"The Parable of the Eagle" by James Aggrey

"A certain man went through a forest seeking any bird of interest he may find. He caught a young eagle, brought it home and put it among his fowls and ducks and turkeys, and gave it chickens' food to eat even though it was an eagle, the king of birds."

"Five years later a naturalist came to see him and, after passing through his garden, said: 'That bird is an eagle, not a chicken.'"

"'Yes,' said its owner, 'but I have trained it to be a chicken. It is no longer an eagle, it is a chicken, even though it measures fifteen feet from tip to tip of its wings.'"

"'No,' said the naturalist, 'it is an eagle still: it has the heart of an eagle, and I will make it soar high up to the heavens.'"

"'No,' said the owner, 'it is a chicken, and it will never fly.'"

"They agreed to test it. The naturalist picked up the eagle, held it up, and said with great intensity, 'Eagle, thou art an eagle; thou dost belong to the sky and not to this earth; stretch forth thy wings and fly.'"

"The eagle turned this way and that, and then, looking down, saw the chickens eating their food, and down he jumped."

"The owner said: 'I told you it was a chicken.'"

"'No,' said the naturalist, 'it is an eagle. Give it another chance tomorrow.'"

"So the next day he took it to the top and the house and said: 'Eagle, thou art an eagle; stretch forth thy wings and fly.' But again the eagle, seeing the chickens feeding, jumped down and fed with them."

"Then the owner said: 'I told you it was a chicken.'"

"'No,' asserted the naturalist, 'it is an eagle, and it still has the heart of an eagle; only give it one more chance, and I will make it fly tomorrow.'"

"The next morning he rose early and took the eagle outside the city, away from the houses, to the foot of a high mountain. The sun was just rising, gilding the top of the mountain with gold, and every crag was glistening in the joy of that beautiful morning."

"He picked up the eagle and said to it: 'Eagle, thou art an eagle; thou dost belong to the sky and not to this earth; stretch forth thy wings and fly!'

"The eagle looked around and trembled as if new life were coming to it; but it did not fly. The naturalist then made it look straight at the sun. Suddenly it stretched out its wings and, with the screech of an eagle, it mounted higher and higher and never returned. It was an eagle, though it had been kept and tamed as a chicken!"

"My people of Africa, we were created in the image of God, but men have made us think that we are chickens, and we still think we are; but we are eagles. Stretch forth your wings and fly! Don't be content with the food of chickens!"
Everyone has a view of himself or herself that defines him or her. When faced with a crisis or opportunity that challenges us to go outside who we think we are, often we withdraw, spending our energy on reinforcing who we are. For example if our Pastor, boss, or teacher asks us to do something outside our comfort zone, what’s our initial reaction? ‘I can’t do that’, ‘It’s not me’, ‘I failed that at school’, ‘I’ve never been good at that’.

Questions:
What challenge did the eagle in the chook yard face? What was his response when encouraged to be an eagle? How did the eagle learn to fly?

What challenges have you faced recently? What was your reaction?

Read: “The Parable of the Sower” Mark 4: 1 – 20

Like the seed had to die to come alive and bear fruit, the eagle had to “die” to life in the chook yard and life as a chicken to reach his full potential and fly as an eagle.

Discuss:
• What things are holding you back from “flying” like an eagle or growing into a fruitful plant?
• Where do you need to die to self in order to come alive in Christ?
• In what ways have you kept others in the chook yard? (Eg. Defining them with your agenda rather than seeing them and their potential as God sees them.)

Pray:
Use Psalm 22 as your prayer, especially verses 1 – 5, 9 – 11, 19, 22 – 31.
You may like to pause as the Spirit leads, and reflect on Christ’s suffering and death, your life, God’s faithfulness and Christ’s victory over death and his resurrection life.