

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, May 8, 2011 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**His Eye is on the Sparrow - Matthew 10:28-31**

**Introduction:** One of my favorite hymns is “His Eye is on the Sparrow” written by Civilla Martin, whose husband was a Baptist Pastor. She said the inspiration for the song came from a couple they became friends with - the Doolittles. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for over twenty years and her husband was a cripple, but managed to get around and earn a living from his wheel chair. She said that despite their afflictions, this couple lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. She said that one day her husband commented on their positive outlook on life and asked them the secret of their joy in the midst of pain. Mrs. Doolittle’s reply was: *“If God’s eye is on the sparrow, then I know He watches me.”* The beauty of that expression of faith gripped her heart and that same evening she wrote the words for the song: *“Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come? Why should my heart feel lonely, and long for heaven and home? When Jesus is my portion, a constant friend is He. His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me. I sing because I’m happy. I sing because I’m free! His eye is on the sparrow; and I know He watches me.”*

Of course, those words were inspired by something Jesus said as recorded in **Matthew 10:28-31 (NIV)**: *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell. 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.”*

Many times Jesus refers to nature to illustrate spiritual principles, and this is one of those instances where His message is *“Don’t be afraid.”* So if you’re living in fear or worry today, listen carefully...God has a message of reassurance and hope for you. He’s telling you that you don’t have to be afraid, and He gives three reasons why you shouldn’t worry or fret. First, you can say, *“I’m not afraid”* because of the assurance that:

**1. God Keeps You.** According to a recent Gallop poll, the ten most common fears among Americans are the fear of: 1) terrorist attacks, 2) spiders, 3) death, 4) failure, 5) war, 6) heights, 7) violence, 8) being alone, 9) the future, and 10) nuclear war.

I thought it was interesting that the fear of death was third on the list, but that 6 of the other nine fears directly relates to death. That means that the common thread is a fear of death or anything related to death. We’re afraid of terrorist attacks, wars and violence because they can cause death. We’re afraid of spiders mostly because we’ve heard of people being bitten by a poisonous spider and dying. We’re not really afraid of heights, but afraid of falling to our death!

Now, this kind of fear is not just confined to America or even to our modern culture. Earlier in Matthew 10, Jesus sent out His disciples with the warning that they were going out like sheep among wolves, and there would be enemies who would arrest them and even threaten to kill them. Jesus must have sensed their fear of death, so He said, *“Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body.”* (vs. 28). He said *“Don’t be afraid of doing My bidding even though the threat of dying is there because that is the worst your enemies can do to you.”*

Now I believe this resonates with us today because the events of this week have once again raised our awareness of the threat of terrorism in America. But listen, the worst thing we could do is allow fear to settle in our hearts, and cause us to shut ourselves in our houses and close our mouths to sharing the gospel. We can’t live our lives in worry and fear of what man may do to us. It is still our responsibility to go out into the byways and highways and compel the lost to come to Christ. And yes, we will still be going out as sheep among wolves, but it’s my hope that this will cause a resurrection of hope and Godly moral values in America. I pray that America will experience a spiritual awakening on the scale of what happened on the day of Pentecost when God poured out His Spirit. It can happen if we’ll not fear man, but seek God’s face and stand together as one nation under God.

There are many verses in God’s Word encouraging us not be afraid. One of my favorites is **Psalm 27:1 (NIV)**: *“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”*

I believe that passages like this, and the words of Jesus are reassuring us today that we don’t have to fear man

because the worst thing that can ever happen in this life is the death of our body, and we are more than just a body: We are a soul. C.S. Lewis wrote: “*You don’t have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.*” Our soul lives inside our body. It’s who we really are, our personality. And physical death cannot destroy our soul, because our soul will live on in eternity.

Jesus said the only thing we should fear is God because He has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. The Bible says that to fear God is the beginning of wisdom. But now, fearing God doesn’t mean cowering down in terror before Him. To fear God means to have a loving and trusting respect for Him and then live in a relationship with Him. And once you know Jesus in that way, you don’t have to fear hell because He will keep you in His care and save your eternal soul.

This is the very reason we share our faith with others. We don’t want anyone to spend eternity separated from God. So don’t be afraid of man and what he can do —instead, have a holy reverence for God. Next, you don’t have to be afraid because:

**2. God Cares for You.** We all know that beautiful little verse in John 3:16 which says: “*God so loved the world.*” But have you ever made that verse personal and put your name in it? “*God so loves Steve?*” That’s an amazing truth. The same God who put the stars in place loves you personally. In fact, He cares so much for you that Jesus said He has numbered the hairs on your head.

Now let me ask you something...Do you know how many hairs are on your head? Well, some have less than others, and some might could count them on one hand. But apparently some hairologist has counted, and came up with an average for different colors of hair. Blondes have around 145,000 hairs; if you have black or brown hair you have about 120,000 hairs and if you’re a redhead you only have 90,000. I don’t know how that hairologist counted all those hairs, but it must have been an arduous and tedious task. But God doesn’t deal in averages; He knows the number of hairs on EVERY head!

If God can number something as trivial as the hairs on your head, then it stands to reason that He knows everything else about you as well. And not only does He KNOW about you, the Bible says you can cast all your cares on Him... “*because he cares for you.*” (1 Peter 5:7 NIV). That’s why there is nothing too small or insignificant to bring to the Lord in prayer. If He cares about your hair, He cares about everything in your life.

But look at the text again. Jesus didn’t say God knows the number of your hairs, because any scientist with a microscope can count them. Jesus said every hair is *numbered*. That means each one has a special number, a unique designation. I’ve had a lot of haircuts in my life, but I’ve never once had a barber say to me, “*Hey, I just want to let you know that hair number 947 has a split end.*” I don’t have my hairs numbered, but God does. The point is God knows things about you even you don’t know. In other words, God knows you better than you know yourself!

The Psalmist declares: “*Oh Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar....How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.*” (Psalm 139:1-2, 17-18 NIV) Wow! Not only does God count your hairs, He thinks about you so many times each day, you would lose count if you tried to count them because they would outnumber the grains of sand on the beach. Here’s a challenge youth...when you go to Jekyll Island for Super WOW, as you walk on the beach; notice those gazillions of grains of sand, you need to pause and thank God because that’s how often He thinks about you. You are never dismissed from His mind because He cares for you. Finally, Jesus said, “*Don’t be afraid!*” because:

**3. God Catches You.** Sparrows are probably the most common birds in the world. Where you find people, you’ll find sparrows. They aren’t known for their beautiful colors or for their sweet songs. They are just rather plain, common birds. Jesus said two sparrows sell for a penny, but the actual word Jesus used meant ¼ of the value of our penny, so two sparrows would sell for ½ penny. In other words, they are so plentiful, they are real cheap. But no matter how plentiful or cheap they may be, Jesus said God is aware, and He cares when any one of them falls to the ground.

Now, we might grasp this better if Jesus had said God knows when every eagle falls, because eagles are such majestic birds, and there are so few of them. But Jesus was making a point that God cares for the most common, unnoticed birds. Only He cares enough to count the sparrows. Nobody else would notice or care every time a sparrow dies, but God does. Jesus said not a single sparrow is forgotten by God. And if He cares about the smallest, most insignificant birds...if His eye is on the sparrow, how much more does He care about us? How

much more valuable are we to God? Jesus says we are worth *more* than sparrows.

Now, why is that good for us to know? Well, notice that Jesus said God notices when a sparrow *falls*. That means He knows when it dies. He doesn't prevent sparrows from dying and falling to the ground; He simply knows about it and cares.

**Psalm 37:23-24 (NIV)** says, "*The Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.*"

I remember Elaine and I teaching our boys how to walk when they were toddlers. We didn't just turn them loose and say, "*You're on your own! Make it the best you can.*" No, we knew it was a process that required a lot of coaxing. We didn't get on to them when they fell, and tell them what rotten walkers they were either. We guided them and used a lot of positive reinforcement and told them, "*Good job! Try again. You can do it!*" And when they started walking, we were there to hold their hands. If they started to fall, we'd hold on tighter or we'd catch them.

Spiritually speaking, we're all like toddlers learning to walk. We're going to stumble and fall, but God has promised to uphold us with His hand. When we stumble He's still holding on to us.

But how many of us, when we know we've stumbled and failed God, do we think, "*Boy, I've really blown it now. God's not going to love me anymore. He doesn't care for me anymore?*" Have you ever thought that? Sometimes we think we've disappointed God and He's not going to accept us anymore. But listen, God isn't a tyrant who is watching over us, waiting for us to make a mistake so He can punish us. He is a loving Father who wants the very best for us. He knows you're going to fall, and He still loves you. He still cares for you and He'll always be there to catch you and set you back on the right path.

You don't have to be afraid, because God has promised He will never leave you nor forsake you. He watches over every sparrow that falls, so you can be sure He is watching over you!

Look at King David. Here was a leader of God's people whom God sought after and said was "*a man after his own heart.*" **1 Samuel 13:14 (NIV)**. Yet David committed adultery by taking Bathsheba, another man's wife, and then tried to cover his sin up by having her husband killed in battle. But when Nathan confronted David with his sin, David didn't cowl down in fear of God. He didn't run and hide under the bed like a scared child afraid of the boogey man. No, David had a proper fear and respect for the Lord. He acknowledged his sin, repented of it, and asked the Lord for forgiveness and mercy, and God restored him. Why? Because he knew that God Keeps, God Cares, and God Catches.

**Conclusion:** 366 times in God Word, He says to "*fear not!*" That's one for every day of the year including leap year! But do you know in reality how many times God says, "*Don't be afraid?*" God says, "*Don't be afraid*" every time you are afraid. So, when you're knocked down in fear or weighed down with worry over things like health, a job loss, or a financial problem, just remember that God is reaching down and touching you on the shoulder saying, "*Don't be afraid, it's going to okay.*"

I close with a little poem that reminds us of the care the Lord has for each of us. It goes like this:

*"Said the robin to the sparrow; 'I'd really like to know;  
Why these anxious human creatures rush about and worry so.'  
Said the sparrow to the robin, 'I guess that it must be,  
that they have no Father such as cares for you and me.'*

But listen, I'm telling you today - we DO have a loving Father who cares about every detail of our lives. And whatever you may be afraid of or worried about today' God knows you, God keeps you, God cares for you and God is always there to catch you when you fall. He's never going to leave you or forsake you. You can leave your worries and your fears behind today and say, "*His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he's watching me!*"

(Some of the material used in this message came from a sermon by the same title preached by Dr. David Dykes of Tyler Texas)