize 29 Proverbs 23:5	48
Mobilize 30 Proverbs 30:19	49
Mobilize 31 Job 39:26	50

Introduction to devotional series “Soaring to the Heights”.

I have been asked to develop a series of devotionals related to becoming involved in missions. The premise of this material is what we can learn by looking at what is involved in soaring in the heavens and applying that to God’s call to mission.

Why this idea? It is because no matter what actual form of transport we use, whether we walk, ride in a boat, car, or plane we need to keep our eyes on God. In a sense to soar so that we can keep our focus on God and on the mission we have been called to participate in.

There are many ways to reach those people. We can walk or maybe ride a horse or donkey. We can ride in a cart or in a boat. These were the primary avenues of reaching people for so many years. More recently we can now ride in a vehicle and can fly. Options that have increased our ability to reach people. In all of these a critical factor has been a vision of going where God calls. And an ability to soar, to let God open our eyes and hearts to all that is possible when our focus is heavenward.

There will be five sets of devotionals in this series. Here is the list and the focus of each. The overall theme for them is taken from the process of entering air or space, which in many ways is not much different from entering a remote location on the planet.

Here is a description of each of the five sets of devotionals.

Soaring to the Heights: Motivate— In any endeavor a key element is motivation. What motivates our choice to become involved.

This series of devotionals is to provide time to focus on, think through, and review all that will be or has been part of the process to encourage a person to choose to heed God’s call to missions and its related ministries as an avenue of service in the kingdom of God.

The scriptures for this section are drawn from the Pentateuch and the Books of History

Soaring to the Heights: Mobilize – At some point is time to commit ourselves. It is time to take all we have learned and put it into action. It is a scary exciting moment. It is filled with all kinds of emotions, fears, worries, and hopes. It is like the moment when you are accepted into school. It is like the moment when you sign a contract for a job. It is like the moment when a bride and groom say “I DO.” It is about the moment when you say YES to the Lord’s call on your life.

This series of devotionals is for the purpose of reflecting on those decisions, whether taken in the past or being taken now. It is about reviewing the consequences of such a decision and the reality that, once the decision has been made, life will never be the same. It is about facing the fear and the joy of choosing.

The texts for this section are drawn from the books of Poetry

Soaring to the Heights: Function – The idea of soaring is about learning to live at a new level spiritually. In some ways it is similar to what a plane deals with when taking off. There are several factors that come into play and need to be dealt with. These have to do with weight, amount of fuel, and final destination. If we do not care for them properly then we will fail. As in all endeavors in life our actions involve choices and how they will affect our plans and our ability to function. When we handle all those choices correctly then we will be able to soar, able to carry out the work that we are given. These choices also affect how long it takes to arrive at our destination. We choose to go to school after secondary school. We choose an occupation. We choose a place to live and so on. The choice of marriage and kids - depending on the person. The choice of hobbies and activities. I can go on. All are part of how I function in the role God has given me.

This series of devotionals is for the purpose of allowing time to reflect on past choices, current decisions, and thinking about the impact of any other choices that may be necessary. Learning to make wise choices is critical as we move from one phase of life and enter into the next phase of life – or, in this context, as we move forward in the mission of God

The texts for this section are drawn from the Prophets

Soaring to the Heights: Validation – We all want to know that all we have done has a point and will bring about the desired results. It is when we begin to see the fruit of all that has been done and being able to accomplish the goals that have been set.

In life, all the choices have this focus, they are designed to bring us to the point of carrying out specific goals and accomplishing key responsibilities. In life it is finding employment or raising a family. In the church it is becoming engaged in the mission of God.

This series of devotionals is for the purpose of, as before, reflecting on what happens when you have found the place where God wants you to serve. It is about reflecting on what it means to use the lessons learned, the skills obtained, and the relationships developed in carrying out what God has called you to do.

The texts for this section are drawn from the New Testament

Soaring to the Heights: Mission – Consider this. Every rocket sent into space has a mission. Some are for communication. There are exploratory satellites. There are manned missions, like the space station and moon. There are military satellites. There are weather satellites. So many kinds and each designed to carry out a mission. There is also often a set time and location for the mission. Some satellites have a short-term purpose and limited location. Some, like voyager, are sent off on long journeys with a vast purpose. Some study the earth, and others study the beyond.

It is the same in life. We all have a mission. We all have a time and place of service. The goal is that all of us, in carrying out our portion of the mission, can work together to accomplish a greater mission, the call of God to proclaim the good news to all tribes and nations.

This series of devotionals is for the purpose of reflecting on how you fit into that greater mission. It is about thinking through the value of what you do, no matter how small or unseen, in making the mission possible. We often don't realize how important everyone is to the work being done. In mission aviation, it is the same. We need each other. We need people who keep things functioning. We need people to communicate; we need people to explore. We need people to carry out specific work at specific times. We need people who commit to long arduous efforts and we need everyone in between.

The texts for this section are from references to the heavens found in all of scripture.

May God use this series of devotionals to encourage and inspire you as you play your part in carrying out the great commission. May God richly bless you as you spend time in meditation and reflection. May you sense, over and over, the truth that God has called and that when God calls, He provides all you need to do what He has called you to do in His service.

Mobilize 1 – Job 5:7

“Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.”

So, have you ever heard the phrase “just looking for trouble,” or “a glutton for punishment”?

It describes the human condition more or less. So let’s be honest with ourselves. No matter how hard we try to do what is right, to avoid trouble, and not make mistakes, we can’t win, can we?

How many times have you winced as you realized you said or did the wrong thing? How many times, as you review what happened in a situation, do you wish you could do it over so you could somehow do better?

We don’t like it, but that is our reality. And why? Because we are riddled with sin. We are not selfless and truly loving. We are not as pristine and angelic as we would like to believe, even on the best of days.

So, am I being cruelly honest? Well, yes, I am being honest—and there is nothing cruel about being honest with ourselves and those around us.

Without God’s help, the focus of life will be me. That is why there are sparks. That is why they fly upward. Forget all the science about fire and heat; the sparks represent the presence of something that triggers our actions. They fly upward, meaning we can’t hide them.

Now consider something different. You have the spark of life in you as well. The question is, how do you let that spark dominate? How do you let others benefit from that flame within—and not the flame of sin?

Mobilize 2 – Job 9:25

“My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy.”

Have you ever been in a place where you feel like you are running out of time? Or maybe that there just isn't enough time to do what you wanted or needed to do? It is a strange feeling. There you sit, wondering what happened to all the time you thought you had—time you wish you could rerun to see if you could have done something different or more so that the time would have been enough.

The crazy thing is that there has always been enough time for you to accomplish what God wanted in your life and what He wanted you to accomplish. The issue is that what you thought needed to be done and accomplished is not always what God needed to do and accomplish through the time given to you.

That is why there is no joy. We create goals that are not based on the truths and realities of the life we are given on this earth. We are stuck in a concept of time that is out of step with the reality of who we are and what we were created for.

We spend our days thinking we could live forever, but the context is wrong. We are trying to live forever *here* and not in the forever God has planned for us. We are trying to create something here that has no hope of lasting, when we should be creating something for the eternity God is preparing for us.

We think of how long it will take to accomplish something, basing it on our strength and our knowledge. We miss the point of what God can accomplish in a moment with a life joyfully committed to Him. It is not about how long life lasts; it is about finding the joy God has placed in the life we have.

Mobilize 3 — Job 9:26

“They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey.”

Who is the prey? Are we the prey, and is time hunting us down to carry us away? Why does Job see life in this way? If we are the prey, then how will we respond? How will our response affect those around us? We will make others feel the same way—as if they were prey and life was doing everything possible to hunt them down and render life unbearable.

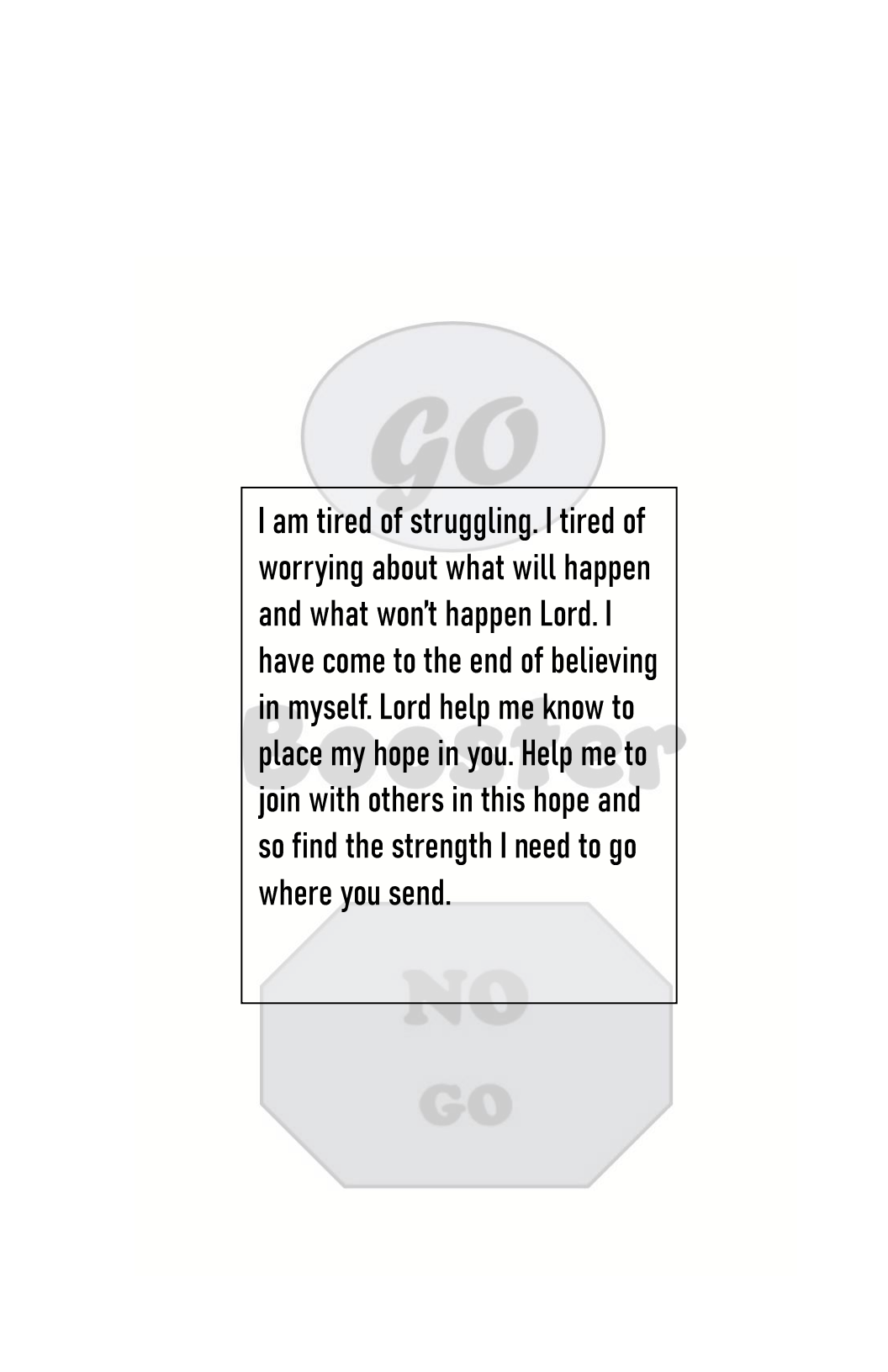
There is the feeling that no matter how long we live or how hard we struggle in this life, it is all in vain. The truth is that if all we have to look forward to is judgment and a verdict of *guilty*, then each day is filled with judgment—judgment that will carry us, not toward God in hope, but away from God in despair.

Without hope, that is the reality of life. Without hope, everything appears to be another attempt to ruin and destroy what little we think we have.

So what do you really have? What is it that you are afraid to lose? What would make you willing to struggle for another day? What would bring joy into your world and make the pain and suffering worthwhile?

I cannot answer that question for you. I can only give you my answer: It is the knowledge that no matter what happens to this thin thread of life, I have hope in God for something far greater. It is the knowledge that I can share this hope with another person who feels that every day is designed to rob them of whatever hope they have.

It is knowing and experiencing God’s presence in the company of others who know Him as well.

The background features a faint, light gray oval with the word "GO" inside, and a faint, light gray octagon with the words "NO" and "GO" inside. The text is centered within a black rectangular border.

I am tired of struggling. I tired of
worrying about what will happen
and what won't happen Lord. I
have come to the end of believing
in myself. Lord help me know to
place my hope in you. Help me to
join with others in this hope and
so find the strength I need to go
where you send.

Mobilize 4 — Job 12:7

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you.”

What can we learn from the animals, birds, fish, and the world around us? Job’s friends were often wrong in what they said—not because they were looking in the wrong places, but because they usually misunderstood what they were seeing and hearing.

The birds and animals have much to tell us. We can learn a great deal about faithfulness and commitment in their care for their young. We can learn about perseverance and endurance by observing how they live and survive. We can even learn how to live well in a specific context or place.

The issue is whether we will learn from what we observe. Will we apply what we learn from them to our world and to what is happening around us?

Actually, the deeper question is this: **Will we learn from anyone or anything?**

I ask this because we are often extremely proud and arrogant. We easily turn away good examples and helpful input. We do not take the time to observe or seek advice. We ignore so many things that could prevent the trouble we so often *invite* into our lives. Yes—invite.

This happens because when we don’t listen, when we don’t stop to observe and learn, we are opening the door to trouble.

Animals and birds that don’t learn from their parents become prey. They do not learn how to live; they do not experience all that was created for them.

Learn from them—and learn to experience all that God has created for **you**.

Mobilize 5 — Job 26:7

“He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.”

Is space really empty? Is God not present everywhere? What holds the Earth in the void of space?

I have come to learn that space is not as empty as we once supposed. It is filled with energy—waves of gravity, waves of light, waves of plasma, and, surprisingly, dust. Most of this is undetectable to the human eye.

This means that without specialized tools, the northern sky (perhaps a reference to something like the Northern Lights) would appear to hang in empty space. If we were standing on the moon, the earth would also appear to be suspended by nothing, in nothing, and over nothing.

Everything else is beyond our ability to perceive. We only see the results of their presence. We have light, we have weight, we have heat—all effects of forces we cannot see.

In all of this, God is present. We are told that the universe cannot contain Him, and that He sustains all things. And, like those unseen forces, we cannot perceive any aspect of His presence with our physical senses. It is only with the eyes of our spirit and the ears of our faith that we gain any awareness of God’s presence.

What we *do* have is the evidence of His presence. Just as gravity pulls on us, light reveals the world around us, and cosmic rays bring us warmth, so the Word of God speaks to us of His nearness. And most importantly, we have Jesus—the incarnation of the living God.

So, whether we can see God or not, the evidence of His presence is everywhere if we choose to believe and see.

Mobilize 6 — Job 28:21

“It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air.”

What is hidden from our eyes? Why can't we see?

What could be hidden from every living thing? Actually, there are many things hidden even from the eyes of birds. Keep in mind that the sight of birds is often incredible. Eagles can see across great distances. Owls can see in the dark and detect the slightest movement. Any bird that catches insects while flying must have exceptional eyesight.

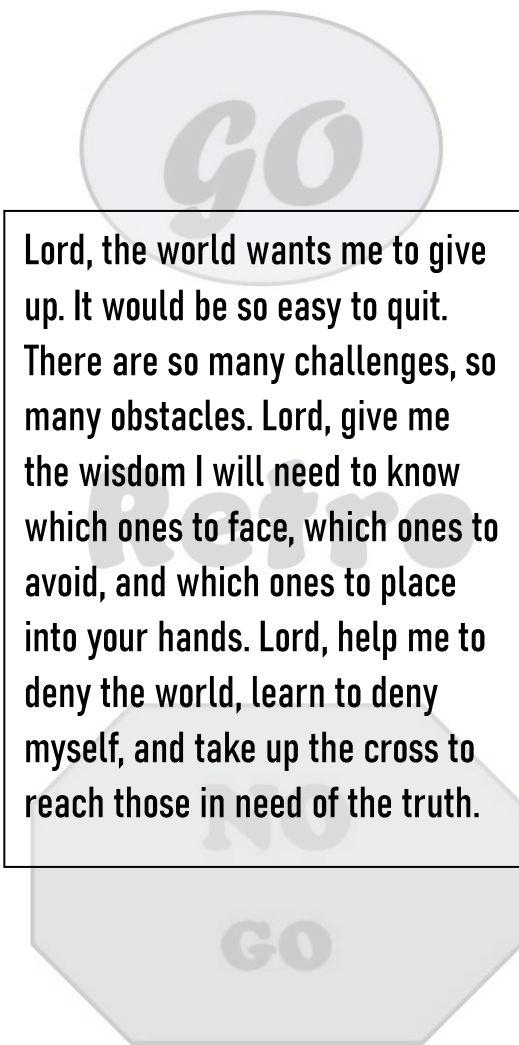
Our eyesight compared to theirs is incredibly limited. And here is another example: birds like loons can see underwater. Again, they win hands down over our ability to see in that context.

So what can't they see? They cannot see thought—the capacity to reason, the ability to ask *why*, and to understand even a portion of the answer. They also cannot see beyond death. They will fight to avoid it, but they cannot see what happens afterward.

So what is the point? Are we, too, just as blind? We have the ability to observe, to ask questions, and to respond. But do we know *why* we can do that and what the ultimate purpose of that ability is? If you exclude God from your reasoning, then there is no answer. There is no explanation for why wisdom exists or what its purpose may be.

In this world, we have many attempts at answers. That is the realm of philosophy and religion. The problem is that all such attempts must begin with the assumption that humanity has value and purpose—or their constructs collapse.

God is the answer. But even the sharpest eyes in the world cannot see Him. Only the eyes of faith can—and only there is the answer.

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Lord, the world wants me to give up. It would be so easy to quit. There are so many challenges, so many obstacles. Lord, give me the wisdom I will need to know which ones to face, which ones to avoid, and which ones to place into your hands. Lord, help me to deny the world, learn to deny myself, and take up the cross to reach those in need of the truth.

Mobilize 7 — Job 35:11

“...who teaches more to us than to the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the air?”

Who is teaching us, and what is the wisdom we receive? The obvious answer is God. Although there are many lesser sources, in the final analysis, all they have to teach us is based on what God has provided for us to observe and learn from.

The birds and the animals are listed as sources of teaching. Let's focus on the birds. What can we learn from them? The obvious lesson relates to flight. From birds, we learned that flight is possible.

Yet we made many mistakes along the way—and some rather idiotic attempts at flight. Many of the earliest ideas involved trying to mimic the action of wings. Those attempts ended in total disaster and, admittedly, produced some humorous results.

It wasn't until we began to truly study the birds that leap from high places that our understanding of flight began to develop. It wasn't about flapping and running around. It was about finding a way to generate enough velocity for the wings to carry us. The best example of this is the eagle, which does very little flapping and a great deal of soaring.

The next lesson is this: when it comes to following God, it is not accomplished through a lot of flapping and running around. You know what that represents—our human efforts to accomplish something we think is good without God.

Following God is accomplished by launching ourselves in faith and catching the winds of the Spirit. When that happens, we learn to soar.

Mobilize 8 — Job 37:15

“Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash?”

If you thought the wind was unpredictable, think again. Take a moment to watch a lightning storm. Consider the impossibility of predicting when the next bolt will occur—and even more impossible, the path it will take. All you have to do is look at a photograph of a night sky illuminated by lightning.

The path is ragged and jagged. It zigs and zags. It can jump from cloud to cloud, from cloud to ground, or from cloud to tall objects like towers, trees, or even a lightning rod.

When it comes, it arrives with a great roar and clapping sound. Count the seconds to know how far away it was. Then listen as the thunder reverberates and shakes the ground, the air, and even your windows.

Lightning is terrifying because it is unpredictable—not in *whether* it will occur, but in *when* and *where* it will strike. It stands as proof of the limits of our knowledge and, even more so, the limits of our ability.

Yet God knows the wild and unpredictable path of the lightning. He knows its when, He knows its where, and He knows every detail of its journey.

Our life is much like a lightning bolt. It is unpredictable. We never truly know what will happen next, when it will happen, or how it will happen. So why do we think we are in control of any aspect of it?

The good news is that God *does* know. He is in control, and He knows the when, the why, the how, and the where of every event and every moment of our lives.

Stand in awe with me—and then learn the meaning of the word *respect*.

Mobilize 9 — Job 37:21

“Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.”

What happens if you try to look at the sun? You guessed it—you could seriously, even permanently, damage the retina of your eye. Anything over 60 seconds can cause permanent damage, and even clouds may not be enough to prevent it. If you can see the sun’s outline through the clouds, beware.

What happens if you focus all you are and look at God? What will you see? What will happen?

You won’t damage your eyes. But I doubt you will be able to look for very long. In all of Scripture, only Moses was allowed to see God’s glory—and even then, only after it had passed by. Everyone else collapses in terror and fear. Why?

Because in that moment, all their sin was exposed. They saw themselves as God saw them—ugly and twisted. Not a pretty sight, and something that would forever be burned into their memory, something they would never be able to erase.

Looking at the sun causes permanent damage so you cannot see. Looking at God creates a vision of ourselves that cannot be erased. We see ourselves without filter, without distortion, and without escape.

The one needs to be avoided, but the other—truly looking at God and seeing ourselves as He sees us in the light of His perfection and glory—is essential. Until we do, we will never fully understand the sacrifice that was made for us.

Fortunately, there is a way to soften that image and see the original restored. It is by focusing our eyes on Jesus and allowing His forgiveness to work its restorative power on our lives.

Lord I know that I have a past
and it weighs me down. The
world wants me to believe that
because of that I am ugly and
unlovable. They want everyone to
believe that so that they can feel
good about themselves. Help me
to see with your eyes. To see you
through your Son's eyes and
through his sacrifice that has
cleansed me of my past. Help me
to help others find you and learn
to see the wonder of what you
created in each of us. Lord I have
a past help me to leave it behind
and learn to fly.

Mobilize 10 — Job 39:13

“The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.”

I am surprised to see this in a description of the wonders of God. God has been using incredible images and powerful illustrations to challenge Job’s understanding of Him. Then He brings up an ostrich. They are the largest birds on earth and can run very fast. But when they flap their wings, nothing. The wings are big, but they will never lift them off the ground. Why is this a source of joy?

The stork is one ugly bird. Have you seen a picture of the marabou stork? There is nothing pretty or aesthetic about that bird’s appearance. I don’t think anything could make me believe that its feathers and pinions could compare to the majestic wings of many other birds.

Yet God includes both of these birds in His list for Job to consider. Why?

In some ways, the answer is simple: animals are amazing creations of God. It doesn’t matter what their appearance is or how they behave, they are still amazing. They have life. They know how to survive in unique environments. They are exactly what God created them to be.

We, too, are amazing creations of God. It does not matter how we appear to others. It does not matter whether others understand us or can explain why we behave the way we do. We remain God’s creation—and even more incredible, we are created in His image.

While we cannot explain any of the above, God knows every detail and understands the *why* behind everything. There are no mysteries for God. That truth can be both scary and comforting at the same time.

Think about that—and let God’s presence settle into your heart as you learn to trust the One who truly knows you.

Mobilize 11 — Psalms 8:8

“...the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.”

Are there really paths in the air and in the sea? Of course there are. There are all kinds of ocean currents. In the air, the jet stream is one example. There is also a current that starts in the ocean and affects the jet stream—it is called El Niño. But are there paths that birds follow for migration?

We know that many species of ocean life follow the currents to find food and breeding grounds. We also know that these currents circulate warm and cold water, which helps control the climate in many parts of the world.

What I have learned is that in the spring, some animals use these currents to move rapidly from one area to another. In the fall, they fly below the currents to avoid them, and a few fly high above them. All this shows that fish and birds have the ability to sense the presence of these currents and either use them to their advantage or avoid them so they will not be delayed or hindered. Flight in airplanes works the same way. Routes and timing are based on the presence or absence of currents and how they affect the weather in a given place. Important tools and sensors have been developed to help identify all of this.

So what sensors do we have as human beings? Do we know how to interpret the information we have? Do we know how to benefit from it and how to avoid serious mistakes? Usually, we are not too good at this area. History is filled with evidence of our inability to sense what is happening, especially in the spiritual area of our lives.

The good news is that God has promised to help us. He promises to send the Holy Spirit to guide us and, through the Spirit, provide discernment. The key question is: are you willing to be guided?

Mobilize 12 Psalms 19:1

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Do we understand what they are declaring?

When you look up at the sky during a clear day? You see only one thing. You see the sun. If you say I see clouds, that is not quite right, for behind those clouds and what makes them visible is the sun. If you see a blue sky that is not quite right either, for without the sun, you will not see the blue sky.

So what does that singular light in the sky represent? The one and only God. Am I stretching this idea? That is the glory of what is being declared for us. At least my idea of what that is. There is only one God. All else is false and a creation of His.

Now, what about the night sky? What do you see? You see the vastness of space. A vastness that seems to expand every year as we gain better and more powerful ways to examine it. The one visible galaxy of the Bible has now become super clusters with billions of galaxies.

What does that immensity represent? It also represents the one and only God. This one God is immense beyond anything we can imagine. More immense than a universe over 98 billion light-years across with an innumerable number of stars. This is the glory on a magnificent, unimaginable scale.

So let the universe speak to you about the one and only God, who is far beyond our capacity to comprehend, yet speaks to you in a

way you can see and understand, revealing the truth about who has called you and loves you.

This world wants me to mimic them. They want me to use their methods and systems to accomplish your work. There is so much available that can be used to carry out the work you have given us. Help me know what is useful and what is a waste of time and energy. Help me to know when I can use the tools available and when to discard them and put my faith in your direction and guidance. Help me to not waste my energy and time in fruitless labor. Help me to place my faith in you

Mobilize 13 Psalms 24:7

Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

This psalm opens with a statement that we all recognize and believe: “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.”

Yet here we are the gates, and the cry is for the gates to not only be opened, but because of the greatness of the Lord, be lifted higher. Prior to this, the city had been occupied by another people. A people who did not worship the God of all creation.

Now the city has been conquered and designated Zion, the city of God. The people have come to enter the city and give glory to God, and the symbol used to show its submission is the call to not only open its gates but do so in a manner that reveals the greatness of the one who has come.

What are the gates of our lives that need to be opened so God can enter? What areas do we continue to maintain control over that we need to submit to the King of Glory?

In many ways, we are like a city. We have gates that we use to control who has permission to be part of our lives. We also have gates that define who has permission to guide our lives and even have control over our lives.

Sadly, we believe that we have some level of control over our little worlds and their surroundings, and forget the statement that opens this Psalm that the Earth and everything within it belongs to God, and the fact that one day every knee will bow and recognize this truth.

The blessing that we can enjoy is to recognize this fact and open the gates over our lives, even lift them up in recognition of this, and submit our lives to the King of Glory.

Mobilize14 Psalms 55:6

I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.

Why a dove? Where is the place of rest? What is the rest we seek?

There are two birds often used to symbolize two opposing attitudes. The hawk, a bird of prey, attacks and creates fear in its enemies. The dove, a bird of peace, flees away in the face of threat and seeks a place of quiet and rest.

Which is the description we prefer?

We prefer to be seen as hawks, as capable of defending ourselves and able to deal with any threat that may come our way. Truthfully, we may not actually act that way, but in our hearts and minds, that is what we wish to be. We wish to have the courage and power to depose our enemies and control our world.

We also prefer to be seen as doves. As one who wishes to live in peace and not have to deal with the conflicts of the world around us. We are fearful of losing. We wish there were someone else who would come and deal with whatever problem is confronting us.

We are often torn between the two opposing forces of being in control and feared, and of being in peace and at rest. The question is which is better? Which will actually accomplish God's work?

It is a difficult question to answer, for we are called to be bold in our witness of God's truth. At the same time, we are encouraged to be gentle in our treatment of others. But is it not both? The ability to have peace and be gentle often requires more strength and courage than attacking the enemy. Take time to reflect on why this is true.

Mobilize 15 Psalms 57:10

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

We know the extent of God's love. We know this because of the sacrifice he made for us. We know this because we have experienced the depth of this love in the forgiveness we have received. Paul challenged us to know the height, depth, and width of this love. What happens is we run out of words to do so, and our attempts at doing so seem feeble in comparison to its reality.

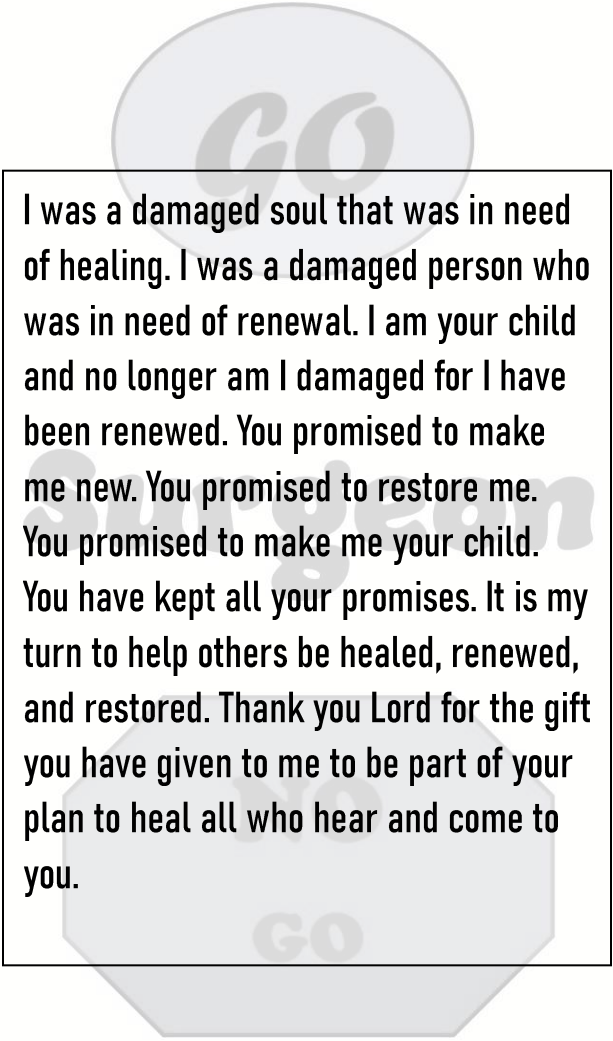
The same is true of God's faithfulness. When he makes a promise, there is no limit to what he will do to carry out what he has promised in the best way possible and at the most opportune time.

The question now is, how evident is my love? How visible is it? How far am I willing to go in obeying the Lord? Do I have the same level of love for others? How would they describe my love? In the same way, how would others perceive and describe my faithfulness? Am I seen as a person who will fulfill my word to them? As a person whom they can depend on in every circumstance?

To be honest, our ability to love and to be faithful is limited.

It's what we think and how we live. Why? Because we depend on our resources and abilities to love others and to be faithful. That is a serious mistake and one that guarantees that we will not succeed in loving as God loved us, nor being faithful in the way that God is faithful.

The point is that if Christ is living in us, then we don't have to rely on our ability to love or be faithful. We can draw on the resources of God so that our love becomes like his, and our ability to be faithful depends on his power and resources.



I was a damaged soul that was in need of healing. I was a damaged person who was in need of renewal. I am your child and no longer am I damaged for I have been renewed. You promised to make me new. You promised to restore me. You promised to make me your child. You have kept all your promises. It is my turn to help others be healed, renewed, and restored. Thank you Lord for the gift you have given to me to be part of your plan to heal all who hear and come to you.

Mobilize 16 Psalms 68:13

Even while you sleep among the campfires, the wings of [my] dove are sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold."

This is a psalm of victory. It talks about the defeat of an enemy and the plundering of that enemy. Behind this is the fact that without God, there would have been no victory. What is of more interest is that the dove is involved in the plunder. A dove, the bird of peace, is involved in plundering. That is a conflict of concepts. Yet in a way it isn't.

Consider this: to whom belongs the victory? Who is actually fighting the battle? These are important questions to answer and will help us understand how the bird of peace is enjoying the plunder. Also, while this is the plunder of a human war, there is a greater battle that must be fought with a plunder much more valuable than silver or gold.

In this battle, we are not the warrior but a tool being used by the warrior. Further, the battle is not about destroying the enemy but about rescuing those trapped in service by the enemy.

In this battle, the goal is peace. The spoil is the salvation of lost souls. What better garment to receive than that which represents the reward for being effectively used in the restoration of the lost? They are more precious than any of the riches of this world. But they are not obtained by human warfare. They do not result in the forced submission of another. Instead, they are gained through faithful service of the king of peace.

We are called to bring peace to the world. A peace that has been given to us by the one who sends us forth with a message of peace, not of war.

What do you seek as plunder, as you serve?

Mobilize 17 Ps 68:18

when you ascended on high, you led captives in your train;

This is a familiar passage. It is quoted by Paul in Eph 4:8 in discussing what Jesus accomplished by his death and resurrection. What is to be noted is that those recovered from the depths were not merely brought back to an earthly existence but to a place higher than the heavenly realms.

There has been some discussion about what those heavenly realms mean. A simple one is that it is outside of the created realms we know and live in. It is also outside of the existence of the spiritual world. It is to an existence that is in the presence of God.

This event, the descent into a lower realm to recover, that is such an inadequate word. For indeed what Jesus accomplished was so much more than recover, or if you will, rescue. It involves a restoration of what was lost as well as a return to an existence that now admits one into the presence of God.

So many of us aspire to so little. We want to have a good life. We want to be loved and appreciated in this world. We want to believe that one day we will enter paradise, a place where all our dreams of the good life and freedom from pain and suffering are no longer a threat.

That is such a small thing. God could accomplish that with a mere thought, and we would have a paradise. Instead, God wishes to take us higher and into a loftier reality. He wants to take us into his presence and enjoy all of what that implies.

What it implies is something far beyond the heavens and what we can conceive of. So much so that any description that we have of what this means is limited by the bounds of our feeble attempts to imagine it. We do not know what it means to enter God's presence and desire nothing more.

Mobilize 18 Psalms 68:33

to him who rides the ancient skies above, who thunders with mighty voice.

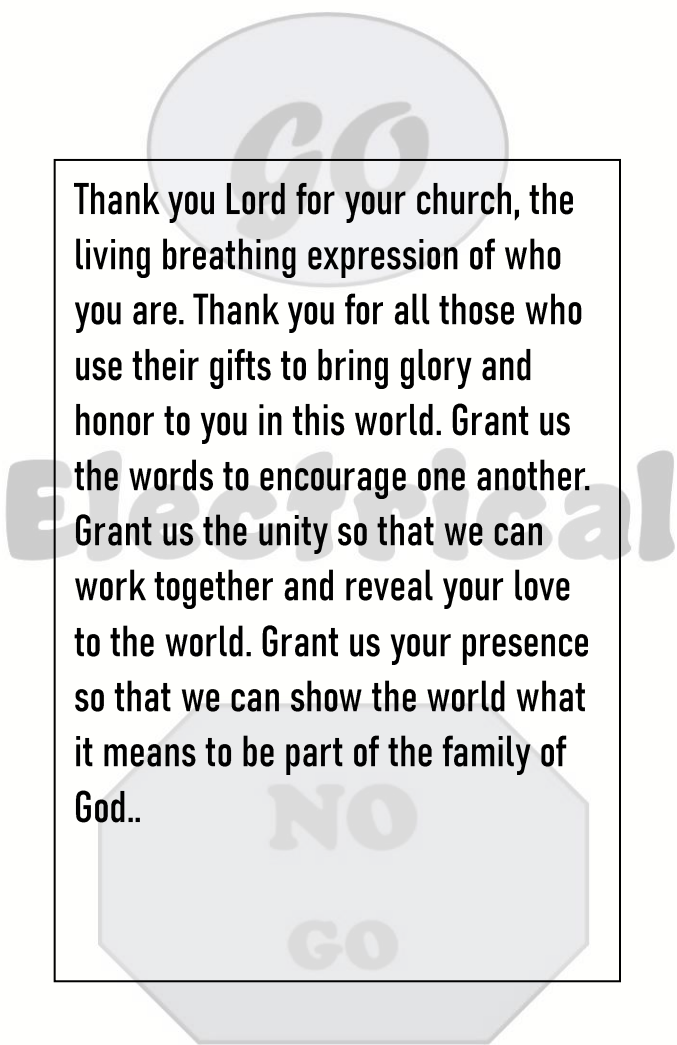
In scripture, we have a piece of information that is interesting. We are told the Spirit of God was hovering over the world as it was being formed. God, enveloped in the process of creation, floated on the heavens as he proceeded with creation. This image brings to mind to flight patterns. The first of the hummingbird, which involves the expenditure of great amounts of energy to hover. That does fit this image of hovering. God was not fighting to maintain his position.

The other is something like the frigate bird, which can, with no movement or expenditure of energy, hang in the sky for extended periods of time. This bird understands the heavens in which it flies. I know how to use the winds and currents in those winds to, in effect, fly without movement. It has an awareness of the skies that makes this ability possible.

What skies are we riding in our lives? Do we understand the world around us, and can we float along as if we are at peace and in accord with it? Truthfully, we can't. We are too distracted by many things. We are too worried about many things. We cannot focus on what is truly central to our creation and learning to join the one who created the sky we must live in and learn to fly above.

The challenge we must deal with daily is learning to see the world and all that is within it from the one who rides the ancient skies. We must learn to soar. We must learn how to sense the spirit's movement and so learn where we are and what must be done.

Think about it. God hovered over everything. From there, he sees what to do and then does it. Let the spirit of God lift you up into the ancient skies and see what he has for you to do.



Thank you Lord for your church, the living breathing expression of who you are. Thank you for all those who use their gifts to bring glory and honor to you in this world. Grant us the words to encourage one another. Grant us the unity so that we can work together and reveal your love to the world. Grant us your presence so that we can show the world what it means to be part of the family of God..

Mobilize 19 Psalms 75:5

Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck."

This passage is a warning to the arrogant.

Have you ever watched animals with horns when they are about to attack? First, they lift their horns so as to display their power and possibly intimidate an enemy. They believe in their strength and ability. Part of this process is stretching out the neck so as to make the display of their power, their right to rule.

The display of this power and then the clash of two such beasts, beasts like bulls, rams, deer, elk, and others, is incredible. It is amazing that their necks and horns are not broken by the force of such an impact. In the end, only one is victorious. Only the strong survive.

So, what does that have to do with us? Easy. We are proud creatures. We are quick to tout our strengths and skills. We want others to submit to us.

All too often, when this happens, there will be a clash of wills, and something will be destroyed.

But never mind if there is a clash. Pride in our abilities and others' need for who we are and what we do is always a concern. We may not like to admit it, but it is true, and we want people to be grateful to us and for us. We forget that whatever we have, whether ability, resource, or strength, we are not the source. It is God. He created us and gifted us.

So be careful about blowing your horn, lifting it up for all to see. Be careful about focusing on winning in place of serving. Be careful about being proud.

Instead, learn to be humble and learn to serve. Learn to fly in the way God intends us to fly.

Mobilize 20 Psalms 84:3

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young — a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God.

This psalm starts out with a cry a yearning to be near to God. He observes that even the smaller, insignificant birds like the sparrow and the swallow know where they belong. They know where they can go to raise their offspring. David calls this place the altar of God.

We know that the altar is a place of sacrifice, most notably the one that was in the temple. That altar no longer exists. We also think of the front of a church as an altar. Both are seen as a place to be near God and offer up one's sacrifices. The most notable sacrifice is myself to God. But birds cannot enter the temple. So, what is the significance of the altar here? Consider that the whole world is the Lord's. So anywhere we are, we are in his presence. This would mean that a bird living out its purpose as defined by God would be in his presence.

So, consider this: If you are living according to God's purpose and sacrificing your life in obedience to him, then where is the altar of God? Is it not then you? It does not matter where you are. What matters is that you have given yourself to God and so have come near to him.

Mobilize 21 Psalms 89:6

For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?

The prior verse states that the heavens praise the wonders of God. This concept is reflected in Ps 19, where the heavens declare the glory of God. This is somewhat obvious. They were created by him and reveal the incredible wonder of who God is. Science daily

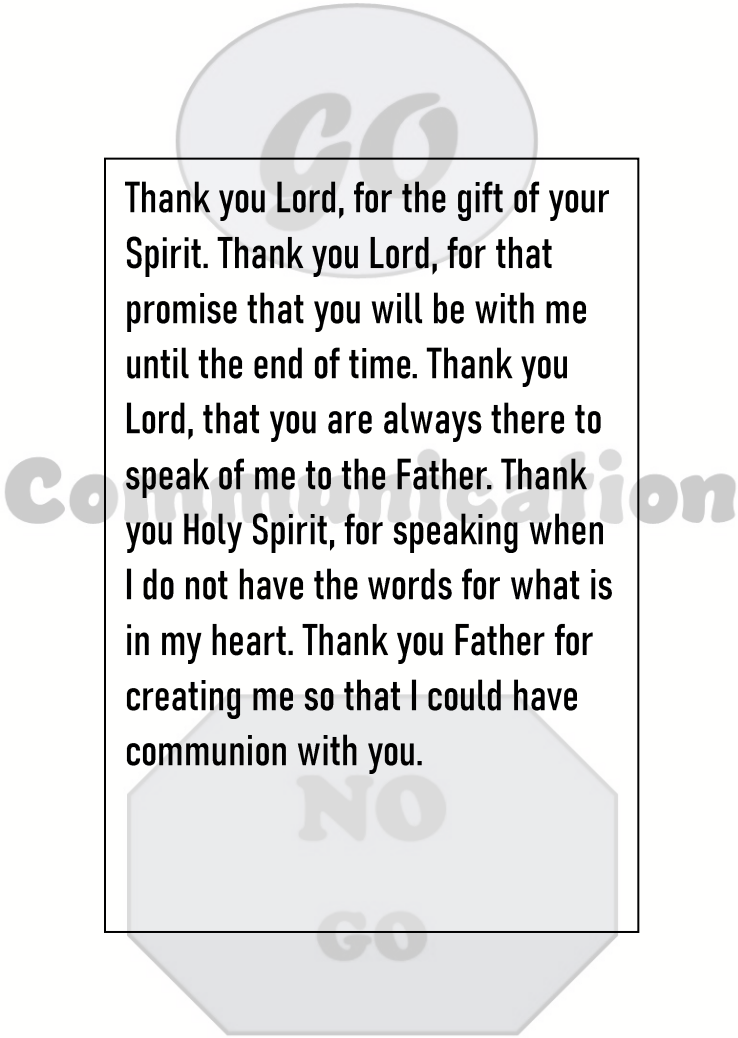
confirms this by revealing time after time just how amazing this universe is. Only those who choose not to listen are unable to praise its wonders and glory in its creator.

Then we have two things in this passage. We have the question of who in the skies can compare to God. This is followed by who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord.

We have lost some of the wonder of this declaration. We have lost an awareness of the reality of another layer of existence. We see them in the Bible but have little understanding or awareness of who they are. For truthfully, they live in the skies and have a heavenly existence. An existence apart from us. An awareness apart from us.

They, too, are created and, though wondrous, cannot compare to the Lord, nor are they like him in any way. The fact that one group sought to supplant God and failed is further evidence that none compares or is like the Lord in any way. That cannot be because they, too, are his creation.

Now consider this. Do you give rule to anything created by God, and so prevent you from honestly answering the question? Do you allow anything to prevent you from hearing their proclamation and seeing who, in fact, is without comparison and unlike anything we place before him?



Thank you Lord, for the gift of your Spirit. Thank you Lord, for that promise that you will be with me until the end of time. Thank you Lord, that you are always there to speak of me to the Father. Thank you Holy Spirit, for speaking when I do not have the words for what is in my heart. Thank you Father for creating me so that I could have communion with you.

Mobilize 22 Psalms 89:37

it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky."

So, what do you use to remind you of important times and events in your life? Do you use your refrigerator like so many people? We post calendars, reminders, photos, souvenir magnets, and more on its flat metal surfaces. But that object is not permanent. It will be replaced, and then what happens to those reminders? Some will be retained, others discarded. Some will be updated. But nothing on the fridge is truly permanent.

Do you have photos on display? These may be hung on the wall, but they always need to be updated. I imagine we could each think of something or someplace in our house, office, or bedroom where we maintain reminders. But they only remind us of things that are temporary, not eternal.

We could talk about treaties, contracts, and other documents. Again, they are always being reviewed and updated. More permanent but not. Countries come and go. Jobs come and go. Everything they relate to is subject to change.

Do you have a bible in a prominent location? Many do, but if it is not opened and read, what is its purpose? Also, it can be moved, relocated, or covered by other objects.

The Psalmist is trying to remind us that there are some things that do not change and cannot be hidden. These are related to the presence of God and his promises to us. The moon, the rainbow, and the sun are constants and will be present until the creation of the new heavens and earth.

But like all other reminders, if we do not pay attention to them, then they fail in their purpose. God has created clear, unavoidable reminders of his love and presence. Pause and consider what they mean for you today. God is here.

Mobilize 23 Psalms 90:10

The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

Life is brief. Life is short. Life is fleeting. Life seems to be over before it starts. In the scope of the recorded history of many, what is 70 years? What is 70 in comparison with, say, 1000 years or the 2000 years since Jesus walked on this planet? What is 70 years in comparison with the written history of man, which is over 4000 years?

If that seems like nothing, then what is it in comparison to the age of the Earth or the universe?

The farther we go with this, the smaller we look in comparison to the scope of time. Looked at this way, is our pain and struggle really significant? Does our struggle to live have any real value or purpose? If looked at solely on the basis of human value and meaning. Not really.

We are a temporary blip on the movie screen. Barely noticeable. And so, we fly away out of the picture. Yet we are eternal. Our body may be a blip, but our soul will live on into eternity. That means what we do with this brief life will have eternal consequences. In the same way, what we do and say and how we live can have eternal consequences in the lives of others, for they, too, have an eternal soul.

Yes, all our troubles are a fleeting reality. That is not the point. The point is that we can begin a relationship with God now. We can experience his love now and so begin something that will last into eternity.

We also have the ability to help others learn this truth and join us in the journey from that which will fly away to that which is eternal.

Mobilize 24 Psalms 102:7

I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof.

Two images come to mind as I consider this passage. The one is of a vigil in the midst of loss and confusion. We hold vigils when we are searching for answers. We hold vigils when we are suffering. We hold vigils to let those who are suffering know that they are not alone. The vigil speaks of loneliness and isolation and a desire to find comfort and answers. The vigil speaks of a willingness to wait until comfort, peace, and joy return.

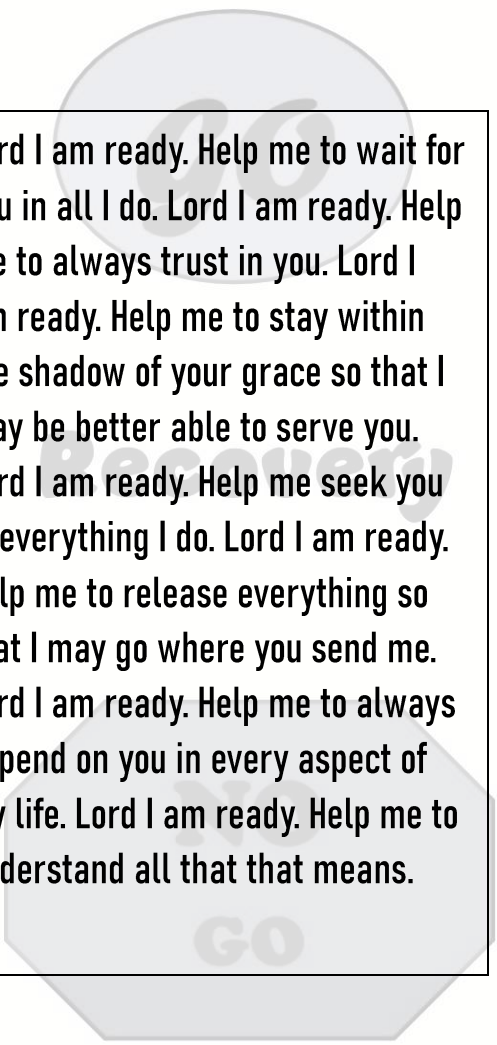
The vigil speaks of a readiness to wait on the Lord. To wait until he answers and brings resolution to my confusion.

The other is of watching for something. A bird perches on a roof, watching. This is common for birds. They often can be seen perched on tree branches, power lines, fences, and any object high enough to facilitate their ability to watch. This is not about seeking a place for others to gather and socialize. There may be others sharing the same place, but all are doing the same thing. They are seeking food.

Roofs provide a convenient place to perch when nothing else is available. This is especially true when there are no other options available.

So in this case, the Psalmist is perched and waiting for both. He waits to hear from God and find an answer to what is happening. He waits for consolation and affirmation. He is also waiting to receive what is needed from God to feed his soul and help him to continue to serve and lead.

When was the last time you took time to perch? Where do you go so that you can focus on God and seek out his presence? Do you know what you are seeking?



Lord I am ready. Help me to wait for
you in all I do. Lord I am ready. Help
me to always trust in you. Lord I
am ready. Help me to stay within
the shadow of your grace so that I
may be better able to serve you.
Lord I am ready. Help me seek you
in everything I do. Lord I am ready.
Help me to release everything so
that I may go where you send me.
Lord I am ready. Help me to always
depend on you in every aspect of
my life. Lord I am ready. Help me to
understand all that that means.

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Mobilize 25 Ps 103:12

as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Have you ever looked at a globe? As long as it has no motion, then it has no axis. It has no up or down. No left or right. Why? Because these can be changed at any time by simply relocating it. This also means you have control over what happens to that globe.

Now spin the globe and all that changes. Once the globe starts spinning, it now has an axis, which means it has a top and a bottom. Changing its position does not change this reality. This also means that if you put a dot on the equator of the globe, it will never catch up to itself. It will never reach an endpoint.

Now get in a plane. You can fly to either axis point, and once there, if you continue flying, you will end up at the other axis point. But if you decide to fly in the direction of the rotation, you will never come to an endpoint.

I know this is complicated, and yet it is the basis for this comment of this scripture. You can reach the northern and southern points. But you can never reach east or west. The two never meet. Consider this: if you stand at one point of the axis, any direction you take will bring you to the other axis. In the east and west, you will never reach such a point.

It is a strange reality of what happens when a globe starts spinning. A globe like our world. We can reach a southern or northern axis point. But you can never reach a point at which east or west changes. This only happens if you physically stop and then head in the opposite direction.

This is the nature of forgiveness. Once it happens and the direction is changed, you will never find the end of the new direction. So how do you treat others? Are you on a north-south direction, ever-

changing your treatment of them? Or are you on an east-west path and never finding an end to being able to forgive?

Mobilize 26 Psalms 108:4

For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

So just how high are the heavens? What are the limits of the skies? Harder to answer is how one measures something like love and faithfulness. Is there a quantitative form of measuring them?

A mother has 20 bushels of love. A father, 18 bushels of love. The person who sacrifices for others has a double portion of love. A priest has 50 yards of faithfulness. A follower of Jesus has 40 yards. A martyr has hundreds of yards of faithfulness.

These seem a bit strange. They all suggest there is somehow a limit to things like love and faithfulness. Yet the psalmist is attempting to get us to conceptualize or measure God's love. He is trying to help us comprehend the extent of God's faithfulness. Paul does something similar when he prays that the Ephesians will learn the height, depth, and width of God's love (Eph 3:18).

The point is that we have no true way to measure any of these except as relates to our personal experience of them. Even then, we fail. The truth is that we do not understand or comprehend the extent of God's love or of his faithfulness.

So instead of using human measurements, of which none is adequate, we must use things without measure because we have no idea how high the heavens are, nor where the sky ends. The hope of the psalmist is that we will see this and glory in this truth that God truly loves us and is faithful in all he does.

Now pause and consider how much God loves you and is faithful in all he does.

Mobilize 27 Psalms 147:8

He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.

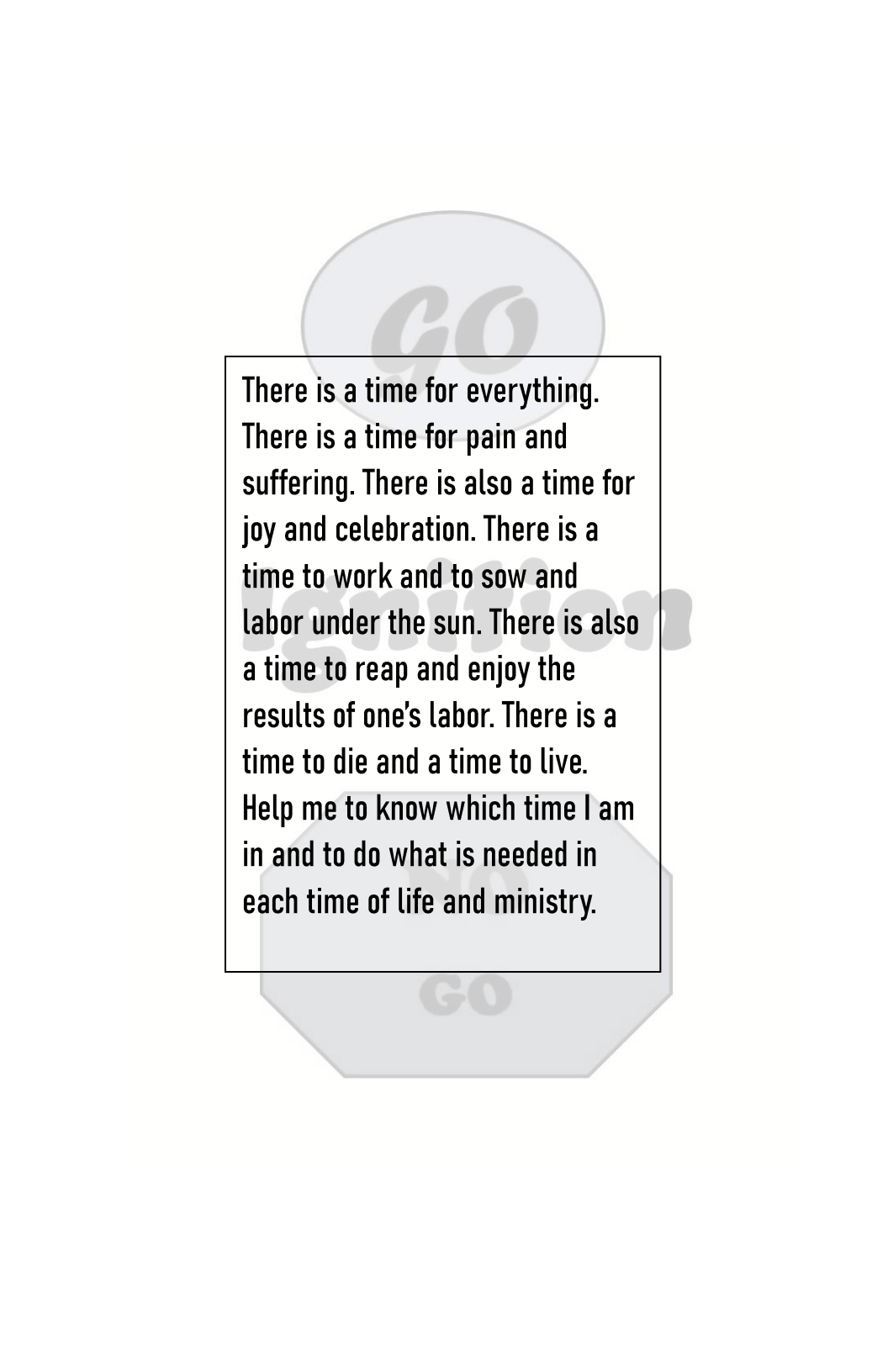
Water is a unique chemical. It is critical to life on this planet. Its cycle of evaporation, cloud formation, and rain sustains life as we know it. Its solid form is also unique. Unlike most chemicals that become denser when they are in solid form, water becomes less dense. If not for this fact, then as soon as it freezes, it would sink to the bottom of the oceans, lakes, and rivers. If that happened, then slowly they would fill with ice and have a destructive impact on all aquatic life. Nothing would be able to survive.

This would also reduce the amount of water available to create rain, which would then impact the viability of life on land. Little by little, there would be no water except in a solid form.

This verse is a lesson in chemistry and how God created the Earth in such a way as to sustain life as we know it. When you look at those clouds, take a moment to notice how carefully God thought through everything that was needed so that we could live and thrive on this planet we call Earth.

Now pause and think of the many other critical cycles that God has created so that all of this may continue to function. Consider photosynthesis. Consider decomposition. Consider reproduction.

So, when you read the psalmist's comment that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, it is about more than just us; it is about how everything was created so that we could live and know God. And that is even more wonderful than all of the above. The fact that everything was created for one purpose: to create a place where we could exist in God's presence.



**There is a time for everything.
There is a time for pain and
suffering. There is also a time for
joy and celebration. There is a
time to work and to sow and
labor under the sun. There is also
a time to reap and enjoy the
results of one's labor. There is a
time to die and a time to live.
Help me to know which time I am
in and to do what is needed in
each time of life and ministry.**

Mobilize 28 Psalms 148:4

Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.

So what words or sounds do the heavens and waters above the skies utter or make?

This psalm is about calling on all things, animate and inanimate, to lift their voices in praise of God. It is not until that last verse that humankind is called on to join in this song of praise.

To be honest, none of the prior created objects outside of man have the ability to speak a coherent word. Yet they can communicate volumes if we are willing to listen.

The heavens speak of the incredible immensity and majesty of God. They speak of the incredible power and infinite nature of God.

The lesser things speak of God's attention to the details of what he has created. To watch plants, animals, birds, and ocean creatures speaks of the intricacy of what God has created and his awareness of how, when all functions according to its design, all is linked and connected.

The invisible things, like air and magnetic fields, and light, speak of his omnipresence and provision, and how all depends on who he is for their function and existence.

So do you want to hear the heavens speak? Do you want to hear the marvels of creation explained to you?

Ah, then you need to stop and let this psalm speak to you about what happens when one allows God to speak in all the voices of creation. It is what happens when one allows their heart and soul to be tuned to God's presence. How that is possible will depend on what you choose to focus on.

Mobilize 29 Proverbs 23:5

Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

Why do we humans place so much value on possessions? Why do we think that having money in the bank, or in investments, or in property, or other tangible assets will bring any kind of control or security to our lives and world?

Why do we assign value to materials like gold, diamonds, silver, rubies, or other such items? One day they have value and the next it shifts like the sands of a sea.

Why do we think the created object of a specific person has more value than almost the same object created by another person? I think of paintings and sculptures and so many other things. They only have value if the right people desire them at the right time.

In one place or time, this has value, and in another place and time, it has no value or use.

Do you want an even more difficult question? Why is man so valuable? When you sum up the total value of all the materials that are contained within his body, the value of all of that is less than five dollars.

We are such strange creatures. We know so little of what has true value, of what will not change, rot, or fade from memory. We focus too much on what can be destroyed, stolen, or lost in a moment.

Review what has value in your life. What will you risk of the things that are temporary and fly away in a moment to gain what has true value? Or maybe it would be more important to pause and think about what you are investing your life in and whether it will last or fly away in a careless moment.

Mobilize 30 Proverbs 30:19

the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden.

Do you enjoy a good mystery? Why?

It is because we enjoy finding the answer. We enjoy the process of the hunt for answers or for someone revealing to us what is behind the curtain and hidden from sight.

But what happens when there is no answer, or the answer simply causes more questions and creates more mystery?

That is what is happening in this proverb. It asks us to consider mysteries that cannot be explained. We can describe what is happening. We can see and define the causes and effects involved, but we cannot explain the why behind the what and how.

Consider this. Life is a mystery. We cannot explain why it is possible for life to exist. You don't believe me? Pause a moment and consider that all the laws we use to define and explain something in this world only explain the how. They never tell us the why behind the how.

Be honest with me. Behind every description of how something works, there is always a why. Why does something fall to the ground? Gravity. Why is there gravity? It exists because of gravitons. Why do they cause gravity? Each question requires a more complicated 'how' answer, and each time we still have not answered the why it is so.

Eventually, we have to say that is just how things were created to be. Which means it is all an accident or is part of a great design and so created to function that way.

So why can you fly, and can't give me the how you can fly?

Mobilize 31 Job 39:26

"Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south?"

We wish to believe that somehow, we are in control of what happens in our world. The truth is, we are more dependent than we like to admit.

We want to believe that when we start the motor, take control of the throttle, move all the controls related to flaps, and the like, that we are the ones in control of flying the plane. Or that someone is in control, and so making it possible for us to fly.

That is a major error. We are merely making use of the control that has been established by something that is outside of our control or ability to influence.

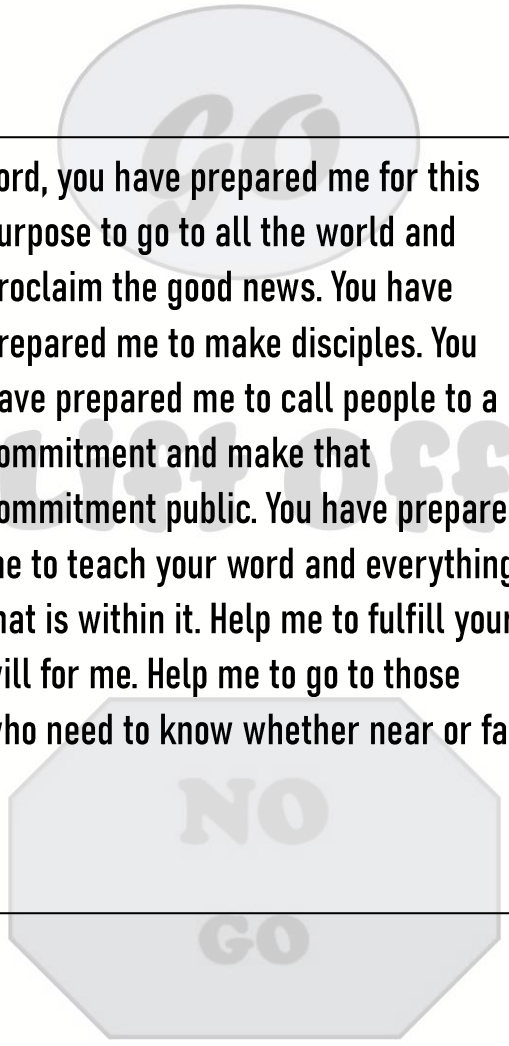
Consider at least a couple of factors that affect flight. How hot is the weather? The hotter the day is, the harder it is to take off. Why? It is because the air is less dense. The greater the altitude of the runway will also make it more difficult to take off. Again, the air is less dense. Another factor is the direction of the wind. Facing into the wind can make it easier than if the wind is behind you. Cross winds created greater complications, which must be dealt with.

Along with all of that, all of these factors are constantly fluctuating. The result is that we do not have as much control as we would like to think we have.

Pilots and plane manufacturers do a lot of study and training to deal with these realities. But they remain dependent on the laws that God has created that control the possibility of flight.

You have been called to serve. You have been called to prepare in order to fulfill your call. But like flight, you are not in control of all the factors related to succeeding. You will need to learn to

recognize who is in control and how to let Him show you what needs to be done in each situation if you hope to fly and serve.



Lord, you have prepared me for this purpose to go to all the world and proclaim the good news. You have prepared me to make disciples. You have prepared me to call people to a commitment and make that commitment public. You have prepared me to teach your word and everything that is within it. Help me to fulfill your will for me. Help me to go to those who need to know whether near or far.

