

OCTOBER 5TH, 2022 MIDWEEK DEVOTIONAL

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: MATTHEW 10:29

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

BLESSED THOUGHTS: "THE DAY MY APPLES FELL"

Thanks to all the rain we've had this summer, my apple tree had a bumper crop of apples. I picked up a ton of them and worked until past midnight recently turning them into applesauce (which, by the way, was delicious). I have a stepladder that allows me to pick all the apples halfway up the tree, but after that, I am too shaky to climb higher, so I just let them up there, until, eventually, all those apples fall down.

In past years, the neighborhood rabbits and deer feasted on the fallen fruit, but the deer have been scared away by my neighbor's high-tech deer scarer. Actually, this is a water sprinkler which a motion detector that turns on, scaring the deer away with a big spritz. After the deer left the neighborhood, that sprinkler would turn on me, every time I walked down the driveway to get into my car. Anyway, once all the apples crash to earth, I shovel them up and put them in my composter to make next year's potting soil for our flowers.

Isaak Newton was living outside London to get away from the plague (even back then they had pandemics), and one day, while he was outside, an apple from his family's tree fell near him. Being a genius, he wondered why apples always fall down, and before long, he had written a whole lot of science on gravity, which was more or less the standard explanation until Albert Einstein came along with new explanations.

Apples fall down. Pick your explanation, or better yet, pick them before they do and make applesauce. Or not.

Things fall down. The moon, for instance, is always falling toward the earth, but never crashes into it, because by the time the moon gets to where the earth was, our planet has itself fallen toward the sun, but we never get the Big Toasting because, by the time we get to where the sun was, it has fallen toward the huge black hole in the center of our galaxy (the Milky Way), but it never gets there because our whole galaxy is also always twirling and moving. All of physics really is the science of how everything falls, but never gets there. If all this is too much for you, go have some applesauce.

Birds fly high and far, yet, one day, each bird falls to earth. And, in the same way, one day, for each of us, the clock will run out, and it will be our turn to be gently laid down into Mother Earth. When I was writing my family history I found the actual grave side of one of my way-back ancestors. His stone was hard to read, it was so worn down by the weather. There is not one person alive today who knows what he looked like. Thanks to ancestry.ca, I was able to trace some of my forebears back to the 1500's, but even if I could find written records about them, so very much remains unknown, even though I did find out lots of things about my family that I did not know before.

A poet wrote, "Do not go gentle into that long night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light." Well, you can rage all you want, but you and I owe life one death. What happens next is in God's hands.

Jesus knew how scared most of us are when we think about our last hour. So, he pointed to the small birds that flew around Jerusalem. Some were even like the barn swallows that every year would build a nest by the front of our church. He asked his audience, "Do you see those birds?" Now some young businessmen actually trapped those birds and sold them for temple offerings, at a few cents per bird, which even the poorest of the poor could afford to give God as a sacrifice. Jesus said an amazing thing: God knew and cared when every bird fell. Will not God also care for each one of us when we go from here to eternity? If you can't believe in God's caring, you are a person of little faith.

A fellow Canadian, Civilla Martin, born in Nova Scotia in 1866, was married to an evangelist who travelled all over the United States. She accompanied him and they worked together on most of the musical arrangements that were sung. While visiting a sick friend, today's Bible verse was shared to encourage them to trust in God. Later she wrote a poem on that experience that has gone on to be a classic. Some of us old-timers (like myself) can remember the great Ethel Waters singing her song at Billy Graham crusades. May her wonderful hymn, "His Eye Is On the Sparrow," written in 1904, encourage you to trust that God watches over you, too!

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.

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.

–written just as Hurricane Fiona crashes into Nova Scotia, knocking down a whole crop of apples