

Jesus' Command to Watch the Birds

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

Matthew 6:25-27 (NIV)

Have you ever had your doctor tell you to go bird watching? It happened to me today. This surgeon is internationally known in his field of specialty. He was also the fourth surgeon to examine my medical records with a view to operating to relieve chronic back and leg pain.

The examination in his office was thorough both as he poked me here and pushed me there, and as he asked many questions in a very logical order. I felt that I was in the presence of an unusually competent practitioner.

He allowed me to see the CT scan results on his computer, drew me several maps of my spine and carefully explained what my spine should look like and what it did look like. He then sat back in his chair, looked right into my eyes and gave me his opinion.

I was discouraged to hear him tell me that any surgery would be long and complex and the risks far outweighed the possible benefits. Then he went on to suggest a particular form of physiotherapy and some other

remedial steps that could be of benefit. This doctor is a fine Christian man and he knew I was also a believer.

After telling me surgery was not an option for someone with my medical issues he reminded me of a command of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. That command is in our text for today. Jesus commanded us to be bird watchers the doctor reminded me. (When I got home I looked the verb "to watch" up in my Greek New Testament and sure enough it is in the imperative mode and means a searching, attentive gaze.) I knew the text well, have used it many times over the years with people in pain, and even used the text for another devotional some months ago.

How appropriate for the physician to tell the preacher what is in the Bible. Knowing of the godly character of the doctor I took his comment as a word from the Lord.

When life seems to be a great tsunami, and the waves crash over your head sweeping you off your feet and taking you where you do not want to go,

it is time to lay hold of some great truth of Scripture and hold on to it like a life preserver.

The birds our Lord has created are of an enormous variety in colour, habitant, size and song. Our Creator has given them a strategic place in the food chain and they have all the food and other necessities of life provided by the One Who made them.

Birds do not plough the ground, plant seed, harvest grain or store food for winter. Yet our Father in heaven sees to their care. Jesus then puts the question to His listeners, "Are you not much more valuable than they are?" Of course we are! So if I see the birds fed and provided for in the world, my Father in heaven will do as much, and much, much more for me as His child. So I can leave all of my concerns in the hands of my loving Creator. Will you not do the same today? Obey the command of Jesus to go bird watching and do it today.

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