

## **“A Lesson from the Birds”**

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From the living creatures around us, as well as from inanimate nature, God designs that we shall learn lessons concerning Him and His love.

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;  
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;  
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;  
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

Who knoweth not in all these  
That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?  
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,  
And the breath of all mankind.

Job 12:7-10, R.V.

The great lesson that we are to learn from the lower orders of creation is the care that God has for all His creatures, and to be sure that since God cares for the lowest, He will much more care for man, whom He has made in His own image, and placed over the works of His hands.

The Saviour said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” Matt. 10:29. Still stronger: “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Luke 12:6, 7.

Again the Lord says, “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” Matt. 6:26. In the care of God for the birds we have the assurance that He will care for us; and as they do not spend time in anxious thought and worry, much less need we. Surely God will take as much better care of men than He does of birds, as the needs and the value of men are greater than those of the birds.

But the care of God for the birds does more than assure us of His care for our physical wants. The life is more than meat. God’s care assures us that He will supply all our need, “according to His riches in glory.” Phil. 4:19. He who cares for that which is least, will not forget that which is the greatest.

God's care for the wants of the smallest of His creatures should be taken by us as comfort when we appear before the throne of grace to ask for mercy, and grace to help in time of need. Here is our warrant:—

The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion;  
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.  
The Lord is good to all;  
And His tender mercies are over all His works.  
All Thy work shall give thanks unto Thee, O Lord;  
And Thy saints shall bless Thee.  
They shall speak of the glory of  
Thy kingdom, And talk of Thy power;  
To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,  
And the glory of the Majesty of His kingdom.  
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
And Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.  
The Lord upholdeth all that fall,  
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.  
The eyes of all wait upon Thee;  
And Thou givest them their meat in due season.  
Thou openest Thine hand,  
And satisfieth the desire of every living thing.  
The Lord is righteous in all His ways,  
And gracious in all His works.  
The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him,  
To all that call upon Him in truth.  
He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him;  
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.  
Ps. 145:8-19, R.V.

But the fact that God cares for all His creatures, and that all get their supplies from His open hand, does not imply that they are to sit still and wait for the food to drop into their mouths. He provides food for all, and expects them to take it.

These wait all upon Thee,  
That Thou mayest give them their meat in due season.  
That Thou givest unto them they gather;  
Thou openest Thine hand, they are satisfied with good.  
Ps. 104:27, 28, R.V.

The birds fly about, and gather that which the Lord has provided for them; but that does not indicate that they do not receive it direct from the hand of God. So the fact that man works for his living is no sign that he does not receive it direct from

the Lord. Man is actually as much depended on the Lord for his daily bread as the birds are for their food. But for God's provident care there would be nothing to gather, and but for the same care there would be no ability on the part of men to gather it.

"When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, . . . and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." Deut. 8:10-18.

From the physical we are to learn lessons concerning the spiritual. God has provided every spiritual blessing that man needs, and more than he can realise. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [things] in Christ." Eph. 1:3. A man to whom this was quoted once asked, "If this is so, why do I not have all spiritual blessings? Why is it that I lack so much, and have so little enjoyment in the Christian life?"

The answer ran thus: "What would you say of a man who should come to your house nearly starved, if, when you have loaded the table with the best that your house affords, he still rings his hands, and moans, 'Oh, I am so hungry; how I wish I had something to eat!' You would say, that if he is hungry the fault is all his own; that plenty has been given him, and that all he has to do is to take hold and eat. The fact that he is still starving does not prove that you have not given him everything he needs. Thus it is with the gracious gift of God. He has given you all spiritual blessings, and if you lack it is because you will not take that which He has so richly provided."

The man insisted that this was not a fair illustration, for, said he, "the beggar can see the food before him on the table, but I cannot see the blessings of God." True, we cannot see them, but we may be more sure of them than if we could see them. We have the assurance of the Word of God that they have been given to us, and there can be no doubt about it. Our eyes often deceive us, but the Word of the Lord never does. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen our eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18. God's Word makes thing so that did not exist before; therefore we may rest assured that all things that we need for this life, as well as for that which is to come, have been freely given to us, and that we have only to appropriate them.