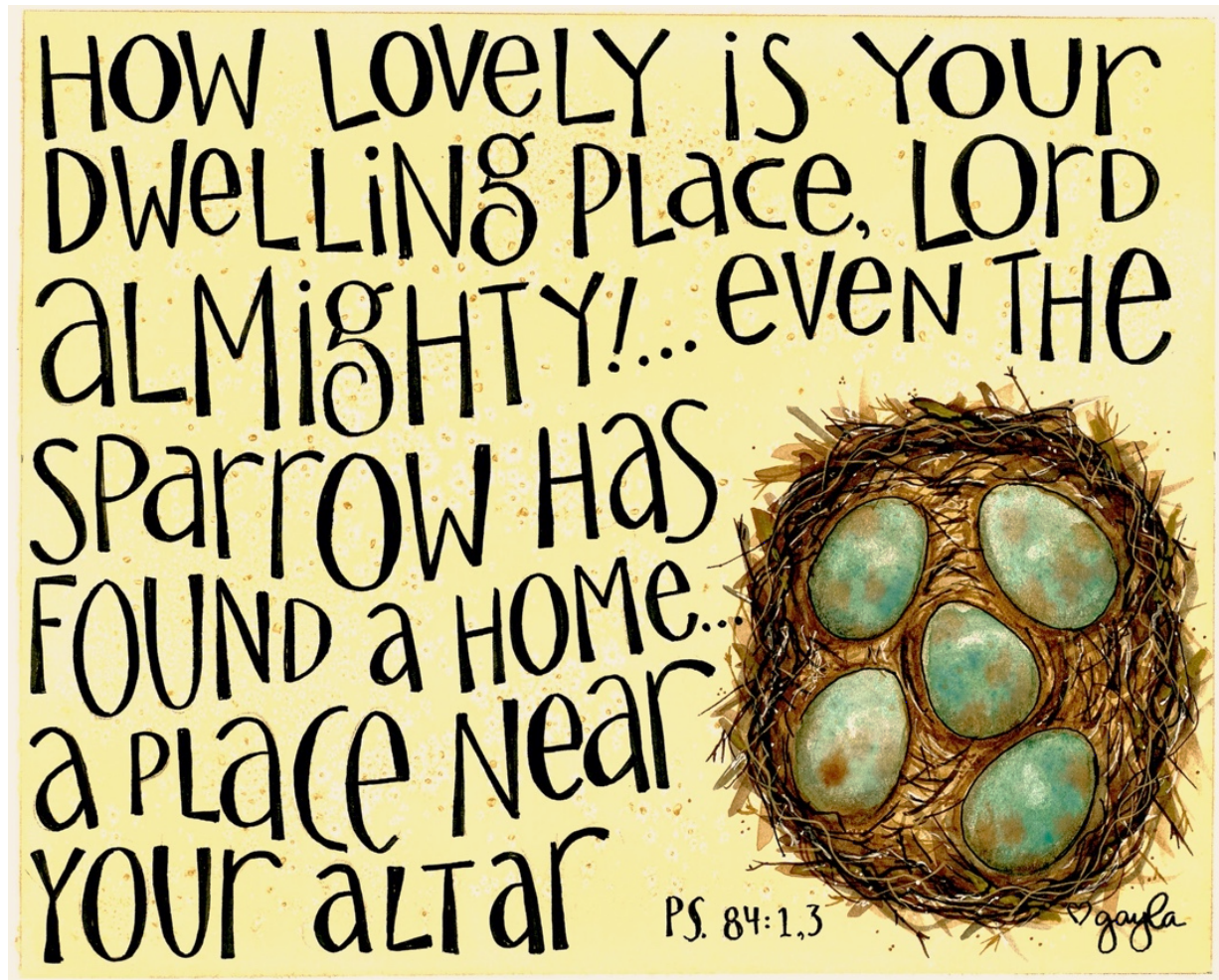


The Sparrow



1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of Heaven's Armies.

2 I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the Lord.

With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.

*3 Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young
at a place near your altar... Psalm 84: 1-3*

As an artist, I am often inspired by nature. Lately, I have been interested in what we can learn about God from the animals, plants, and other things He created in our world.

To many people across the world, **the house sparrow** is the most familiar wild animal, and, because of its association with humans, these little birds are frequently used to represent the ordinary. Too often, they are regarded as useless and disposable. They will eat just about anything, and they nest literally everywhere.

John Stott wrote a wonderful little book, *The Birds our Teachers*. He observes,

These largely negative assessments of Sparrows make Jesus' positive reference to them all the more striking. For these little creatures, lacking both colourful plumage and musical song, are nevertheless cherished, remembered and protected by God.

Matthew 10:29-31 reminds us, "You can buy two sparrows for only a copper coin, yet not even one sparrow falls from its nest without the knowledge of your Father. Aren't you worth much more to God than many sparrows? So don't worry. For your Father cares deeply about even the smallest detail of your life."

Joni Eareckson Tada broke her neck in a diving accident when she was just a teenager, leaving her a quadriplegic. Years later, she was having health problems and had to go back to bed. Her husband, Ken, hung a bird feeder outside her window, to cheer her up. As she watched them, envying their freedom to fly, she remembered what Jesus had said about sparrows. She wrote:

I glanced at the bird feeder and smiled. I could understand Jesus noticing an eagle...But a scrappy Sparrow? They're a dime a dozen. Jesus said so himself. Yet from thousands of bird species the Lord chose the most insignificant, least-noticed, scruffiest bird of all. A pint-sized thing that even dedicated birdwatchers ignore. That thought alone calmed my fears. I felt significant and noticed...If the great God of heaven concerns himself with a ragtag little Sparrow clinging to the bird feeder outside my window, he cares about you.

To have an accurate sense of our self-worth, we must first recognize our value to God. Go back and re-read Matthew 10:29-31. Jesus tells us that not a single sparrow is forgotten by God. And we are worth more than many sparrows! If God cares for the tiny little sparrow, how much more must he care for us?

Questions:

1. If you are able, go outside and look for a sparrow. Watch it flit about for a few moments and remember what Jesus says about sparrows. How does that make you feel?
2. Can you name some ways that God has provided for you in your life? As you consider those things, what does it make you think about God's love for you?
3. Are there any people you know who may struggle to believe that God cares for them? Take a few moments and ask God if there is a way you could express His love for them. Perhaps there is something specific you could do, like writing them a note, calling them, or even serving or helping them in some way.