

Learning to Fly

Nature's lessons are ever before us. Jesus frequently used His creation as a visual aid. The lilies of the field (Matthew 6:28) and the birds of the air (Matthew 8:20). His inspired writers followed suit, referencing the cycle of a seed (1 Corinthians 15:36-37) or a fading flower (James 1:10). So many lessons, right in front of our eyes if we would but open them to see (Acts 26:18).

Which bring me to a rather common event I witnessed recently. For the past couple of years, I have made it a habit to begin my Bible reading and office work from the front or back porch (depending upon the wind) and enjoy God's glorious creation. It has a humbling impact on prayer and study, and promotes an appreciation of how blessed we are in this country where one can experience this scene in peace. It is particularly poignant as a people of God that, in observing such beauty in nature, we can anticipate the beauty of Heaven.

What I witnessed, no matter how common the event may be in nature, was not so common for the little red-bird couple that has become so accustomed to my presence that they frequently light on the porch handrail and "talk" to me (or scold me for intruding into their space, I haven't figured out which). This particular day, I could tell there was panic in both birds, flitting from tree to a bush in the corner of the alcove, fluttering and hovering and never lighting for more than a moment. Upon investigation, I found their fledgling, fallen from its nest, in the corner, struggling and flittering, not quite ready to take flight.

Any critter with means would have scooped up their adolescent and returned it to safety, to protect it from the coming storm; but cardinals can't do that. All they could do was circle around their tiny charge, as if to encourage it to fly home. It was what they couldn't do that struck me.

No matter how much we love someone, no matter our concern, taking flight is still their choice. And, when they fall from safety, we can encourage them, pressure them to keep trying, and pray...but we can't make them.

I hope the little guy survived. Learning to fly can be so difficult. But, the bottom line is: it's their choice (Joshua 24:15).