

I. The Introduction

- A. There's a famous story about an eagle's egg that somehow ends up in a chicken coop.
- B. The eaglet hatches and is raised among the chickens. It learns to cluck and scratch in the dirt for grubs. It pecks at the ground, never looking up, because that's what chickens do.
- C. One day, a biologist sees this magnificent bird with its powerful wings, acting like a chicken.
- D. He lifts the eagle up and says, "You are not a chicken! You are an eagle! You belong not to the earth, but to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly!"
- E. The eagle, confused, just wants to get back to the familiar dirt.
- F. But the biologist carries it to a high mountain, looks it in the eye, and says again, "You are an eagle. Fly!"
- G. He then flings the bird into the air. The eagle, terrified, begins to fall, but then, instinctively, it stretches its mighty wings, catches the wind, and soars into the heavens for the first time, never to return to the chicken coop again.
 1. I don't know how your story goes. Where you came from. How you got where you are.
 2. But I do know that you were created to soar. I do know that, if you have Jesus, you were born again with a new nature so that you are a new creation, designed for the heights of God's presence and power.
 - a) And the great tragedy is that you have been raised in the "chicken coop" of a fallen world's thinking, scratching in the dirt of fear, anxiety, and self-effort.
- H. But here's the good news: God brought you here today not to tell you to try harder to be an eagle, but to believe better in who you already are. Believe better in a Father who gave you the wings of a glorious new nature. Believe better in your life's great potential to stop scratching in the dirt and start exploring the vastness of a star-studded sky that is your sacred birthright as a child in the royal family of heaven.
- I. The Shepherd of the Stars sent me here to tell you personally today that he loves you better than you think he does, he has forgiven you more than you realize he has, and therefore your life will be better than you ever dreamed possible.

II. Scripture and Series Intro

- A. Welcome to part 11 in our series through the book of Philippians called: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't.**
- B. As we've been listening to God one paragraph at a time through this book, today we at long last arrived at Philippians 2:17-30.
- C. This paragraph is different. It isn't teaching. It's about 3 people and their stories... actually their hearts. Actually, it's about heroic hearts on display.
- D. I'd like to introduce you to these men today. My talk is called: **Quit Taming Your Inner Hero**
- E. Or we could call it: Quit pecking bugs with the chicken when you were meant to soar.
- F. So how do you go from scratching in the dirt to soaring in the sky? The eagle doesn't do it by flapping its wings harder than a chicken. The eagle soars when it learns to catch the invisible currents of wind—the updrafts—that were there all along.
- G. In the same way, God doesn't call you to try harder to be a hero.
- H. He invites you to spread the wings of your faith and catch the powerful updrafts of His grace. The updrafts of the Holy Spirit.
- I. Paul, from his prison cell, is about to show you three of these supernatural updrafts that will lift your soul into the sky where it belongs.

III. Title: Quit Taming Your Inner Hero

A. **The Updraft of a Heroic Mind (Philippians 1:17-18, Paul)**

1. *"Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me."* (Philippians 2:17-18)
2. This isn't the language of a victim. This is the language of a champion.
3. This is the mind of an eagle, not a chicken. It's a mind that has learned to think from heaven down, not from earth up. Paul doesn't just think about heaven; he thinks from his royal seat in heaven. From up there, he looks down here at his circumstances through the eyes of Jesus.
4. The world's reality says, "Paul you're going to be executed."
 - a) But Paul's heroic mind reframes that line. "Oh, is that what you call it? An *execution*? I call it being poured out as a drink offering."
 - (1) Before Jesus died and rose again, there was a very refined sacrificial system. It was profoundly meaningful. These sacrifices were highly symbolic rituals. They symbolized deep truths about Jesus. Specifically, they symbolized his death and our salvation.
 - (2) In many cases, a drink offering was part of these sacrifices. They all knew what it meant. It happened last. The last step in the ritual would be the pouring out of wine to God. This was the drink offering. It brought the ceremony to a close. It was the grand finale of a ritual thanking God for his grace.
 - (3) You could say that the whole ritual of sacrifice was like writing a thank you card to God. That would make the drink offering the signature at the end: Love, Paul.
 - (4) He did not think of his death as a tragedy; it was just the sign-off on a lifelong thank you card.
 - (a) Thank you for loving me.
 - (b) Thank you for saving me.
 - (c) Thank you for blessing me.
 - (d) Thank you for growing me.
 - (e) Thank you for using me in such beautiful ways.
 - (f) Thank you for healing me.
 - (g) Thank you for these wonderful sisters and brothers, this family, this church, these friends.
 - (h) Thank you for bringing me all the way home.

- b) To tame him, authorities threatened to kill him.
 - (1) He said, then that will be my drink offering.
- c) To tame him, the powers of darkness said, "We'll throw you in prison."
 - (1) He said, I've always wanted a prison ministry.
- d) To tame him, the devil gave him a thorn in the flesh.
 - (1) He said, "Look at this beautiful rose."
- e) To tame him, the devil did everything he could to make Paul care only about himself. To turn inward, to become self-preoccupied, and self absorbed.
 - (1) He said, "I'm being poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith." TRANSLATION: "If you're going to kill me, on the way to that glory, climb every mountain, sail every sea, amplify every truth of grace, and defeat every obstacle, and shatter the gates of hell itself... all so I can drag as many people to heaven with me as I possibly can."
 - (a) Then he looked at his friends... he smiled, and he added... *Don't be so grim about this everybody. Let's party!! Our team wins! Let's go storm the gates of hell and set the captives free.*
- 5. The untamable mind. And lest you think, Well, that's just some special apostolic superpower, he says... "For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me."
- 6. You can access this same joy because you have access to this same mind, and this same updraft of the Spirit.
- 7. Don't let the world, the flesh, or the devil tame your mind.
 - a) The world says: "You lost your job! Your future is ruined!"
 - (1) The redeemed mind says: "My provision comes from God, it always has and always will."
 - b) The world says: "The doctor's report is scary. There is no hope."
 - (1) The redeemed mind says: "This doctor doesn't have the final word on who I am and where I go; my birthright transcends anything the world can know."
 - c) The world says: "Your past is permanent and you are disqualified."
 - (1) The redeemed mind shouts: "My qualification is named Jesus Christ. Your voice has no power in me!"
 - d) The flesh sighs: "Your dream is dead. You should feel sorry for yourself."
 - (1) The redeemed mind declares: "Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and where that dream died is precisely where my miracle will soon rise up."
 - e) The devil says: "You've been wounded. Build your walls and protect yourself."
 - (1) The redeemed mind says: "My wounds do not define me. They make me tender in ways I can love others well."
- 8. Stop flapping in the winds of a timid, tame mind. The redeemed mind does not wrestle its way into thinking positive thoughts. **The call on your life is to spread the wings of your faith, on the currents of truth, and let the updraft of God's Holy Spirit do the lifting.**
 - a) It's time to quit taming the hero within.

B. The Updraft of a Heroic HEART (Timothy, Philippians 1:19-22)

- 1. *"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged [eu-psych-eo] when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded [iso-psych-os], who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel."* (Philippians 2:19-22)
- 2. An eagle with one wing can't fly. It's not enough to have your mind soaring if your heart is still chained to the ground. The second updraft of grace is the one that comes for your HEART—your psyche, your emotional core.
- 3. And I need you to see that Paul, a master psychologist of the soul, is deliberately taking us deep inside. Listen to the language he uses.
- 4. First, look at this:
 - a) **Eu-psych-eō. A good soul.**
 - b) **Iso-psych-os. An equal soul.**
 - c) What's in the middle of each of those words? Psych. Psyche, the Greek word for soul. The emotional core. The psychological core.
 - d) Paul is putting the human psyche on the operating table. He's signaling a shift from the mental world to the psychological world.
- 5. The words in verse 21 offer a master diagnosis in verse 21, revealing the two warring sources from which your soul can draw its life.
- 6. He says some seek "the things of self," while others seek "the things of Christ Jesus." In the original language, you have 2 exactly parallel lines. I wish it were translated that way.
 - a) Both lines have the word "the things."
 - b) Both lines have a grammatical construction called a "genitive of source."
- 7. Here's how I translate it literally:
 - a) **For all seek the things which flow from the source of self, not the things which flow from the source of Christ.**
- 8. This is the essential problem in the church today.
 - a) The inner hero is tamed because we seek the things which flow from the source of self more than the source of Christ.
 - (1) Who's your source?
 - b) In case you're wondering, my preaching today isn't just a Bible study.
 - c) I'm officially designating this sermon a CCRO: A Chicken Coop Rescue Operation! I want this message to be a jailbreak!
 - d) And the first step in any rescue is to identify the forces that built the cage.

9. The world has two primary strategies to tame your heart, to keep you scratching in the dirt.
 - a) First, there is the **Iron Cage of Damage**.
 - (1) It's the voice of your father that said you'd never measure up.
 - (2) It's the memory of that failure that still burns with shame.
 - (3) It's the sting of rejection that makes you flinch every time you get close to someone.
 - (4) It's the quiet belief that you are fundamentally flawed, a disappointment to God.
 - (a) The Iron Cage of Damage tames you with fear. It makes you play small. It makes you hide. It turns your heart inward to protect what's left of your broken self.
 - b) Then, there is the **Golden Handcuffs of Attachment**.
 - (1) This leash feels like freedom, but it's just a longer chain.
 - (2) It's the leash of approval, yanking you around with every "like" and comment.
 - (3) It's the leash of ambition, dragging you toward a success that is always just one more rung up the ladder.
 - (4) It's the leash of money... if I put my values on display, I'll lose customers.
 - (5) It's the leash of addiction—to a substance, to a screen, to a thrill—the desperate chase for a temporary high to numb the emptiness.
 - (a) The **Golden Handcuffs of Attachment** tames you with desire. It makes you a performer. It measures you by production. It makes you a slave to the next payout or the next hit. It keeps your heart busy, but it starves your soul.
10. A caged heart or a handcuffed heart—either way, it is a tamed heart.
11. Things that flow from the source of self. A heart living from the dry well of self.
12. But the updraft of grace is a jailbreak. It is a revolution. It is the power of God that comes to shatter the iron cage and snap the golden leash.
 - a) It flows from the source of Christ.
13. Timothy is a trophy of this revolution. This is a man who needed emotional healing and he found it.
 - a) The Bible tells us his father was a Greek—likely not a Christian—and his mother and grandmother believed in Jesus. In that culture, this would have created an identity crisis. He was a man caught between two worlds, and it made him insecure.
 - b) In fact, later as a young adult, Paul had to remind him that his wimpy, weak, timid spirit did not come from God. What came from God was power, love, and psychological health... a sound mind.
 - c) Timothy's heart went through the fire of grace. And the result is his *dokimē*—a word we translate as "proven character," but it is so much more. It means his heart was "vetted by fire and approved."
14. The very fire that was meant to cage him became the flame that cut the chains to set him free. The wounds that were meant to tame him became the crucible where God proved his heart to be genuine.
15. And this is where the updraft comes for you. This is the moment you decide to stop living like a caged bird and to stop chasing the golden leash. This is the moment you declare your independence.
16. When you received Jesus, you received all the things that **FLOW from the source of Christ**. Those are the things to seek.
 - a) You received
 - (1) **Identity**
 - (2) **Powers**
 - (3) **Privileges**
 - (4) **Riches**
 - (5) **Potentials**
17. Jesus said all authority has been given to me, and I give it to you. So every day you can say...
 - a) I AM approved by God.
 - b) I AM a child of the King.
 - c) I AM a new creation.
 - d) I AM forgiven and free.
 - e) I AM a warrior.
 - f) I CAN break this cage.
 - g) I CAN snap this leash.
 - h) I CAN silence the accuser.
 - i) I CAN love without fear.
 - j) I HAVE a new name.
 - k) I HAVE a new heart.
 - l) I HAVE His Spirit within me.
 - m) I HAVE a seat at His table.
 - n) My heart was not made for a cage. I was made for the sky.
 - o) My soul was not made for a leash. I was made for the wind. It's time to quit taming the hero whose heart was forged in the fire of grace.

C. The Updraft of a Royal Will (Epaphroditus, Philippians 1:25-30)

1. The final, most powerful updraft of grace is the one that comes for your WILL. This is the updraft of resurrection power that lifts you out of the paralysis of "what if" and launches you into a life of heroic action.
2. Paul gives us the ultimate picture of this in a man named Epaphroditus.

3. He is not a safe man. He is a wild man of God. He is the hero in motion.
 - a) *"Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.... because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me."* (Philippians 2:25-26, 30)
4. This is a portrait of a will that has been fully uncaged by grace. This is what it looks like to occupy your birthright.
5. We don't know a lot about this man, but his name was Epaphroditus, a living trophy of grace. His name meant he was dedicated to the pagan god Aphrodite, so he had some healing to do. And did he ever get healed.
6. Paul writes he came close to death, "not regarding his life."
 - a) The original Greek is explosive.
 - b) **It says he para-boule-usamenos his life.**
 - c) It means he gambled with it by choice. He put it all on the line, by free will.
 - (1) This is the opposite of a tamed, calculating will that is addicted to safety nets and paralyzed by analysis.
 - (2) He went to the edge of a cliff and launched. And he didn't know how it would turn out.
 - (3) That is free will. That is bold choice. That is royalty in action.
7. I'm giving you your permission slip. Actually, God is.
 - a) He's giving you permission to wear your crown and to own it.
 - b) He's giving you permission to want your wants.
 - c) He's giving you permission to choose your adventure. To stick your neck out for the Gospel and laugh at the storm.
8. For too long, the enemy has tamed your will with the whisper of "What if you fail?" "What if you get hurt?" "What if you look foolish?" "What if you lose money?" "What if you burn the cookies?"
9. But the updraft of a royal will is the wind of the Holy Spirit, who roars back,
 - a) **What if the worst thing that could happen to you is getting planted in the Promised Land and never occupying most of it?**
 - b) **What would your life become if you quit taming your inner hero and let your mind, will, and emotions reflect the heroic victory of King Jesus over every realm of this earth.**
10. This is the moment of truth. This is where the eagle leaves the cliff.
11. This is the war cry of a will set free. And when you make that choice, when you decide to launch, you need to know you are not the first. You are joining a long, unbroken line of heroes who refused to be tamed.
12. You are stepping into the legacy of...
 - a) Abraham, who walked away from his home toward an unseen promise.
 - b) David, who ran at the giant with a shepherd's sling and a warrior's heart.
 - c) Ruth, who made a commitment, broke the rules, and helped write the cosmic history of redemption.
 - d) Daniel, who threw open the window to pray, with the lions roaring in the distance.
 - e) Three men who refused to bow to an idol, and were cast into a fiery furnace knowing they would be burned.
 - f) Esther, who walked into the throne room, ready to die for her people.
 - g) Peter, who swung his legs over the side of the boat and walked on water into a storm.
 - h) Paul, shipwrecked and snake-bitten, who kept pressing toward the prize.
 - i) And Epaphroditus, who gambled his very life to bring the gospel to his world.
13. This is your lineage. This is the company you keep. This is the squadron of eagles you're invited to join.
 - a) Are you ready to fly? Do you want this?

IV. Conclusion

- A. The crown is on your head. The scepter is in your hand. It's time to end your spiritual amnesia and occupy the throne room of your soul.
- B. So let me give you a new definition of a hero, one that has nothing to do with capes and everything to do with your coronation.
 1. **A HERO is any believer deciding daily to fully occupy all the realms of their birthright as a royal child of God: their identity, their powers, their privileges, their riches, and their potentials.**
- C. And this determination, this heroic choice to occupy your throne, isn't about waiting for perfect conditions. It's a decision you make right in the middle of the mess.
 1. If you're afraid, you do it afraid. It makes the demons tremble.
 2. If you're hurt, you play hurt. It makes the devil afraid.
 3. If you're confused, you blunder forward. It makes the angels stand and cheer.
 - a) No excuses. No complaining. Spread your wings and launch.
 4. When you add your faith, God adds the grace, and grace makes even the weakest faith invincible.
 - a) Quit taming your inner hero.

V. Prayer

- A. Father, King of Heaven, Commander of the squadron of eagles in this room, we come before You not as beggars, but as heirs. Let the updraft of a Heroic mind, emotions, and will be the wind beneath their wings, lifting them to see from Your perspective, to call a drink offering what the world calls a tragedy, and to rewrite every lie of the enemy with the ink of the Resurrection. Over their hearts, we declare the jailbreak is complete. The Iron Cage of Damage is shattered. The Golden Handcuffs of Attachment are snapped. And so now, Father, we don't just ask for a blessing; we receive a commissioning. We send them out from this chicken coop for the last time, as the untamed, royal heroes You have already made them. Send them out to laugh at the storm, to gamble on Your promises, and to occupy every realm of their birthright as your royal children. In Jesus' Name, Amen.