

God Cares for the Sparrow

by Vance Havner

The sermon emphasizes God's intimate care for each individual, illustrated through the humble sparrow, and offers comfort in times of loneliness and loss.

Duration: 30:46

Scripture: Psalm 84:3, Matthew 5:11-12, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 10:29-31, Matthew 11:6, Luke 7:22, Acts 17:24

Topics: "Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the mysteries of life and the greatness of God. He shares a personal experience at a seminary and emphasizes the importance of faith in times of loneliness and uncertainty. The speaker reminds the audience that God is always watching over them, even when they feel alone. He also discusses the temporary nature of our physical bodies and the eternal nature of our souls. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God collects and values our tears, as they can lead to valuable lessons and visions.

Transcript

I've had an odd experience this morning. I meant to preach a sermon and somehow I can't get away from talking of all things about sparrows. Three times in the word we have some very wonderful things said about sparrows.

And so I, if I was going to say it at all, it ought to be out here in the hillside with the trees and the birds and the mosquitoes. Here I am in a regular congregation like this and yet I feel like saying a word from this direction. The Bible refers to nature many, many times now.

The Lord used many illustrations from that field. You have to watch these Bible scholars though. I prepared a sermon on the spider taketh hold with their hands and is in king's palaces.

Then I learned from the Bible scholars it wasn't a spider at all, it was a lizard. So I had to throw away all my spiders and start working on lizards. I never have got up a sermon on lizards yet and don't think I ever will.

John Stott is quite a bird watcher. He some time ago announced as his takes consider the fowls of the air and he said that means watch birds. Well that sounds like a bird watcher for you and he's on a vacation now I think and he says one thing he wants to do catch up with his bird watching.

I grew up in the hills and I mean way back in the hills and I remember that mama always sent me up that little old dirt road to the little bitty grocery store with about a dozen eggs in the basket. We traded in eggs in those days and chickens and anything and I was told she said now if there's any money up over if eggs had gone up and was over you can buy candy with what's left. I went up there just practically praying that the price of eggs would go up.

But if we had candy it was just steak candy very ordinary looking candy but that was that beat all the fancy stuff I've eaten in the last few years. And arm and hammer soda had a bird card in every box in those days and I started collecting them and that started the fever the bird fever and I got a bird guide and my father didn't see much sense in a thing like that and birds plentiful didn't buy a book about it. But then that led on to binoculars one thing after another now I've got all the paraphernalia and still listening to the birds but there's always been something about the sparrow.

Of course you have plenty of English sparrows they're everywhere they're town birds they don't care for the country and they have some of the characteristics of town folks. You know a country boy can learn town ways but a town boy just can't learn country ways. You've got to be born there and grow up to know anything about that.

Well we read in the word of God our Lord tells us that two sparrows are sold for a farthing and five sparrows for two farthings. Now if you pay two farthings you get a bargain yet an odd bird yet an odd sparrow and what in this world is more inconspicuous and apparently more unimportant than an odd sparrow of all things and yet our Lord uses it to say that God knows when the odd sparrow falls.

Think about the odd sparrow there are other kinds of course but the one I like most is not the white throat although he sings starts off some of the bird lovers think that it's the first few notes of the wedding march lifted several octaves and it does have that sort of similarity and then the song sparrow who sings all day long and but my favorite is always the field sparrow because when I was a boy working in that hot field with corn or cotton or whatever it might be the other birds all stopped but the hotter it got the better the field sparrow liked it and he sang for me all day long I developed an appreciation for him but here we have the odd sparrow God cares for what seems unimportant the hairs of your head are numbered the lilies of the field God knows what the stock is in his

store he knows what's on every shelf in the store the store of the universe and he never loses anything nothing disappears and the cynic says well so what you see sparrows lying dead what's that got to do with God and caring about us when we get into trouble that sounds very cynical but it says God knows about it no matter what happens even the smallest detail never escapes his notice nothing ever goes out of existence anyhow they move around and change appearance and change form you burn a stick of wood in the fireplace and some of it goes up in the smoke and some of it remains in ash in the ashes but everything's around somewhere and they just change forms the whole world does like that and I read that my tears psalm 56 8 are in God's bottle did you know God's in the bottling business

and then he's keeping bottles of your tears Velma Daniels who's a newspaper a religious writer down in Florida told me some time ago she got overexposed in a tv studio to the bright lights and her eyes gave her trouble and she went to the eye doctor and he said you know what the best formula for the eyes is in the world no he said tears we don't know how to make them but that's the best formula of all because God made it and sometimes you learn your best lessons and see your best visions through the tears nothing goes out of business we're fearfully made after all I've never seen you you've never seen me you know we

see each other walking around with a suit of clothes on but we look at each other's eyes the windows and that's the nearest you ever get your eyes can't see you see you with

your eyes there's something behind all this little apparatus and when it goes out of business one of these days they bury it but they don't bury you for keeps because you're going to live forever and your ears don't hear you hear with your ears your tongue can't talk you talk with your tongue you take your tongue out lay it on the table what would it talk about you do the talking and when the tenement when when that little tenement that you've been living in these years goes to pieces or an automobile and puts it out of business or something and they lay it away what happens to the tenant when the tenement is disposed of well the christian goes to be with jesus and that ought to be enough for the present there will be a lot more discovered later on but remember friend that we are fearfully

and wonderfully made and i i spend a lot of time wondering about those dear ones and you do too the bible doesn't tell us an awful lot about the christian between death and the resurrection what what does he look like or the old bodies in the grave he doesn't have the resurrection body and folks say well what form of manifestation does he take when i'm not getting into all that but god will take care of it i guarantee you that well we know our loved ones over there well you don't think we'll have we've got over here i expect to know them and i think that we won't all be like eggs in a crate oh just alike i think that the peculiarities of personality to some extent no doubt will be manifest and remember that he's not the god of the dead he's the god of the living and all live under him

nobody's dead in the sight of god everybody's alive as far as he's concerned that ought to cheer us up and we are waiting for the final restoration and there won't be any odd pieces everybody's going to be somewhere every knee shall bow first and every tongue confess that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god the father that's not universal salvation but everybody will be accounted for they'll all have to recognize that jesus is lord and whoever's lost that's for the garbage heap and where the worm dies not the fire is not quenched but accounted for not non-existent i have a wonderful friend great presbyterian brother david petty in greensboro we get together every little while the other day just laid something down the table when i was eating at his house it's from the writer who

probably is not a christian at all but this unbeliever speaking of hell said oh we laughed today at it we make our wry remarks about it we use it as a byword but he said between here and there there's a great gulf if we could see over it there would be millions of millions of millions of faces and not a smile on one of them that moved me somewhat and yet from an unbeliever that's a strange but true comment it seems to me does god care for the fallen sparrow does god care for you when the mishap comes and then there's the lonely sparrow the psalmist wished in psalm 107 said i'm like a sparrow alone on the housetop now when the sparrows alone up there probably the nest has been destroyed or the mate has been killed and when some time in your life there comes that day when the nest has been

destroyed and the mate killed you know what this means i know what this means i walk down these streets and many times i see two going along i assume man and wife and i say well they still have each other and then i sort of gripped that hand as though reaching out for one that isn't there but i know that as i've told you before i haven't lost her because i know where she is but homes of robert g lee oh when my dear one passed away that great preacher wrote a great long two-page letter to me and he all used to say it the latter part of his life i'm not going home now i'm just going back to memphis so saturday i'll be leaving not for home i'll just be leaving for greensboro and so here's the sparrow on the housetop and like that grand old spiritual that are that the black saints have given

to us sometimes i feel like a motherless child oh that's a tremendous thing that i remember down in florida one night they brought out the kids from a children's school and the little folks sang and that's a song i can't quote it here but i'm glad i belong to the family of god and in that family of god there aren't any orphans and because uh god has made arrangement about all that they asked me over to travis avenue that great baptist church in fort worth some years ago for a conference and when i got there some of the folks came to me and said there's one thing we'd like for you to talk about now they seem to have everything we had our first meeting in the country club and it looked like they didn't lack a thing in this world pretty well fixed most of them but they said talk to us about

loneliness do you realize that with all our amusements and all our entertainment today we've got more lonesome folks than we've ever had on the face of the earth they've got plenty but that doesn't meet the need we're like a little amy lying in the hospital and she was kind of unhappy that day little annie said why don't you pray she said how would god know it's me yeah and he said put your arms out on the counter pain and say lord i'm the little girl with her arms out on the counter pain that might identify you oh you ever feel that way sometime when trouble comes in his heart well god's got trillions of stars to look after and billions of people how can he ever take time out to think about me well it's because he's omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent and those big long words mean

that he's everywhere knows everything and can do anything he wants to and you can leave all that with him just said of this one question in your head is god infinite if he's infinite then you don't put any stops anywhere because god's infinite and that's what the odds bearer means and my lord when he was on earth i've wondered so much about the fact that he didn't mix with the upper crust much why didn't he go to rome and alexandria and athens and say i'm the son of god why did he start in this poor little country no bigger than new jersey over there across the sea and why did he when he had only 40 days left to stay after he came back from the grave wouldn't you thought then he would have gone and said i'm back i'm the only person who ever died and came back and i'm here no all he does

is comfort a poor weeping woman at a sepulchre have dinner with some lonesome emmaus disciples and tell some poor fishermen those disciples that fish don't i can't nothing that's one fish tail i believe and tell them how to fish lord couldn't you have used your time there was 40 days it's something that no no that leads me to believe that he's interested in the little things that i do and the little things that you do and there's a place for it in the economy of god after the resurrection just went about as usual in many ways and yet not as usual i'm glad his eyes on the sparrow i know he watches me etho waters used to sing that in the billy graham meeting oh she blessed her so she'd sometimes saying it his eyes on the little bitty spare well she wasn't little bitty herself but somehow

somehow he said i don't care she knew what she was saying my what a spirit she had and then finally psalm 84 3 tells about the sparrow that builds in the temple and that is a refreshing thought and the temple of the lord now god dwells not in temples made with hands but the psalmist said here i want to abide i want to stay in the temple of god the heart of man still longs for a hiding place jesus lover of my soul let me to thy bosom fly rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty you'll never you can't hide from god that's for sure except in one place you can hide from god when you're in god that's when he's your home when you're homed in god i think of the mother of augustine who

wanted to go with him on a trip and she was old he said mother you mustn't go it's a long trip and you might not make it you might die away from home and she said no uh my life is hid with christ in god and

i'm homed in god and when your home's god you can't die away from home that does me a lot of good because i'm a lonely poor mortal for eight years now wandering around over the country and staying in motels and the other night when the preacher and his wife brought me up to that when she said there ought to be a special medal in heaven for traveling preachers who have to live in motels and go in and turn the door nobody there stare at the wall when i wake up in the middle of the night and the old it's human to say what would happen to me if i went on in a situation like this and a

thousand folks can come to you but somehow beloved out of all this in the past eight years you come the richest period of my life i wrote that little book that ever nearly every other person is bought i think though i walked through the valley and they call me and they write to me from everywhere saying we buried our son i buried my wife we've lost this one that one sorry and your little book somebody gave us your little book or i've got your little book and sometimes i'm i sit down and get kind of low sometimes of course you never do but i get a little low sometimes feel like the last rose of summer in a hailstorm sometime and about the time that i do why some time ago i was sitting in my room and i wasn't in the best place and the phone rang and some dear brother at the other side of

the country went to all the long distance trouble to call them doesn't have anything to ask of in particular just wanting to tell you you've been a blessing brother that's the best paycheck a preacher ever gets that's the best paycheck anybody ever gets does anybody you don't have to be a preacher does anybody tell you you've been a blessing you ought to be everybody can be a blessing that's one vocation that's open to all of us and we can get into it but you cannot rest in god until you nest in god two words in the bible that keep reminding me abide abide abide that means you settle down now don't go running just when you get in the jam he's gracious and loves you and he'll help you then but uh you it'll mean a lot more if you just stay there abide in the secret place of the most and the

others dwell abide dwell put some stay with it there it doesn't mean you got to be a recluse or a hermit the sparrow doesn't stay in the nest all the time goes about his business but uh the savior is not only our savior he's our sustenance and uh we must feed upon him and uh he'll meet every need sydney lanier lived down in the last days of his life dying of tuberculosis near brunswick georgia i had meetings there some time ago in the first badness church and across across the marshes i had a great uh meeting ground old-fashioned methodist campground and the tree out here where lanier sat and wrote his wonderful poem about the marsh hen secretly builds her nest on the watery sod i'll build me a nest on the greatness of god that's a mighty good place to stay and you think of mr penny and

the great millionaire when he was very ill you've heard it you've read it we've all read it dozens and dozens of times and i'd like to read it again and then he heard some some of the saints singing down below his room in the hospital got up and put his robe on went down there and they were saying be not dismayed but every time god will take care of you that did him more good than all the pills he'd been taking all those weeks that's not true oh it's a good thing to remember with madame guillaume to me remains nor place nor time my country is in every climb i can be calm and free from care on any shore since god is there and you have learned in whatever states you are to be content romans 8 28 doesn't say we understand how all things work together for god doesn't say that understand it or

not it says we know it now can you quit worrying about understanding it and get around to knowing it understand it or not i don't understand how a black cow can eat green grass and give white milk but i still like ice cream i'm not putting it all together i know a few things and i can enjoy them oh god's greatness flows around our incompleteness around our restlessness his rest and i recall that well the other day i was

in new orleans baptist seminary for some days and along with the others who came up to shake my hand was one of the faculty a dear man of god sometimes we get on bible conferences together but i didn't know the latest and i preached on why and i want to talk about that one time here not that i can explain why but thank god there is a word in the book that it's all wrapped

up in one great big why in this book my god my god why that's selfish thing and he said it did me a lot of good considering the fix i'm in well i didn't know what kind of a fix he was in he'd been away holding a meeting and some fiend broke into his home and murdered his wife now that's something to come home to explain it i can't i don't know how to i don't know why i couldn't tell him why of course but thank god he knew the lord and in an hour like that it's a mighty good thing to be homed in god and when you're home with him yours is the forgotten beatitude because my dear one went to heaven at 2 15 sunday morning and i preached at 11 and i didn't know whether i could or not but it did you heard me tell it maybe before john the baptist in jail and sending of all things a delegation to

jesus are you the one or do we start looking for somebody else now that was a low mark for john the baptist man who had stood on the banks of the jordan behold the lamb of god that rugged man with his camel's hair garments and his grasshopper salad that he lived on what a character and yet now he's in the dumps he's in jail and it's one thing to stand on jordan and give it and another thing to stay in jail and take it and he couldn't take it very well jesus didn't ball him out he didn't ball out old simon peter for denying him he just asked him do you love me he didn't ask him do you love sheep ron dunn my dear friend this coming young preacher said when my dad and mother dad loved and mother loved cats but dad couldn't stand cats but he said after mother died and went to heaven one night

we were all in front of the fireplace talking and the old cat came in tail up in the air very happy came around rubbed up against every one of us when he got to dad guess what dad did he picked him up held him on his lap and stroked him all during the rest of the conversation said dad still wasn't fond of cats but mother had been fond of cats and dad loved mother jesus said if you love me you'll love the sheep you try to work up a love for this miserable these wolves today some of them apart from that you won't get very far but jesus said go tell him go tell john the baptist that i'm running on schedule blind or seeing a day for hearing lame or walking poor having the gospel preached and then the forgotten beatitude nobody ever knows this one blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended

in me blessed is the man who never gets upset by the way i run my business now if god's business involves something you can't figure out and you say lord you must have been looking the other way where were you no no claim the forgotten beatitude it'll work and then after all this i had two years in my life and i couldn't sleep i i don't know how i lived and nervous exhaustion and depression and i hadn't learned what martin lloyd jones being a doctor and a preacher both and speaking from both standpoints said don't let yourself talk to you you talk to yourself that's a terrific thing the old adam in you start raising all these awful questions stand up and say in the name of jesus christ sit down i'm going to live it whether i feel it or not something will happen then and my doctor after i

was left alone he gave me a bottle of valium and said well if you can't sleep take this well i i said now lord i'm not going to become a valium i i'm not getting hooked on that stuff i threw my bottle away and i said if i'm going to preach i got to sleep and thank the lord i've been sleeping sometimes it's the other way now like that old boy out in the country country i came from went to the doctor and said i'm having trouble sleeping the doctor says how does it work of course i do all right in the night and pretty well in the afternoon but seemed like of a morning i just roll and talk so so i just want to tell you thank god it works

thank god it works if you're alone on the housetop you feel like it you don't know where to go people come and some of them don't say the right things and

all alone with the pillow wet with tears in the middle of the night you can't tell folks they've got enough burden to their own thank god the watchman of the universe never goes to sleep he's night and day on the job and i'm like the old bishop who read that he that keepeth israel shall neither slumber nor sleep read that in the middle of the night and he looked and said lord if you're sitting up i'm going to bed good night so all the way my savior leads me what have i asked beside cannot out his tender mercy who through life has been my guide

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27486.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/vance-havner/god-cares-for-the-sparrow/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net