

We are better as precious as Sparrows.

Matthew 10:16, 22, 26-33

The hymn, His Eye is on the Sparrow, is one of the most loved Christian hymns. It was made famous by Ethel Walters and many other singers have recorded it. It even was used in the movie, Sister Act Two. The hymn was written by Civilla Martin, the wife of a Baptist Pastor. She described in her own words how she came to write the song.

“In the spring of 1905, my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship with a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle—true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for over twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them the secret of their joy in the midst of pain.

Mrs. Doolittle’s reply was simple: ‘If His eye is on the sparrow, then I know He watches me.’ The beauty of this expression of simple faith gripped Civilla Martin’s heart and that same evening she wrote the words for the song. If you’re discouraged, afraid of the future, or struggling with the problems of today, listen again to the words of this beautiful song:

“Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come? Why should my heart feel lonely, and long for heaven and home? When Jesus is my portion, a constant friend is He. His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches over me. I sing because I’m happy. I sing because I’m free!”

The lyrics and theme of this song are taken from the words of Jesus when he sent out the 12 with authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. He was offering them and us, power, warning and

comfort, when they faced opposition as they witnessed about Jesus.

Our main focus is in the middle of a story when Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to witness. He was warning them about being mistreated and persecuted for their faith in Him. I think we all can agree that we live in a fearful time, so this message of warning and comfort is for us to help us stay faithful and keep witnessing.

Jesus clearly tells the 12 and us, who we should fear. Jesus said there is only thing we should fear. Jesus’ disciples are not to fear those who can destroy our bodies. Satan has that power. Instead, we should have a reverential awe of the Almighty because our Creator has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. To fear God is the beginning of wisdom. But fearing our Comforter and Sustainer, doesn’t mean cringing in terror before Him. Instead it means having a loving, honoring reverential respect toward our King and Savior.

An acrostic for FEAR when it relates to God is Father Earns Love and Respect. Surveys reveal that a vast majority of North Americans believe there is a heaven and most of them really think they are going there. Only a small percentage of North Americans believe there is a hell.

Well, Jesus believed hell exists. Once we follow Jesus, we don’t have to fear hell. The reason we share our faith with others is because we don’t want anyone to spend eternity separated from the Almighty. So we don’t need to be afraid of any person and what they can do. Instead, let’s have an awe-inspiring holy reverence for God who is all-powerful.

Fear can be a debilitating force in our lives. The Greek word for fear is “phobos.” There are at least 254 psychiatric recognized forms of phobia, like fear of spiders, fear of flying, fear of heights, fear of being in confined spaces, fear of speaking in public, and so on.

But Jesus tells us three times, in a few verses – to not be afraid. Jesus uses the example of the

sparrow to give us **three powerful reasons why we can say, I'm not afraid.**"

Probably our most common fear is death. The other fears we have – often are related to death or pain. For example, we usually don't fear flying – we fear crashing and dying. Our fear of being in confined spaces may have more to do with the fear of suffocating. A spider bite may poison us to death. With heights we fear falling and dying. And some people would rather die than give a speech.

But our scripture highlights – “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body – but cannot kill the soul.” Physical bodies are temporary. Souls are eternal. Maybe the worst thing that can happen in this life is death, but we are eternal souls. Jesus often warns us, to not let fear run our lives. He especially warns his followers that we can be, and often are in lots of places around the world, persecuted and killed for the Christian faith. So he says – fear not. Why?

Our souls are eternal. Our true citizenship is in heaven. Another way to view this truth comes from the words of another *favorite hymn*, “This world is not our home, we're just a passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door. And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.”

Jesus is reassuring us today that we don't have to fear death because the worst thing that can ever happen in this life is the death of our body, and we are more than just a body: We are a soul. C.S. Lewis wrote: “You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.” Our soul lives inside our body. It's who we really are, our personality. And physical death cannot destroy our soul, because our soul will live on long after the stars have burned out and the universe has faded away.”

There are hundreds of verses in God's Word encouraging us to not be afraid. Psalm 27 gives us a great one we can trust. “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1-2)

Jesus gives us a second reason to fear not. If God **cares enough to number the hairs on my head, he cares about the other details of my life.** Jesus is making the point that Almighty Creator God has the capacity and the desire to love each of us individually and personally.

This is in contrast to the evil One who doesn't love us – in any way shape or form. God loves us so much so that he knows how many hairs each of us have on our heads, and I suspect, he knows how many we've lost over the years.

Did you know – a blond has around 145,000 hairs. If you have black or brown hair you have about 120,000 hairs and if you're a redhead you only have 90,000. And we can guess that white haired people have even less. But the point our scripture is making is: Because God knows how many hairs are on our heads, it doesn't even tax His omniscience to number our hairs, and this is a symbol of how much he cares for each one of us.

The point is, if God can number something as trivial as my hairs, then He is smart enough to know everything else about me as well. The Bible tells us, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7) Why do we sometimes think there are issues too trivial to bring to the Lord in prayer? We make a big mistake if we think there is anything too small or insignificant to bring to the Lord. If He cares about your hair, He cares about every thing in our lives.

Jesus didn't say God knows the number of your hairs, because a scientist with a microscope can count them. Jesus said every hair is numbered, that means each one has a special number, a unique designation. I've had a lot of haircuts in my life, but I've never once had a barber say to me, “Hey, I just want to let you know that hair number 947 has a split end.” I don't have my hairs numbered, but God does. The point is God knows things about you even you don't

know. In other words, God knows you better than you know yourself!

We can trust the Psalmist who declared: “Oh Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar...How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.” (Ps 139:1-2, 17-18)

God is all knowing and all caring and all loving. He focuses on the big things like the universe and the small, individual things. He can multi task – loving each one of us. This is how powerful and amazing our Creator is. So we don't need to worry and be afraid.

And the third reason to not be afraid, if **God cares about a sparrow who falls, our Creator won't stop loving me when I fail.**

Sparrows are some of the most plentiful, common birds in the world. Where you find people, you'll find sparrows. They only live in populated areas because they are scavengers of leftovers. Sparrows hop up to you at the outdoor restaurant and wait for crumbs. They aren't known for their beautiful colors or for their sweet songs.

Jesus said two sparrows sell for a penny. A penny was our smallest coin, but the actual word Jesus used meant ¼ of a penny. In other words, two sparrows would sell for ½ penny. In Luke Jesus said, four sparrows are sold for a penny, and the merchant throws in the fifth one for free, like a baker's dozen. The point is, sparrows were cheap and common.

We can easily imagine a little sparrow that is hatched and lives its life in obscurity and falls down dead after a few years. Nobody on planet earth even notices or cares. But Jesus said not a single sparrow is forgotten by God. Jesus was making a point that God cares for the most common, unnoticed birds and every one of us.

Jesus used this illustration to demonstrate how valuable we are to God. We are worth more than sparrows to God. That's good to know! Now notice Jesus didn't say God knows when a sparrow flies. He said God notices when a sparrow falls. That means when it dies. Jesus didn't say that God prevents sparrows from falling to the earth. He simply knows about it and cares. The truth is sometimes we fail and fall, and we think we have disappointed God and that He no longer cares for us. But God knows when you fall, and He still loves you.

The Bible says, “The Lord delights in a person's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.” (Ps 37:23-24)

The God of the Bible isn't some sinister tyrant who is watching over you just waiting for you to make a mistake so He can punish you. Our Almighty Creator is a loving Father who wants the very best for each of us. So we don't have to be afraid, because God has promised He will never leave you nor forsake you. He watches over every sparrow that falls, so you can be certain He is watching over you!

A poem summarizes this scripture about trusting God with our fears. It reminds us of the care the Lord has for each of us. It goes like this:

Said the robin to the sparrow; “I'd really like to know; Why these anxious human creatures rush about and worry so.”

Said the sparrow to the robin, “I guess that it must be, that they have no Father such as cares for you and me.”

But we DO have a loving Almighty Creator Father who cares about every detail of our lives. The Bible tells us so! And over the next month as we listen and reflect on Psalms 46, I hope this awareness grows.

Adapted from a [David Dykes](#) sermon.