June 21, 2026 – Westwood United Methodist Church

**“Not One Is Forgotten”** Rev. HeeYoung (Lucas) Lim

Matthew 10:29-33
29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted.
31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.
32 “Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

**Not One Is Forgotten**

When I lived in South Korea, I used to go hiking often.
This picture was taken on top of Bukhansan Mountain, fourteen years ago.

One thing I noticed there was the birds. They were not afraid of people.
I guess they had learned that hikers would sometimes feed them.
I told my wife, "Just hold out your hand."
She did.

And to our surprise, a small bird landed right on her hand.
I quickly took a picture.

It was amazing.  In the original picture, you can actually see the bird's eyes looking at my wife.

I still remember that bird and thought how beautiful God's creation is.

I did not touch that bird. However, I felt some divine experience through the meeting with those sparrows on my wife's hand. The bird was so small. So fragile. It looked as if you could hurt it just by squeezing your hand.

Maybe it sat on my wife's hand because it expected food from us.
I was too scared to try it myself.  But I still remember that moment.
It felt like a small touch, a gift from God's creation.
It looked like "do you see another creation like this?"

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus talks about a bird like that.
Jesus said: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father."

How much is a sparrow worth? Not much.  In Jesus' time, two sparrows could be bought for almost nothing.  They had little economic value.
People did not think much about sparrows.
But Jesus did.
Jesus did not look at sparrows through the eyes of the market prices.
He looked at them through the eyes of the Creator.  And Jesus says that even a sparrow is not outside God's care.

Jesus was telling the people the aspects of God - how God loves and cares God's people.

When I was younger, I used to read this verse in a very literal aspect, God's power and acts of caring for the world. Some people interpret these verses to blame God for everything, to question God's reasoning, and to point out God's powerlessness in caring for the world.

Others use them to justify violence or suffering in God's name.

But I do not think Jesus is trying to explain God's absolute control over everything through the parable of the sparrow.
I think Jesus is telling us something much more beautiful about God.

I think that nothing is too small for God's attention.
Nothing is outside God's care. Not one is forgotten, as the title says.

Then Jesus says, "So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."

Jesus said these words to His disciples. Remember the passage we read last week.
"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."
Then Jesus sent His disciples into the world. And we know that they were not powerful people before they met Jesus.

They were not important or famous people. Maybe they felt small themselves. Maybe they were afraid. Maybe they wondered if their abilities were good enough compared to other religious people.

And to those fearful disciples, Jesus talked about sparrows. Even a sparrow is remembered by God. How much more are you?

After that Jesus says, "Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven."
Sometimes we read these words as a burden, the responsibility that we have to bear.

But, before that, Jesus mentioned, "Do not be afraid."
He first reminds them that the disciples were beloved from God's people He first reminds them that they were known by Jesus.

He first reminds them that they are precious.
Then, Jesus said: "Do not be ashamed of me."
Because our confession grows out of trust and our actions are an imitation of Jesus.

To confess Christ is not simply to speak louder, to make other people afraid, to push them to force to believe. It is not about winning a debate.
It is about living in the way that Jesus taught us.
It is about seeing people differently for they are the people of God.
It is about treating others with dignity as creations of God.

It is about recognizing God's image in those whom the world ignores.
Because, also, they are not forgotten.

Our world measures people by money, by success, by power, and by achievement.

But the Gospel says something different. The value of humanity does not come from money.

Your value does not come from success. Your value does not come from what others think about you.

Your value comes from God.
And you are not the only one who matters.
The people you overlook matter.
The people who seem weak matter.
Even the smallest creatures matter because no one and nothing is forgotten before God.

To follow Christ is to join God's work of caring for God's creation.
Not with power. Not with violence.
But with love. With mercy. With grace.

So when you feel small, look at the birds, the sparrows.
When you feel forgotten, remember the words of Jesus:
"Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."

Not one sparrow is forgotten. Not one tear is forgotten.
Not one person is forgotten.

And you are not forgotten. Not one person is forgotten before God.
Be bold and follow Jesus. Be proud of Jesus for Jesus revealed you are more precious than others. And, I think that's enough.

Amen. Let us pray.

When we feel that we are meaningless, let us see Jesus.
Let us feel that Jesus cares for us and that we are also precious like sparrows.
Let us remember that we are precious for we are the creatures made in the image of God. When secular thoughts flow over us, let us see the sparrows and remember we are precious people of God. In Jesus's name, we pray, Amen.