

Theresa Lungu:

Good morning. Welcome to morning prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton Psalter book. Psalm 139 is found on page 70. Please stand as you're able, and read responsively by whole verse. Oh Lord, you have searched me and known me.

Congregation:

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

Theresa Lungu:

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Congregation:

Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.

Theresa Lungu:

You hem me in behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Congregation:

Such knowledge is too wonderful to me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Theresa Lungu:

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

Congregation:

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

Theresa Lungu:

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

Congregation:

Even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Theresa Lungu:

if I say, surely the darkness shall cover me and the light around me become night.

Congregation:

Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light as you.

Choir:
(Singing)

Aric Flemming Jr.:

Good morning. Oh my goodness. It's so refreshing to be back with my Memorial Church family. I feel like I haven't seen some of you in so long. But I'm so grateful to be back. Thank you for inviting me. I want to start with a contemporary song that I grew up hearing when I was just a boy in Atlanta, Georgia, and it's reflective of what we'll talk about today. It's a song that goes, they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings like an eagle and soar. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk in everything. They that wait on the Lord, and I say, wait on the Lord. Hold on a little while long. Here's what you got to do. Trust and believe, my friends, he'll work it out for you.

One thing you must remember, my God is able and he cares for you. Oh yes, he cares for you. And then my favorite part. Wait on the Lord and he will come through. Wait on the Lord, he will answer you. Wait on the Lord, and it won't be long. Wait on the Lord. It's going to work for them that wait.

Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft, so does our God do for us. Usually what happens with us as humans ... I think we can all attest to this, is that we're so visionary that we allow our vision to get in its own way. We are excellent at painting the picture of life or the life that we want to see, with the gifts and the talents that we possess. But in this life, there happens to be a disconnect between where we are and where we want to be. And usually it's called the jump.

The jump is when you're standing on the edge of your dreams and you know what the spirit is requiring of you, but you finally realize that it's not going to be handed to you. So you have to jump. Usually what happens is, just like eagles, we get flustered by the terrors of uncertainty. Uncertainty is a pain. Not knowing where you'll be in the next so and so, not having an answer for a specific outcome and application, a hope for the future. It's just uncomfortable. No one likes to sit in uncertainty. But the jump is always and always will be necessary in every area of your life.

Up to this point, for my own self, this is the decision of my life. This may even be the decision of your life. But it's hard because when it's time for the jump, sometimes you'll have to go against the loudest voices, even the loudest voices or the most influential voices in your head, or that are in your immediate sphere. Those are the folks that are usually the closest to you, the people that can get you to do pretty much anything. You'll even have to tell them that they're wrong. And trust what you heard the spirit say, and just like an eagle, stand on your own two wings.

Whenever eagles are born, the mother eagle takes her babies through a process where they learn to test their wings. First, she leads them up to the cliff, and then she pushes them off of the cliff with no warning, no test, and catches them until they learn how to fly. This process is repeated until the eaglets have learned the full process of testing their wings. And sometimes it's even the Spirit's responsibility to push you off the cliff. Here's the biggest misconception about learning how to fly in the jump, that you will not be able to learn how to fly. You will not become comfortable with learning what it is to actually

fly until you have learned how to wrestle with the wind. News flash. You cannot to avoid wrestling with the wind because in order to fly, it is imperative that you learn to wrestle with the wind.

While some of them gain their balance. Others of them struggle to figure out what it means. And you have to be careful, even in the process sense of learning how to fly and watching other eagles take off, because comparison kills. You must be careful, cautious, intentional, not to compare your progress with someone else. They may not have had to struggle as much as you did, but that's probably because they won't actually really have to go the places that you're going to go.

I once heard an African proverb from a wonderful professor of mine named Jacob [inaudible 00:13:45] when I was a student here. And he said this so briefly. Birds are smart enough to know that the sky is big enough for them to soar and for them to not run in to each other. And I'll leave you with this last point, and you, some of you, some of us, some of ... I would even argue might be all of us, we're in a state where we have to make the jump, but we are afraid. We're scared to wrestle with the wind that we might just be overtaken. And the spirit is saying to you this morning so clearly, if you can hear it beyond my voice, I did not give you wings to sit. I gave you wings to soar. And as long as you are in the Spirit's hands, you will never touch the ground. Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

Please stand as you're able, and let us pray. Almighty God, creator, restorer, redeemer, savior, help us to take this moment of worship and connection with you into the day ahead. Amen. And together, let us recite the Lord's prayer, saying our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Please let sing the hymn, Be Thou My Vision oh Lord of My Heart, number 291 in the Crimson hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing)

Theresa Lungu:

Thank you for being with us this morning. And as we go forth until this day, we give thanks to the Lord for the gift of a new day, grant we pray that we pass the hours of this day in the perfect freedom of God's service. Amen.