

TITLE: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW – SPARROW THEOLOGY

BIG IDEA:

GOD’S LITTLE CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE VAGABONDS THAT FIND PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER WHO VALUES THEM

INTRODUCTION:

What do we know about **sparrows**? Have you ever taken time just to observe the small birds in nature and contemplate what can we learn from them about the God of the vast universe?

- **Very common** – Wide range of species of various types of sparrows; May be the most familiar of all wild birds; relatively worthless and insignificant; we all have experience of viewing sparrows; not some exotic, rare species

- **Very small** -- sparrows tend to be small, plump brown-grey birds with short tails and stubby, powerful beaks; not impressive or powerful in themselves

The majority of sparrow species are relatively small, with sizes ranging from 4-8 inches in length, though 5-7 inches is the most common range.

- **Very restless** – always flitting around

Sparrows are fast, agile fliers that use a series of rapid wing beats followed by a brief glide with folded wings to create an undulating flight pattern. As flocking birds, they may be easily startled and may fly between a food source and shelter frequently while feeding.

- **Eat very little** – small seeds or insects; does not require much to sustain them

A sparrow's bill is relatively short and thick with a conical shape. This is perfect for cracking the seeds that are these birds' primary food source.

Creator has designed them in unique fashion to have characteristics that will enhance their ability to survive.

- **Have a large breeding capacity**

- **Very intelligent** -- roost in noisy flocks on branches of trees and bushes

Remember **Bill Gothard** published those character study books where he took lessons of theology from observations of nature. [cf. *The Eagle Story*]

Going to focus on **3 PARTICULAR LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM SPARROW THEOLOGY**

GOD’S LITTLE CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE VAGABONDS THAT FIND PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER WHO VALUES THEM

I. GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE AND PRONE TO LONELINESS AND DESPAIR –

TESTIMONY TO THE VULNERABILITY OF MAN

Psalm 102:7 *"I watch, and am become like a sparrow That is alone upon the house-top."*

Do you ever feel alone? Abandoned by God? As if God has turned his back and put you in solitary confinement? Your support system has disappeared; it is you against the world; think of how the poor, little lost sparrow must feel

*** * * * *** **Psalm 102**

THE LONELINESS AND DESPAIR OF SPIRITUAL SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CAN ONLY BE OFFSET BY A VISION OF THE ETERNALITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

(102:1-7) THE SILENCE OF LONELINESS MAKES OUR HEART WASTE AWAY

A. (:1-2) NOTHING IS MORE FRUSTRATING THAN THE SILENCE OF GOD

Looking for Answers
Looking for Deliverance
Looking for Help

Lessons:

- Don't be surprised when times of spiritual loneliness and despair come
- God is not obligated to answer our cries for help immediately
- Don't confuse the silence of God with a lack of love or compassion
- Try to direct your vision to the larger, eternal picture rather than the immediate difficult circumstances

B. (:3-5) 3 IMAGES OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING COUPLED WITH DESPAIR

Burning up physically / wasted life
possibly some type of fever
"my days have been consumed in smoke" – sense of life being quickly
burned up in meaningless emptiness (cf. Ecclesiastes)

Heart withered away / heart smitten like grass

Loss of appetite and loss of weight / loudness of groaning
the only noise is my own groaning

C. (:6-7) 3 IMAGES OF ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

1) a **Pelican** in the Desert – out of place and lost
this is a sea bird; out of place and lost in the desert

2) an **Owl** in the Desert – exposed and vulnerable

an Owl should be in the forest; a suitable example of a lonely, isolated existence

- 3) a **Sparrow** on a housetop – lonely and abandoned
birds like to fly in flocks; not sit abandoned alone on a housetop
somehow got separated from the flock in the migration and now sits alone

(everybody says I'm a "strange bird"!)

"I lie awake" – not even able to get any comfort or relief in sleep – tormented by being stuck alone in the pit of despair

(keep waiting for that email of encouragement and rescue ... but it never comes)

(:8-11) THE HUMILIATION OF REJECTION COMPOUNDS THE DESPAIR

A. (:8) REPROACH OF ENEMIES

deride me
use my name as a curse

B. (:9) GRIEF AND ANGUISH FROM WITHIN

"I have eaten ashes like bread"
"And mingled my drink with weeping"

C. (:10) REJECTION BY GOD

1. Why? *"Because of thine indignation and Thy wrath"*
personal sin and responsibility is part of the equation
2. How? *"For Thou hast lifted me up and cast me away"*
no accident that you ended up in solitary confinement

D. (:11) REALITY: THE CLOCK IS TICKING

"My days are like a lengthened shadow"
"I wither away like grass"

(:12-17) THE PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE FINDS ITS ANSWER IN THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF GOD'S PROGRAM

A. (:12) THE ETERNITY OF GOD PUTS THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE

"Thou, O Lord, dost abide forever"
"And Thy name to all generations"

B. (:13) THE SUCCESS OF GOD'S PROGRAM COMES AT THE APPOINTED

TIME

Based on God's Grace and Compassion

(talking here about God's Program for the nation of Israel involving restoration and millennial kingdom blessings)

C. (:14-15) THE REACTION TO THE REIGN OF GOD

1. His Servants rejoice and identify with the fortunes of Jerusalem
"find pleasure in her stones"
"feel pity for her dust"
2. The Nations
 - *"fear the name of the Lord"*
 - respond to the glory of God

D. (:16-17) THE ANSWER TO THE PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE

"built up Zion"
"appeared in His glory"

**(:18-22) SOMETIMES FUTURE BLESSING MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE
OVER IMMEDIATE PERSONAL BLESSING**

A. (:18) FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

"for the generation to come"
"That a people yet to be created"

B. (:19) HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE

"He looked down from His holy height"
"From heaven the Lord gazed upon the earth"

C. (:20) COMPASSIONATE PERSPECTIVE

"to hear the groaning of the prisoner"
"to set free those who were doomed to death"

D. (:21-22) MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVE

**(:23-28) MY WEAKNESS AND BREVITY CONTRASTED WITH HIS
IMMUTABILITY AND ETERNALITY**

A. MY WEAKNESS AND BREVITY

B. HIS IMMUTABILITY AND ETERNALITY

(see Hebrews 1:10-12 for the Messianic quotation)

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- God will never abandon us; we are never alone; God is with us and will never leave us
- My fellowship with God extends throughout eternity – despite all of the images of

the temporal nature of man's existence here on earth – live is a vapor

- **James 4:14** We are not in control of our future -- “*You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away*”
- **Job 7:6-9** Perspective of one without a confidence in eternity -- “*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and come to an end without hope. Remember that my life is but breath ... when a cloud vanishes, it is gone, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up*”
- **Is 40:6-8** “*All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.*” Quoted in 1 Peter 1:24
- **Heb. 1:10-12** speaking of the Messiah – the ultimate answer to man's vulnerability

II. GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN ARE VAGABONDS UNTIL THEY MAKE THEIR SANCTUARY AT HOME WITH GOD – TESTIMONY TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF DWELLING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Psalm 84:3 “*Yea, the sparrow hath found her a house, And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, Even thine altars, O Jehovah of hosts, My King, and my God.*”

Def. of “vagabond” – moving from place to place without a fixed home; wandering; leading an unsettled life

Significance of a Sanctuary

Def: a sacred or holy place (like a temple or church)

- Dwelling place with God -- A Home = Place of Family Relationship and Protection

cf. Wildlife sanctuary

Christian community and fellowship are important

Yes we are pilgrims here on earth; this earth is not our home; but we have a dwelling place right now with God

- Worship in God's Sanctuary -- An Altar = Place of Sacrifice and Worship and Service

Sense of Significance and Purpose as we focus on worshipping and serving God

- Security and Rest in the Presence of God

Contentment – the Lord is our portion; the sufficiency of Jesus Christ

Comes from **Submission** to the Lordship of Jesus Christ – not trying to determine our own course and find our own way

Man will never be at rest until he finds his rest in God.

Eccles. 3:11 *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”*

III. GOD’S LITTLE CHILDREN ARE VALUABLE AND SIGNIFICANT TO GOD – TESTIMONY TO THE PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Matthew 10:29 *“Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.”*

Matthew 10:31 *“Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

Parallel Passage:

Luke 12:6 *“Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God.”*

Luke 12:7 *“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

In Hamlet, by **William Shakespeare**, as Hamlet faces his tragic fate, he says, “There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow”

- Relief from Anxiety and Fear
- Provision of all of our Material Needs
- Sense of Significance and Value
 - God has chosen me to belong to Him – doctrine of Election
 - God cares about the details of my life
 - God values me as His beloved child in His family
- Nothing can happen to us outside of the providential care of our loving Heavenly Father
- Confidence of Answered Prayer – the God who numbers the hairs on my head (more significant for some of us than others) knows what I need before I ask

CONCLUSION:

Lyrics: His Eyes is On the Sparrow

1. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heav'n and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
 - o Refrain:
I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
 2. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
 3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
- No need to feel Vulnerable
 - No need to feel like a Vagabond
 - Every reason to feel Valuable to our Heavenly Father



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