

MY EYE HAS BEEN ON A BIRD

Every time that I go out my front door or return home these past few weeks my eye has been focused on what a bird has been doing with my mailbox. I have never caught the bird in the act, but it has been placing materials to build a nest on the inside of my mailbox. If I happen to close the mailbox then this bird leaves everything on top of it instead. I try to remove these nesting items whenever I find them, but this bird is persistent to say the least and starts adding more materials to the top my mailbox. While the mess the bird leaves is annoying, I do find it humorous that it seems to leave things in my mailbox more frequently than anyone from Canada Post does. I love seeing birds in a nest, but just not in my mailbox.

It has been nice over the past few weeks to see the return of birds around my property. Besides the one coming to my mailbox, I am noticing a few more appearing at my feeders and sitting on top of our fence in the back yard. I find it quite calming watching the birds at my feeder. That sense of calmness changes however whenever I see a squirrel or chipmunk chase away the birds at the feeders and begin to eat away. I have also been noticing more sounds of chirping coming from the trees whenever I take my dog Daisy out back to do her business. Pretty soon I expect to hear the sound of orioles that come to my next-door neighbour's feeders.

As I reflected upon seeing what the birds have been doing lately around my house, I was reminded how Noah was particularly interested in this while he was still on the ark. We read in **Genesis 8** that as the waters continued to go down and the mountain peaks began to become visible Noah released a dove in order to see if the water had receded enough that it could find dry ground. On this first attempt the dove could not find a place to land, so seven days later Noah released the dove again. This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. This offered Noah the hope he needed that God was at work removing the floodwaters. This story always reminds me how watching what the birds are doing can reveal to us what God is up to as well. I am also reminded of this whenever I think of Jesus teaching about worry during a portion of His Sermon on the Mount:

Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? (Matthew 6:26-27)

The story from Noah's life on the ark, and this teaching from Jesus remind us that we can be reminded about how God cares for us by carefully watching what the birds are doing. There is also a reference to sparrows in the psalms that reminds us we should desire to nest and make our home close to the presence of God. We find mention of this in **Psalm 84:3:**

Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young at a place near your altar.

The psalmist used this observation from watching where the sparrows built their nests to share ***how we should also desire to nest in the presence of God.*** He went on to explain through this observation of the ***swallows how seeking God in His dwelling place provides us with a place to find strength, rest, and peace from life's challenges.***

It is interesting to discover through these references to Scripture that we can be reminded of God's care for us and our need to remain in His presence through observing the birds. Based on this understanding, now that Spring is upon us and we are seeing more birds coming to our properties, what might their presence and activities be revealing to us about God:

- When we watch them seek food from our feeders, will it remind us how God provides for our needs?
- When we catch special glimpses of certain birds, will it remind us of all the special things God does for us?
- When we hear their chirps and songs, will it remind us of the joy we receive singing God's hymns and speaking to Him in prayer?
- When we see them gathered in flocks, will it remind us of the comfort we experience gathered together with other believers in worship?

Hopefully whenever we gaze upon birds doing these or other activities it will help us to realize what God is doing in our lives and remind us of our need to stay close to Him.

I think this bird that keeps coming to my mailbox might be a Leafs fan. The reason why I say this is because right beneath my mailbox is a sign that says, "Leafs fans are welcome. Montreal fans must use the back door."

Keep Safe and God Bless,

Pastor Dean