

28. Sparrow



When underlining how precious his disciples were to God, Jesus suddenly started talking about sparrows. “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?” he asked. “Yet *not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing*” (Matthew 10.29). Everything is noticed by its loving Creator, he stressed.

Cheeky, chatty and chirpy, the house sparrow also used to be extremely common. Two a penny, we might say. But 1 in 4 UK birds are now on the Red List of Conservation Concern and the sparrow is one of them. Since the Big Garden Birdwatch began in 1979, sparrows have declined dramatically. Loss of nesting sites and food sources such as stubble fields, have almost halved the numbers.

But every sparrow matters. Jesus makes that clear. And if every sparrow matters, so does every cuckoo, every skylark, as well as every other species caught up in our global extinction crisis.

There is some good news on this World Sparrow Day... The last decade has seen a 10% increase in sparrow sightings. Milder winters and a growing avoidance of pesticides are helping. But we can help some more. Wild areas in gardens encourage insects. Nesting ‘terraces’ for sparrows are available... Playing a part in safeguarding the ecosystems of God’s world is an act of faith.

Today...

...help us find our place in creation, O God,
by gently caring for all who inhabit it with us.

Amen