

## “Preaching from the Birds”

St. Matthew 6:24-34

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SERMON 1937

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Our sermon text is from Matthew 6:26, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord God made the birds on the fifth day of creation. In Genesis 1:28, the Lord God proclaimed that man and woman were to be rulers having dominion over the birds. The text says, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” But now in Jesus’ sermon on the mount, the Lord makes the birds our rulers from whom we are to learn a lesson. We are the students and they are to be our schoolmasters. Jesus tells us “Look at the birds....”

The bird is sitting outside our widow singing sweetly. And so we ask the bird a question, “It’s now fall and winter is coming. Aren’t you worried?” **In utter disgust the bird lectures us.**

“That’s ridiculous! The Lord provides for me. I am not able to ride on a tractor and sow the seed. I cannot work in the field. I cannot store up food for the winter. I cannot do all those things, and yet I don’t worry. I get up and sing for an hour or so, not paying my situation any mind. When my belly grows hungry, I go to find some grain which God has provided for me. I cannot gather into a barn, but then I don’t need to do it. The Lord continues to provide for me my daily bread.

Now you, my featherless friend, have very little faith. The Lord has given you the ability to work for your food. You sow a crop. You bring in the harvest. You store in barns. Ok, maybe it is more like, you work a job, earn a paycheck and accumulate money in the bank. And yet you worry about the job, and the paycheck and your bank account. You worry that you will not have enough. You are a fool! Shame on you! I have every reason to worry, but I don’t. The heavenly Father feeds me.

In addition to all which you are able to do, the heavenly Father has given to you **great promises** that He loves you and He will provide for you. I would love to be able to read in the Word, all of the gracious promises which He has given you humans.

--The Almighty God has told you that He is your heavenly Father and a good One who takes care of His children. 2 Corinthians 6:18 “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”

--Whether He loves us, birds, or not, we do not know. But He has told you of His great love for you. 1 John 3:1, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”

--We, birds, are not beloved children of God, but we know that He feeds us. You

have so many promises throughout the Scriptures, Psalm 33:18-19, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine," and Psalm 37:25-26, "I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed."

More than these promises, He has given you **the gift of prayer** to speak to Him. Furthermore, He has told you exactly for what you are to ask. In other words, if he didn't want to give you daily bread, He wouldn't have told you to pray for it. Do you not realize what assurances He has given you, O you of little faith. Matthew 7:7-8 says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

We know that "He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call" (Ps 147:9). When you see the birds and cattle given food, does it not teach you that the eyes of all look to the Lord. He opens his hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing. (Ps 145:15-16)."

Thus ends the bird's sermon.

The Lord God made the plants, vegetation and flowers on the fifth day of creation. Genesis 2:5-6, "...before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground." Even before the man was created, God sowed the seeds, watered the earth, and brought forth a garden.

After He made the man and woman, God told them, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food" (Genesis 1:29). The vegetation serves man as his food. But now in Jesus' sermon on the mount, **the Lord makes the flowers of the field to be the preachers** and we are supposed to listen to their sermon. We are the students and the flowers of the field are to be our schoolmasters. Jesus tells us "Consider the lilies of the field..." As we admire the flower growing, we ask, "You are so tender and short-lived, are you not worried about your life?"

**In condescending tones the flower begins to lecture us,** "That's ridiculous! I did not make myself. I cannot make myself beautiful, nor can keep myself from wilting. I cannot move myself out of harm's way. I am to bloom when and where the Lord sees fit. Life is but a few days and then I die.

You humans have become stupidly proud to trust in your work and effort, or even that of other humans. Your life does not belong to you. It is on loan from the heavenly Father. You can't give life, neither can you preserve it. Your neighbor or ruler or doctor cannot go even an inch beyond the boundary which God has set. Your prophet Job learned the truth, but you deny it. Job said, "The Lord gives. The Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Of course, the Lord has given you the command to work, so that by the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread, but even that has a limit. For some, hard work produces millions. For others, hard work produces only hundreds. Some lose their

wealth in hurricanes and fires, and others happen upon an inheritance or treasure. God tells you to work, but you can't trust in it.

**He tells you to work, but he forbids you to worry.** Learn from us flowers. We are here today and tomorrow gone. I don't worry or fret, for the Lord is in control. Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Which reminds me that you humans were "called according to God's purpose." You were called to believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. If God so clothes the grass of the field with flowers, don't you understand that He will give you a clothing which far surpasses even Solomon, the greatest secular king in the Old Testament.

Just as your life is not your own and your body is not your own, so also this world is not your kingdom. The Lord has seen fit to give many of you seventy years or more here on this earth. He has graciously clothed your earthly body. But don't you realize that He desires to give you even more--glorious and eternal garments that are not your own. Unlike us flowers, you will live forever.

You didn't work for the garment of salvation and you couldn't purchase it. Your heavenly Father sent His Son to pay the price by His suffering and death. Jesus Christ has provided for you, free of charge, a robe of righteousness. You have a white wedding garment which has been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through faith in Jesus Christ you have been placed into the Christian church which is called the kingdom of God.

So, you foolish human, which is more important? Is it the birds or the humans made in God's image? Is it the flowers or those called to salvation? Is it this world's kingdom or the kingdom of God? If your loving God has provided and given unworthy sinners an eternal dwelling, why would you worry about earthly food and drink and clothing? Listen to Jesus "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). So do you think that your God can give you eternal life, but He can't give you a sandwich, a soda, along with a shirt and pants? Are you kidding me?

**Your worry is unfounded and it is a denial of God's many promises to you.** You are worrying about minor things, while disregarding that which is most important. Gentiles, that is unbelievers, act in that kind of way. Jesus says, "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." When a Christian lives in that way he seeks to serve two masters and it only produces worry."

Thus ends the flower's sermon.

Trust in God and do not worry about your life. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). You can either trust in God or worry, but you can't do both. You have one master and Lord, who created you and saved you and now preserves you. Let us sing like the bird, and "shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation" (Ps 95:1). Let us work but not worry. Our Savior has forgiven us our sins and God has clothed us in Christ's brilliant robe of righteousness. Like the flower, let us bloom where we are planted, wearing our heavenly garment. You are more valuable than the birds and the flowers, you are a beloved and forgiven son of God.