

## Sparrows

Joe Slater

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

I’m not an avid bird watcher. I do enjoy seeing the Robins return in the spring along with the gorgeous red Cardinals. And we keep a hummingbird feeder in the back yard and laugh at the antics of the few who drink there as they dive bomb one another. But I don’t even notice the sparrows. They’re drab; they’re dirty; they don’t sing. I can’t imagine they’d be any good to eat, though I suppose that’s what Jesus had in mind when He mentioned people paying a pittance to purchase them.

I simply don’t care about sparrows. But God does! They are a part of His creation (day five, Genesis 1:20). He notices if even one of them falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29). That being the case, Jesus assures us that God is also keenly aware of us. *“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows”* (Luke 12:7), animal rights extremists to the contrary notwithstanding.

I’m glad God cares for sparrows. I’m even more glad that He cares for me even though I’m not much to look at and there is plenty about me that is undesirable. Can you relate?

I need to check my attitude toward other people, especially those whose behavior I find obnoxious. God cares about them even as he does about you and me. They need Jesus just like we do. Our Lord *“is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9). My job is not to despise them, but to lovingly share the gospel with them.

Can you relate?

## Playoff Or Layoff

*“Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass”* (Psalm 37:5)

I was watching a basketball game with my husband, and I saw a man in the bleachers wearing a shirt that said Layoffs. Then I realized that the shirt was folded, and the letter P was in front of the word and read Playoffs. I thought, “How odd! If you commit to reaching the playoffs, you will do everything you can to make it there. If you do not commit and practice, or neglect what it takes to get there, then you may be laid off.”

In sports, as in life, if you commit totally to your goal, you are relentless in your efforts. Commitment is 100%. Practice, practice, practice is your theme. Your goal is before you, and that is all you can see. If everyone on your team has the same attitude, the team may make the playoffs. If there is one weak link in the team, then the whole team suffers and may not make the playoffs.

Judas was part of the team of Apostles. By his acts Christ was betrayed. The whole team suffered. However, Christ would have forgiven Judas if he had asked. *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they divided his garments and cast lots.”* (Luke 23:34).

*“Commit your way”* means everything we have: our thoughts, our actions, our words, our desires, our perseverance, our determination, all that we have been given by God in the first place. Then we are to trust him, believing that He will do what he promised. We do our part and God will do His part. Teamwork at its finest. No better team than God’s team.

--Linda Gragg (Oceano, CA)

## Indebted To the Older Generation

The Psalmist wrote, *“Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come”* (Psalm 71:18). We quickly note the concern the inspired writer had for the generations that would follow him. He wanted to show God’s strength and power to “this generation” and “everyone who is to come.”

Our attitude should be the same. It wasn’t so many years ago that I was young, and the older generation was there to teach me the strength, power, and ways of God. I will always be indebted to that older generation for doing so.

May we never forget that God’s truth must be taught and re-taught to each generation. The aged apostle Peter wrote to the young and old alike, *“I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me”* (2 Peter 1:12-14). Peter strongly emphasized the need to keep reminding people of divine truth even when they may already know these things.

My generation witnessed a change of direction in the church beginning several decades ago. Less emphasis was given to what the Bible calls “first principles” (Hebrews 5:12). The Hebrews writer lamented that such “first principles” had to be re-taught to brethren who ought to have been teachers themselves. This reminds us that we should not teach **only** first principles, especially to those who already know and honor them; but if first principles are not being followed and respected, then we must teach and re-teach them.

We will always owe the next generation the knowledge of fundamental divine truths. Failure to teach today will bring nothing but trouble tomorrow.

--Milton Smith (Tulsa, OK) via *Old Paths*