

## **LESSONS FROM THE SPARROWS**

### ***Small Birds with Some Big Lessons***

The biblical sparrow is a small insect- or seed-eating bird, very like the common house sparrow that we know. Noisy, active and prolific describes them. In Bible times, they were eaten. They were so cheap that when four were bought, a fifth was given free. The going price was two for a half-penny and five for a penny. They often built their bulky nests in building structures.

#### **LESSON ONE: *God Lives***

*“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*

*Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.” (Psalm 84:1-4)*

The temple holds a special place in the Psalmist’s heart. To worship there thrills his soul and satisfies a deep desire, for here he meets the living God in fellowship. He feels a rapport with the very birds nesting in the precincts; he too knows the homing instinct that brings him here again and again. (*International Bible Commentary by FF Bruce*).

**WE HAVE FREEDOM TO WORSHIP.**

#### **LESSON TWO: *God Hears***

*“Hear my prayer, O Lord and let my cry come to you. Do not hide your face from me in the day of my trouble; incline your ear to me; in the day that I call, answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke; and my bones are burned like a hearth. My heart is stricken and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. Because of the sound of my groaning my bones cling to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I lie awake, and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.” (Psalm 102:1-7 NKJV)*

David is the author of this Psalm. He is suffering physically (and spiritually). A fever has stolen his appetite (v. 4) and left him skin and bones (v. 5). In a culture where ill-health was viewed as a punishment for sin, he found himself isolated and cold-shouldered...but worst of all to bear were the spiritual implications of his suffering. If God is the Lord of all, how could he avoid the conclusion that God has discarded him, a victim of divine displeasure? So he mourned, overwhelmed by the cruelest cut of all. And then verse 12 *“But You, O Lord, shall endure forever...”* And he goes on to praise God and bless Him for the next several chapters. Although he felt abandoned and alone (like a lone sparrow

on a rooftop) we know God heard and answered him or he would not have changed his tune. Just as God had not abandoned David and had indeed heard him, He has not abandoned us and He hears us. We just need our wide-angle lenses!

*And so WE HAVE THE FREEDOM TO PRAISE.*

### **LESSON THREE: *God cares***

*“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:29-31 NIV) See also Luke 12:6-7.*

God cares even for the sparrow which is thrown into the bargain, and which on man’s counting has no value at all. Even that forgotten sparrow is dear to God and known by Him. The thing is even more vivid than that. The authorized version has it that not one sparrow *falleth* to the ground without the knowledge of God. In such a context, the word “fall” makes us think of death; but in all probability the Greek is a translation of an Aramaic word which means to “light upon the ground”. It is not that God marks the sparrow when it falls dead; far more, it is that God marks the sparrow every time it lights and hops on the ground...so it is Jesus’ argument that, if God cared like that for sparrows, how much more He will care for men!

God is concerned about all of the details of our lives. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. There is no need for us to fear when God is exercising such wonderful care over us.

*WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM FEAR.*

### **LESSON FOUR; *God Knows***

*“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” (Matthew 6:26-27)*

*“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:34)*

Jesus warns us against anxiety. He does not forbid foresight and prudence, but he would keep us from worry that destroys our peace and hampers our usefulness. He points us to the birds, to show that the heavenly Father will provide. He knows our needs. He wants us to first seek the Kingdom of Heaven and God’s righteousness, believing that the needful things will be provided.

The two ways to defeat worry by William Barclay based on this passage are: 1) Seek first the Kingdom of God and 2) Live one day at a time.

Worry is needless, useless and even injurious. It cannot affect the past. It is useless for the future. We all know that many health problems and diseases can be the result of worry and anxiety (high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, coronary thrombosis, acid reflux, etc).

Worry has a poor memory. The man who feeds his heart on the record of what God has done in the past will never worry about the future.

Worry is a lack of trust in God. We need to remind ourselves continually of what we know about God. We know He lives. We know He hears. We know that He cares and that He knows our circumstance. *“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3)*

*WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM WORRY.*

**Some ways to win over worry** ( *Nancy Hale, inspired by Elizabeth George’s “Loving God with all Your Mind”*)

*“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”. (Matthew 6:34)*

Five practical P’s to help us avoid the sin of worry:

- 1.PREPARE – for the day(s) to come. Do what is necessary to have ingredients on hand for meals; to have the house clean and neat; to have clothes clean and ready to wear; to have things ready for appointments.
- 2.PLAN AHEAD—Break the large projects into bite-size pieces. Make lists.
- 3.PRAY – Give God everything, every day. Consult Him about the day’s plans.
- 4.PROCEED – Focus on today, doing what is important. Keep moving!
- 5.TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE – He promises to provide:

- \_\_\_\_\_ James 1:5
- \_\_\_\_\_ Philippians 4:13
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Peter 1:3
- \_\_\_\_\_ Philippians 4:19

What is the number one thing on your worry list today? \_\_\_\_\_

What, specifically, can you do about it?\_\_\_\_\_

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** International Bible Commentary by FF Bruce; “Be Loyal” (matthew) by Warren W.Wiersbe; “Gospel of Matthew” by William Barclay; “Gospel of Matthew” by Eerdman’s ; Western Field Guide of Birds (Petersons), “Loving God with all Your Mind” Elizabeth George..