

Be A Flamingo

In years past I have had a little slogan or saying for the upcoming year. Tonight I want to introduce you to the thought of “Be a Flamingo.” For the next few minutes I want us to take a look at these bright and beautiful, tall and magnificent, pretty and pink flamingos. When I see things like these birds in God's creation, it lifts my spirit. Let's take a look at these beautiful birds and see what we can learn. First let us understand that we, as well as the flamingos, are created by God. In addition to the similarity of being created by God, Let's notice a few other things.

1. One of the first things we notice about a flamingo is that they stand up straight and tall even in the water. Do you know what they are doing with their feet down there under the water? They are stirring up the bottom of the lake or pond using their long legs and webbed feet. This stirring causes all that good stuff, those tiny little organisms that the flamingos are craving, to come floating to the top of the water allowing the flamingo to eat. Point to note is for the flamingo to be fed, he has to be work for it.

As Christians, if we want to stand firm and tall we are going to have to work at being fed by the Word of God. We can't be passive about it and think that our spiritual food is going to come naturally floating to the top so we can get at it. No, instead we are going to have to actively seeking God's Word. We are going to have to devote ourselves to Bible reading and study. *Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

We are going to have to dig our feet in and stir up the water. In the end it will ground us and we will be standing firm and tall when life tries to knock us around. Once Paul said *1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

2. We need big doses of God's word to keep healthy and in the pink. Do you know some flamingos are a darker pink than others? It is because they get their color by what's in their diet. The richer their food is with carotenoids (ca-rot-e-noid), the brighter color the flamingos will be. Carotenoids are small groups of orange or red pigments that include carotenes. The diet of these carotenoids will change the color of the flamingo as he matures. Their color as adult birds can range up to bright pinks and crimsons.

As Christian, how rich is your diet? Remember, we are to be in the world, but not “of” the world. The things of the world are not going to contain the important nutrients we need in our diet. To grow spiritually is like growing physically. You need exercise and a good diet. *1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* As far as diet goes, *1 Peter 2:1-2 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

3. Preening is something that women do more than men when it comes to getting ready to go somewhere. As a whole, most women like to check their appearance in the mirror before they leave. They like to look nice and be as attractive as they can. Most of us at least like to smooth out our hair before we go on our way throughout our day.

Birds preen to keep their feathers from becoming matted. They move around their feathers with their beaks in order to keep neat and clean. What is so interesting about flamingo is that when they preen, they move

the oil around their necks. This helps with waterproofing their feathers.

As Christians we need to preen by moving the oil of the Holy Spirit around. It's going to waterproof us against the world and make us beautiful in Christ. Holy living does that for us. ***Galatians 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*** Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit helps protect us from being caught up in sin. Concentrating on holy living and bearing that fruit of the Spirit will help us stand in confidence in front of the mirror.

Ever get your feathers ruffled? Living in the Spirit will quickly take care of that. I read a statistic that says that the flamingo spends 15 to 30% of their day preening. That got me to thinking about how much time I really spend in God's Word and prayer. How much of a percentage of my time do I really work at living in the Spirit?

4. Flamingos are very social birds. Have you ever seen them in a flock and watched the way they move about? They are amazing to watch. All of those movements with their long necks are how they synchronize their mating. That is just another one of those interesting things that God put into creating this magnificent bird.

The way we move about as Christians in the body of Christ should be a beautiful thing to watch too. We need to be synchronized when it comes to serving together with other Christians. We should be working together for Christ like a well-oiled machine. After all, it is how we spread the Gospel and reach others for Christ.

5. As I mentioned, flamingos are social birds. Besides their mating, flamingos also find safety in numbers. If one is off by itself, predators can get to it so easily. There is a lot to be said for that. As Christians we need that bond of fellowship with others that know Christ. It helps keep us safe. Fellowshiping and encouraging each other helps ward off some of the pitfalls and troubles we can so easily get into. Good Christian friends help make us stronger. Notice the three "let us" statements found in Hebrews 10. Those statements are there to protect us for our spiritual predator. ***Hebrews 10:22-24 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*** (24) ***And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:***

6. One last thing about flamingos is that they are a water bird. They like lagoons, lakes, and swampy areas. Flamingos stay close to the water. Christ is our Living Water. As Christians, we need to stay close to Him. We need to rely on His leading. We need to seek Him as our water source to help sustain us. We need to draw close to Him. As Jesus would say to the Samaritan woman at the well, ***John 4:13-14 Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: (14) But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.***

I hope you appreciate the beautiful flamingo birds. It always amazes me how God can take His beautiful creatures and teach me some lessons. I hope too that we can take what we have discussed and put it into practice and do the flamingo. After all, God created us to do good. We are to be living to glorify Him. ***Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*** So my plea for 2020 is to become a flamingo. (1) We need to

stand firm in the Word. (2) We need to stay healthy spiritually. (3) We need to preen in the right way and stay beautiful by living in the Spirit. (4) We need to be working and serving together with other Christians in the body of Christ. (5) We need to interact socially and fellowship with other Christians. (6) Lastly, we need to stay close to the water, the Living Water.

So, are you ready to be a flamingo?