

May 22, 2011 "Listen To The Bird" Acts 6 & John 14

Back in 1816 a writer by the name of Lord Byron wrote a poem about a man in prison called "The Prisoner of Chillon." It's about a man imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon near Lake Geneva, Switzerland. He has been in this narrow, cramped dungeon cell so long that he thinks of it as his home. He has made friends with the spiders, insects, and mice that share his cell. They are all inmates together and he sees himself as the king over all of them. The years in the dark dungeon have taken its toll. He has grown accustomed to his environment so even the chains have become like friends.

One day a bird perches above him on the edge of the only window he has in the cell. The music of the bird was the sweetest he's ever heard. Suddenly he had the desire to climb up to the window and look out. He grabbed the walls and slowly pulled himself up to the little window. In a moment he saw a world he had forgotten. He saw a beautiful lake, green trees, and the little cottage he had called home nestled against the hills. There was an eagle flying high against the blue sky.

He saw all of this in a moment until he fell back to the cell floor. Now his dungeon cell was no longer home. He had caught a vision of a world more beautiful than his own and was filled with a hope that bought a smile to his face and a tear to his eye.

In one way or another we can all identify with this prisoner. Our lives often get smaller and smaller as the walls rush inward as we find ourselves chained to health problems, financial troubles, or emotional distress. Because sin has overtaken us, we have made friends with scary looking spiders of this life like the temptations to hurt others, wanting to hold on to our guilt, and even to reject God's love. We would normally run from these. Bugs that we would brush off now like foul language, lies, cheating, and gossip, become a part of our existence. Mice that fill us with the germs of laziness, false gods, worldly priorities that would cause us to jump on chairs now have become our pets. We are prisoners of the darkness.

Thankfully, God has sent that bird to sing for each of us. Stephen in Acts 6 looks up and sees Jesus standing in heaven, waiting to welcome him with a hug.

Though tied up and being stoned to death, Stephen has heard the song of his Redeemer Robin and looks forward to the eternal joy waiting in his new life in heaven with a smile on his face.

The words of John 14 speak to us as our Lord Jesus promises a new home in heaven for all who believe in Him. Jesus is our Savior Sparrow sent by God to suffer and die to open up that window of hope. Jesus is our Savior Sparrow, our Redeemer Robin, our Heavenly Hawk, our Eternal Eagle Who calls to us in God's Word to see that Jesus is the Only Way to our heavenly home He has prepared for all believers.

Because God is Good.. All The Time, He gives us His Word, Holy Communion, and Baptism to sing to us about the love He has for us. He wants us to listen to His song and through faith see the Only Way to the joy waiting for us in heaven. He wants all of us to be "chillin" with Him forever. Amen...pastor matthews