

His Eye Is On the Sparrow

By Civilla Martin, 1869-1948

Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely and long for Heav'n and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Tho' by the path He leadeth but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted, Whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, When hope within me dies.
I draw the closer to Him; From care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Refrain:

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.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your father in heaven. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

We all face discouragement at times. Circumstance, sorrow, or trials come upon us and in our humanness we can lose the joy and courage that should be ours.

The hymn, "His Eye Is On the Sparrow" was inspired by a couple, the Doolittles of Elmira, New York, who had reason to be discouraged. For twenty years Mrs. Doolittle had been confined to bed as an invalid. Her husband, a partial invalid, managed his business from a wheelchair.

The songwriter, Civilla Martin, tells of a visit to the Doolittles in 1904. Deeply impressed by the joyful spirit that the Doolittles maintained in spite of severe adversity, Mrs. Martin asked the woman if she ever got discouraged because of her physical condition. Her friend responded quickly: "Mrs. Martin, how can I be discouraged when my heavenly Father watches over each little sparrow and I know He loves and cares for me." Within just a few minutes Mrs. Martin completed the writing of her new text, which has since been a source of much encouragement to many of God's people.

It is interesting that our Lord chose the most common of all birds, sparrows of little human value, to teach a profound truth: In God's eyes, no one is insignificant! He is vitally concerned with even the small details of our lives. Notice also that the Bible uses another bird to teach this inspiring truth: "Those who hope in the Lord will soar on wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31). With an awareness of God's concern for our lives and the promise of His enabling power to live victoriously, why should we be afraid?

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

(Story background taken from two sources: "Songs In the Night – Inspiring Stories Behind 100 hymns born in trial and suffering" by Henry Garipey & "Amazing Grace – 365 Inspiring Hymn Stories of Daily Devotions" by Kenneth Osbeck.)