

I Know He Watches Me

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

Introduction

Have you ever felt unloved or uncared-for? Have you ever felt like you were all alone and nobody was on your side? In times like that, I tend to draw from the church songs that I know. And having not grown up in the Lutheran church, I have a whole different library of songs. One that sticks out right now is an old Gospel song, *His Eye Is on the Sparrow*, lyrics by CIVILLA MARTIN and music by CHARLES GABRIEL. The chorus goes: *I sing because I'm happy. I sing because I'm free, For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.*

It brings me back to this passage of Scripture that tells me all about God's love and care for me. It's comforting to know that the God, who made the universe and all that is in it, watches over me. No matter what happens in this life, I know that **GOD WATCHES OVER AND CARES FOR ME.**

Sparrows and Hair

In effect, Jesus is saying not to worry. If God sees when a bird worth half a penny falls to the ground, how much more does He care for you, His child (**v. 29**)? He goes on to say: *"Even the hairs of your head are all numbered"* (**v. 30**). That would be more meaningful to some of us than others if we took it at face value. But, here again, Jesus isn't saying that God just sits around counting hairs. He **knows** us each **intimately**, inside and out. He knows our pains and sorrows as well as our pleasures and joys. He knows how we feel and what we're thinking. Now, that could be scary as well as comforting, depending on our thoughts.

Context

Then, we also might ask, "Why did Jesus say this? Why was He giving these words of comfort to His disciples?" The answer comes when we look at the **context**. This passage is a continuation of what we were reading last week. Jesus chose 12 of His followers to be laborers in the **harvest field**. He sent them out to proclaim the **Gospel** and minister to the **physical** and **spiritual** needs of others. In this passage today, He's warning them of coming persecution. Many people aren't going to believe what they're saying. Some will even be violently opposed to it. He's encouraging them to remain **faithful in persecution**.

Faithfulness in Persecution

Brother will turn against brother (**v. 21**). You can't even trust your family. The pressure from the government will be so great that they will give in and turn you over. But don't worry. Everything will be alright. Here's why you should be faithful.

Christ's Return

First, there's not much time. Jesus will **return** before the mission is completed (**v. 23**). Don't give up. Keep on spreading the Good News.

Treatment of Jesus

Second, the servant is no **better** than his **Master (v. 24-25)**. If they treat Jesus this way, can you expect any better if you're faithful to His message?

Limited Power of the Persecutors

Next, the persecutors can only hurt you in this life. They have no power over your **immortal soul**, only God does (**v. 28**). Don't put this life ahead of the next. It's not that **important**. And it's not **worth it**.

Eternal Punishment

Because, last, *failure is not an option*. If we allow fear to keep us from the mission, we have **denied** Christ and He will **deny** us before the Father (**v. 32-33**). Falling away is how we can lose our salvation.

Who's Our God?

The **FIRST COMMANDMENT** says: *You shall have no other gods (Exodus 20:3)*. Normally, when we talk about putting other things before God, we talk about things that we **prefer** over Him. However, the **Catechism** says the meaning of the **FIRST COMMANDMENT** is: *We should fear, love, and trust God above all things*. Anything we let cripple us with **fear** is also a false god. In these times, when being a Christian is less popular and church historians say we're heading for a time of **persecution** that will rival what the early church went through, I pray that I will always remain **faithful** to God and be a **witness** for Him. But I know I'm weak and will fall. So, what hope is there for me?

Means of Grace

That's where the **MEANS OF GRACE** come in. When we hear the **Word** and partake of the **Sacrament**, God **forgives** our sin and **restores** our faith. He **strengthens** us to be able to stand up against whatever paralyzes us with fear and say, "No." He helps me to remember that *His eye is on the sparrow, and I KNOW HE WATCHES ME*.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
