

LOVE . . .

by Rev. Julia Schwert

Our Heavenly Father has given us the standard of love – ***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”***— St. John 3:16. We know that His Son, Jesus, lived His life giving us many examples of how God expected us to live as one of His children. One example that Jesus gave us is found in St. John 15:13: ***“Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*** Jesus taught us how to love God and others.

In the Old Testament we discover how Jesus was able to live as a man in this world of sin and have strength to share with others whenever He was approached. ***“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”***—Isaiah 40:31.

The other day as I looked out the window I saw one bird soaring in the sky, and my mind went to the eagle. This bird had no difficulty while it seemingly floated through the sky as neither of his wings moved. We are told in God’s Word to be like the eagle. Why? As we take our place in the sky as an eagle, we are able to be above our circumstances, problems, and situations. Have you ever heard the old saying, “You can’t see the forest for the trees”? When we are on the same level as our problem or whatever we are facing, we can’t see a way out and often become overwhelmed, weary, and maybe even depressed. This is when our flesh begins to doubt what God says in His Word.

If we are above our problem or whatever we are facing, it seems to put everything into perspective. When we are above, we are closer to God and our eyes and thoughts focus on the problem solver not the problem. We must train our thoughts (our flesh man) to watch as God makes a way while we simply trust Him. Remember, this is a **learning process!** At least it is for me. The minute I think I’ve got it then something else comes along to challenge my thoughts or to show me how much I have grown; and, yes, new problems humble me and show me how much I **still need Him!** I can’t do it on my own no matter how much I try.

We look at our national bird, the eagle, and think of power and majestic beauty. But, if the eagle remains on the ground, it is vulnerable to attacks from snakes and wolves wanting it as their meal. When the eagle takes its flight and is above the earth, the eagle is transformed. The eagle can easily spot its prey in the world below. Once the eagle singles out its prey, it can quickly swoop down, capture the prey, and fly away with it.

When we learn to soar as the eagle, we too can see our prey. We can more easily spot the ‘such as should be saved’ that have been trapped by the enemy. Those that don’t know where to turn for the answers they need and cannot get freed by themselves. These are the ones that God loves. These are the ones that Jesus died for. These are the ones that we are to swoop down for as an eagle, snatch them out of their entrapment, and fly them to Jesus so they can be whole. When we get above our circumstances, it transforms our attitude. The situation or circumstance has not changed – it is still there; however, the way we deal with the situation or circumstance has changed! We must stay above the circumstances where God lives! He told us to in Ephesians 2:6: ***“God hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”***

God gave His only Son to show His love. Jesus gave His life to show His love. Where do I fit in all of this? I have been given an example of how to live. My example is Jesus. I am to give no thought to my life – I **must focus** on others. There are people that are hurting and dying without any hope. I must reach out to them. As I soar above my own circumstances, I can see the hurting ones in the world and can focus on them. They need someone to help them find the way. They need someone to help them escape from the bondage they are caught in. They need love. I must lay down my life and extend love to them. I can do no less for the one who gave Himself for me.

