

# Wings

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*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Finding God's People

If we desire the courage to share the gospel with others, we should remember that somewhere out there amidst all the sin are quite a few people who really do seek God. It's up to us to find them.

"Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.' And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Ac. 18:9-11).

The apostle Paul is known to history as a bold proponent of the Christian faith who almost single-handedly spread the gospel throughout much of the Roman Empire. He braved insults, threats, ridicule, and even beatings in his determination to get the message out to a lost world. We marvel at his superhuman endurance.

But on this occasion Paul's tireless optimism apparently hit a brick wall. He was working in Corinth, "sin city" of the Empire, surrounded by the scum of humanity. He was dealing with people unlike any he had ever encountered before, and his confidence apparently wavered. Why else would the Lord have to reassure him, "Do not be afraid"?

Paul saw no hope of success in Corinth, but Jesus saw a different future.

He promised Paul, "I have many people in this city," and it was Paul's challenge to find those people. It was the only time (that we know of) when Paul had to be nudged to stay on course.

It took over a year, but Paul eventually found the Lord's people in Corinth. To be sure, they were a motley crew, bearing quite a lot of baggage and requiring a lot of Paul's attention over the next several years. But for all their faults, they were *God's people*, worth whatever hardships Paul had to endure to find them.

This story should inspire us today. Like Paul, we despair at the depth of ungodliness to which our society has sunk. We are convinced that our neighbors are so worldly, so mired in sin, that there is no hope of trying to save them. So we have convinced ourselves that all we can do is retreat within the walls of our church buildings and wait for the Lord to return again.

If the Lord appeared in a vision to us today, I'm confident He would give us exactly the same message He gave Paul: "I have many people in this city."

But where are these people? Who are they? And how can we find them?

These people are no different than the ones Paul was searching for in Corinth. They are tired of the debauchery, the shallow relationships, the phoniness of pretending that everything is cool when it obviously isn't. They're tired of the emptiness of life without purpose. Oh, they make a big deal of their freedom from restraints, and mock those who advocate moral standards. But deep inside, they know it's all a sad joke. They yearn for something more meaningful in their life, but have no idea where to find it.

Paul's duty is now our duty: "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent." Now more than ever, we must do all we can to share God's message of salvation to a generation that has lost hope. We have a message that the world needs; we must be about the business of sharing it with them.

And like Paul, we might be surprised at how many people the Lord has in our city, just waiting for someone to call them to a better life.

– David King