

Matthew 10:29-33

“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. “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

Once at a church I served a sparrow flew into the sanctuary, actually I have had run ins with sparrows twice in my ministry. But this one time we tried and we tried to get this small bird out. No matter what we did though this bird just flew in the opposite direction which we wanted it to go. One of the men working on this task then took the Christian flag and was trying to swat at the bird hoping the flag itself would either cause it to fly towards the door or maybe become tangled in it so as to grab the bird and then take it outside to release; all to no avail. Finally drastic measures had to be taken and one man armed with a BB gun went on the hunt. It took longer than was actually anticipated but finally the hunter prevailed.

The killing of this sparrow became the main topic of discussion around the church and maybe the neighborhood. I would not be surprised if the local gossip paper known as 'The Grapevine' did not have a headline about the killing of this bird. After this incident many became Bible scholars quoting Psalm 84 in which it is declared that even sparrows are welcome in the house of the Lord.

Is there any passage in the Scriptures that is more reassuring about God's love for us than this morning's passage: "*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.” If God loves a sparrow this much how much more do you think He loves us?

Sparrows are small humble birds. Sparrows were actually considered food for the poor in Biblical times, and because they were so cheap, the poor could even offer them in sacrifice to God if they couldn't afford a lamb or a goat or a bull. You could buy two sparrows for a penny. A sparrow is about as worthless as birds get. They are dirtier than most spending most of their time looking for food in the dirt; usually they have fleas and they reproduce abundantly. They have no sweet sounding song like other birds; they're not very colorful and let's face it they are not very pretty as birds go.

“Sparrows are some of the most plentiful, common birds in the world,” notes Rev. David Dykes. “Where you find people, you'll find sparrows. They only live in populated areas because they are scavengers of leftovers.”

Concerning Jesus' choice of sparrows as an example of God's watchfulness, Rev. Dykes writes, “Sparrows . . . were cheap and common. It would make better sense if Jesus had said God knows when every eagle falls, because eagles are such majestic birds, but Jesus was making a point that God cares for the most lowly, unnoticed birds.

Naturalists tell us that there are approximately 35,000 bald eagles in the U.S. and Canada, worse than that there are approximately 435 California condors in the world, but who really cares enough to count the sparrows? Only God.”ⁱ

God sees a sparrow when it falls. Jesus is saying to us that, whatever trial we may be going through, what-ever we may be going through God is aware and God cares. Jesus says, “*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid . . .*”

How many times have we felt alone and afraid? Feeling alone and empty, as if no one cared if we lived or died or even existed at all! How many times have we wished that there was just one person, just one person out there that would just love us for who we are and not what we have or do not have here? There is and His name is Jesus Christ! He is here waiting for you to come to Him, not intruding into your life; He is just waiting in the wings, loving you and caring about you. We need to understand, Jesus doesn’t go where He is not invited to go. He doesn’t boldly barge into our lives and say, “I am taking over now that you have messed things up royally.” He waits patiently and lovingly for us to see that we need Him as much as He needs you!

When we reach the point we believe we have acquired everything we can from this life, like fame, fortune and wealth and still find that it isn't enough. When we finally realize that something is still missing in our lives Jesus will be waiting for us! When we discover that we haven't succeeded in getting all the fame fortune and wealth out of this world and we discover something is still missing Jesus will be waiting for us. When we have tried everything known to man to fill that void deep within us and still haven't filled it Jesus will be waiting for us. When the love we receive in this world from family, friends, children or spouse still isn't enough and isn't the love we are seeking Jesus will be there waiting for you.

We cannot exist in this world by just feeding the body with the food of the world. We also need food for the soul! This food is referred to as the *"Bread of Life"* *"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst,"* and the drink is the *"Living Water"* *"whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* The love we all so badly crave and seek is the Love of Jesus. It's like a plant. You cut off one of the stems which have leaves on it and it will die. Why?

Because it is cut off from the main stem and root of the plant. Without the nourishment which comes from the main plant and it's root, eventually the plant withers, turns brown and dies, separated and apart from the main root and stem.

Jesus is our sustainer of life without Him we are nothing more than stems separated from the main plant which lies on the ground and eventually withers and dies. We have to choose whether we want to be like that separated stem, removed from the main plant and it's root that will eventually wither and die or we can choose to become part of the main plant and it's root (Jesus Christ) and grow and flourish in Him.

When you are feeling empty and that space in your heart says, "I need more, I need to find what is missing and fill it." That is the Lord tugging at your heart. He is trying to reach out to you and say, "Here I am ! Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest. I will fill that empty space in you with My Love and Mercy and Grace and Pardon. I will always care for you. Won't you let me show you what it is like to be really loved, really cared for?" All the pleasures and things of this world will never fill that void within you - none of it! Jesus wants to have you become a part of Him and be fulfilled, but you have to open up. He will not invade our lives, our perceived perfect lives until we decide to be part of the "*True Vine.*"

Jesus calls each one of us to “*Follow Him*” and until we do, until we truly follow we can never be part of the “*True Vine*.” Apart from the vine we wither and die. Luke 12:24-25 “*Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!*” As parts of the vine, as members of His family, as children of God He promises to feed us, to care for us, and most importantly in Hebrews 13:5 we are told “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*” No man could ever make and keep such a promise.

Picture it's a Wednesday night and we are here at the church. When somebody runs in and says, “Turn on a radio, turn on a radio!” And while the church listens to the radio with a microphone stuck up to it, the announcement is made: “Two women are laying in a Long Island hospital dying from some mystery flu virus. Within a few days it seems, this virus just sweeps across the country. The medical field is working around the clock trying to find a cure. Nothing is working! California, Oregon, Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts. It's just sweeping across from coast to coast. And then, out of nowhere the news comes out. The code has been broken. A cure may be found. A vaccine can possibly be made.

It's going to take special blood of somebody who hasn't been infected. Before long all through the country, through all those channels of emergency broadcasting, everyone, man, woman, and child is asked to do one simple thing: Go to your downtown hospital and have your blood checked. When you hear the sirens go off in your neighborhood, please make your way quickly and safely to the hospital closest to you to have your blood checked.

The day comes when you and your family go to the hospital and when you arrive there is a long line, and there are nurses and doctors coming out and pricking fingers and taking blood and putting labels on it. Your wife and your children are out there, and they take your blood and they say, "Wait outside in the parking lot and if we call your name, you are dismissed and you can go home." You stand around with your neighbors, worried and maybe scared wondering what in the world is going on and if this is the end.

Suddenly a young man comes running out of the hospital screaming. He's yelling a name and waving a clipboard. What? He yells it again! And your 10 year old son tugs on your jacket and says, "Daddy, that's me." Before you know it, the officials are escorting your boy back inside. You cry out "Wait a minute! Hold on!" And they say, "It's okay, his blood is clean. We think he has the type we need."

Five tense minutes later, out run the doctors and nurses, crying and hugging one another some are even laughing. It's the first time you have seen anybody laugh in a week, and an old doctor walks up to you and says, "Thank you for coming sir. Your son's blood type is perfect. It's clean, and a perfect match, and from his blood we can now make the vaccine to save the people."

As the word begins to spread all across that parking lot, people are screaming and praying and laughing and crying. Then old the gray-haired doctor pulls you and your wife aside and says, "May we see you for moment? The doctor said "We didn't realize that the donor would be a minor and we need ... we need you to sign a consent form." You begin to sign and then you see that the number of pints of blood to be taken is empty. You ask "How - how many pints?" And that is when the old doctor's smile fades and he says, "You have to know we had no idea it would be little child. We weren't prepared for this. We need it all!"

"But-but...You don't understand. We are talking about the entire country maybe even the world. Please sign sir. We need it all!" You ask "Can't you give him a transfusion?" "If we had clean blood we would. Can you please sign? Would you please sign?" In total shock and numb silence, you consent.

Then they say, "Please have a moment with him before we begin?" Could you walk back to your son? Could you walk back to that room where he sits on a table asking, "Daddy? Mommy? What's going on?" Could you take his hands and say, "Son, your mommy and I love you, and we would never ever let anything happen to you that didn't just have to be. Do you understand that?" And when that old doctor comes back in and says, "I'm sorry; we've HAVE to get started! People all over the world are dying. Could wait outside? Could you walk out while he is saying, "Daddy? Mommy? Daddy? "Why, why are you leaving me?"

And then the next week, when they have the ceremony to honor your son, you realize some folks didn't come they just slept through it, while others didn't come rather they went to the lake or the beach, and some folks just didn't even come, and some did come but only out a sense of duty. Would you jump up and say, "MY SON DIED FOR YOU! DON'T YOU CARE? DON'T YOU CARE?"

Instead God says "MY SON DIED FOR YOU. DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE?" Seeing it through God's eyes maybe now we can begin to comprehend just how much God does love us. Our passage this

morning says “*The very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*” That’s how much He loves you.

ⁱ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/if-his-eye-is-on-the-sparrow-david-dykes-sermon-on-gods-love-160003.asp?Page=4>.