



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- January 4, 2024

The Lord be with you.

I became a birdwatcher. Well, because Jesus told me to, I mean, Jesus said, consider the birds of the air. Now, the Greek word translated here is consider it is a vivid, intense word. That means a lot more than just to look at. It means a locked in, sustained, concentrated watching. I mean, you can't take your eyes off what you're seeing. So you know that there is a lot to learn by watching birds.

Jesus says, consider the birds of the air, consider them and draw a deep spiritual lesson. Are they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you, are you, are you not of more value than they?

Now, I wanna do some bird watching with you today, bird watching in the book of Psalms. Psalm 74 where the psalmist has gone up to the magnificent temple of Solomon in Jerusalem to worship and he sees he's, he sees there, he considers he's locked in gaze at some birds and from those birds, he draws an important lesson. So in Psalm 84 the Psalm is standing there in the temple and he burst into Psalm. How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord of hosts? My soul longs, indeed, it faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars. O Lord of host, my king and my God.

The psalmist attention is arrested by seeing there on the high and holy altar. He sees bird nest. I mean, he says even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself. Now, I was a pastor for a lot of years and, and let me tell you that if I ever saw a bird nest inside the church building that I would have asked the sex and the church janitor to get rid of those bird nest asap but not in the temple, not in God's house as it was out of deep reverence for life that the law of Moses dictated that a bird's nest was not to be disturbed.

I mean, no priest, no Levite better mess with those birds and their nests. They are right where they belong in God's house. They are at home there. And so the psalmist as he goes into this magnificent beautiful temple to worship, he is struck by what he sees. He is taken back as there on God's high holy altar. He sees a sparrow's nest.

Now, have you ever seen a sparrow's nest? Well, it's made of grass, twigs, straw bits of string, I mean, whatever litter the bird can find to build its nest and it swallows. Well, here in Arizona I'm going to be seeing swallows nests in another month or so. And, you know, they, they look like little mud huts made out of the bird's saliva and dirt with the little baby birds poking their, poking their heads out and, and the psalmist looks and he considers, and he draws a spiritual lesson. Well, even a sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars. O Lord of hosts my king and my God.

Ok. With the psalmist, let's consider and let's look a little bit deeper and see what this means. You know, sparrows. They, they really aren't much to look at. I mean, they're small, dull in color. I like to take pictures of eagles of hawks, hummingbirds, cardinals, but, you know, not, not, not sparrows.



## water from rock

And so for the Hebrew people and throughout the Bible, the, the sparrow is a symbol of the person who is looked at as worthless.

No good, no count. I mean, those kind of people that we ignore and we go all of our way to avoid. I mean, that's all symbolized by the sparrow and the swallow. Well, the swallows, I see him here in Arizona. He's ever going and coming here today, gone tomorrow. And the swallows symbolized for the Hebrews. The person who is a drifter, a wanderer. I mean, the person who never seem to fit in can't settle down is shiftless, restless. And so that day as the psalmist looks at the birds right there on the high holy altar. Well, he knows, he knows that the Lord welcomes him there. He knows that he has a home with God so that He breaks into song, my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars. O Lord of hosts my king and my God.

You know, the world might look at the psalmist that day as worthless as a no count someone who never fits in. But, he knows that he has a home and God o Lord of hosts my king and my God. This is the gospel for sparrows and swallows a gospel for prodigals whom God welcomes home. I think the old song says it. Well, God's eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches me and he watches you and he cares for you and you have a home in Him.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.