

## The Price of Sparrows

**Intro.** Messengers and their messages have been important to every civilization. The origin of a well-known long distance race commemorates a Greek soldier who ran twenty-six miles in fourth century B.C. to report the Greek victory at Marathon. In the Middle Ages some important messages were written on a scroll and sealed with the wax imprint of the King's ring. Other methods of communication include semaphore flags (Navy), pigeons, Morse code and today's instantaneous texts, tweets and Skype.

**I.** The Lord's preferred means of communicating the love of God and salvation was person to person. He gathered and trained a group of men and women for the purpose of going to all parts of the world with

this message. They listened to his words and witnessed his actions, including his death and resurrection. These are some of the instructions the Lord gave to his disciples before they were sent on their own mission. Earlier he told them to take no money; travel lightly (no rolling suitcase); no five star resorts. It was a business trip. He warned them about the difficulties they would face: hatred for preaching the Good News of Christ, imprisonment and possible death. Jeremiah mentions his own hardships. The Lord also told them not to be afraid. With these tough instructions and warnings, the disciples probably were more than a little worried about what they were getting into. They had seen the defection of other followers [M. Simone, *America*, 6/12/17]. The Lord softened it by telling them that he and his Father would take care of them.

According to scripture scholars, sparrows were the cheapest meat poor people bought in the market; a few pennies at most [D. Harrington, *Sacra Pagina*, Matthew]. He assured the disciples they were very valuable to him. Since God created even the smallest bird, *certainly* he would watch over the disciples on their mission. Knowing the number of hairs on their heads was maybe a little humor to lighten things up.

**Concl.** Modern day messengers continue to use a variety of delivery methods. The latest is a small flying machine (drone). So should modern day *disciples*. Why waste them communicating useless or ugly things like gossip, violence and hatred? The good news is always down at the bottom of the broadcast or the computer homepage. We should be using technology in the *best* ways to talk about *good*

things such as the love God has for each of us. In a very unusual choice, one of Wednesday night's national news programs had just such an example. A former service member came back from the Middle East haunted by the pain of families trying to escape war. He decided to start a volunteer group that went back to the Middle East to especially help children. His wife later went with him. Then their three kids. It is dangerous but the kids talked about the importance of what they are doing. What a lesson they are learning. When asked why he is doing this the father between tears said, "No greater love can one have than to lay down one's life for his friends." He has found a unique way of communicating God's love that needs *no translation*. **And he is doing it person to person.**