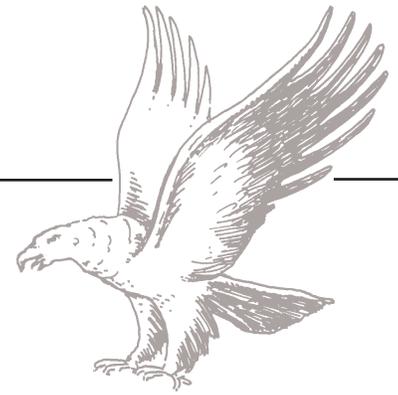


Wings

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



October 26, 2014

What Others Say

We live our entire lives bombarded by the opinions of others. Whether we admit it or not, those opinions can have an impact on us, for better or worse—unless we are prepared to deal with it.

“Many are they who say of me, ‘There is no help for him in God’” (Psa. 3:2).

“There are many who say, ‘Who will show us any good?’ Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us” (Psa. 4:6).



In these early Psalms of David, we catch a glimpse of some of the issues that made his life difficult. Among these issues was the discouraging language spoken by those around him. In some cases, the language was ridicule pointed directly at David: “There is no help for him in God”; that is, they viewed David as a scoundrel whom God had cast off. In other cases, the language had no specific target, but was merely a general expression of despair: “Who will show us any good?”; all is lost, why bother, the game is rigged, we’re doomed, and on and on.

Whatever the details, the language David was hearing was overwhelmingly *pessimistic*. It’s hard to keep your spirits up when surrounded by a horde of Debbie Downers. We humans are social

creatures who derive much of our value and purpose from our interactions with those around us. But when the message we hear from others is nothing but doom and gloom, that spirit rubs off on us, and the fatalism soon becomes our own.

The problem is the sheer volume of the negativity. We can ignore the occasional snide remark, but when the pessimism becomes a torrent rushing in from every direction, from everyone around us, the natural response is to question our own thinking. Maybe I’m out of touch, unaware of the real situation? If so many around me share the same outlook, maybe I’m the one out of sync with reality?

When we encounter that kind of crushing social pressure, we must remind ourselves of two important facts.

First, the cacophony of noise that passes for public opinion usually serves only to obscure the truth, not illuminate it. When Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I am?” the answers were all over the map (Matt. 16:13-14). The wide range of opinions were so divergent that they were of no

value in trying to ascertain Jesus’ true identity. All it proved was that the majority had no clue what was going on. The apostles were wise to trust their own experiences with the Savior and accept Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God (v. 15-16). The majority may be loud, but they are very often wrong.

Second, the voice of the masses is always, *always*, drowned out by the voice of the Lord—if our ears are tuned to hear Him. Later in David’s career, at a very low point when everything that could go wrong had gone wrong, and even David’s own men “spoke of stoning him,” David retreated to the one place where he could find encouragement: he “strengthened himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30:6). No matter how bleak our circumstances may appear, or how bitter the words that are heaped upon us, if we cling tightly to the promises of God, we can endure the storms that assail us. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

What others say can’t shake our courage—if we’re listening to God.

– David King