

Highly Valued by our Heavenly Father

A couple of months ago, I hung a grapevine wreath on our carport. The placement was right next to our kitchen door, so coming and going, it was very visible. One day, I noticed a bird and started to build a nest. I thought to myself, "Now this will be a mess, and I probably should do away with it". Then I thought it might be interesting just to watch and see what happens. The nest sat empty for a few days. Then, I peered in to discover one baby blue egg. It was a Robin, and I knew that others would soon follow. As we went about our daily routine, another egg and then another appeared. The mama bird finally nestled down on the eggs. We didn't want to disturb her, so we would use a different door.



About two weeks went by under the mother's diligent care. I was excited when I noticed the eggs had hatched. Three tiny little naked birds with closed eyes had arrived. The mother was always around, providing warmth and much-needed food. I would often see her pulling up a worm or digging a bug out of the grass. The babies began to gain feathers and

open their eyes in just the first few days. They also quickly doubled in size. The feathers developed fast, and the babies seemed anxious to leave the nest. One morning, I went out early to check on ""Winkin', Blinkin', and Nod" (A favorite Andy Griffith episode by the way). One of the three was on the edge of the nest, ready for flight. He took off, and throughout the day, the others followed. God brought those precious creations to our doorstep, reminding me of His goodness and faithfulness. There are several times in Scripture where birds are mentioned.

In the last week of Jesus' life on earth, He was troubled by Israel's history of rejecting God's prophets. Also, he mourned people's lack of belief and unrepentant hearts. Matthew's gospel records in Chapter 23, Jesus pronounces judgment on the Jewish religious leaders, **Matthew 23:1–39 (NKJV)**. People were spiritually lost, and Jesus says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" **Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)**.

Jesus' heart desires to gather Jerusalem's children, just like a hen gathers her chicks. We read the following in Isaiah: "Like birds flying about, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, He will also deliver it; Passing over, He will preserve it." **Isaiah 31:5. (NKJV).**

Jesus reminds us in the Sermon on the Mount of our Heavenly Father's love and care. "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **Matthew 6:26 (NKJV).**

Jeremy Dykes – CBC Ex. Board

Weekly Prayer Point

A few years ago, while traveling to the Middle East, we had a layover in Istanbul. As our plane descended into the city, I was struck by the miles of high-rise buildings and reminded of the world's more than eight billion lives and souls—each one known by God and called by name. In that moment, I reflected on the awe-inspiring truth that Christ died for everyone, offering forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your great love for humanity and for providing the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ— "the Way and the Truth and the Life" **John 14:6 (NIV).** Through Him alone, our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled to You. Soften hearts to receive the gospel and help us to "always be prepared to give an answer... for the hope that we have" **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV).**

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Petersburg Memorial in Petersburg, WV and Pastor Shawn Champ
- Philadelphia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa and Pastor Biswengo Ilangyi Gazelle
- Pine Grove in Oakland, MD and Pastor Brian Coffman
- Pipe Creek in Union Bridge, MD and Pastor Steven Lowe

CBC Prayer Committee