

Illustrated Bible Life

Mother Goose

One of the saddest sights I've ever seen is the clutch of Canada goose eggs atop the building next door, alone and unattended. My co-workers and I have been anxiously watching Mother and Father Goose attending those eggs with jealous care: Chasing off the peregrine falcons who nest nearby, fiercely facing into blasts of unusually cold winds, ice, and snow in April, and then patiently enduring the soaring summer heat and humidity as our Kansas City winter turned immediately to summer the first week of May.

We were anxious because those eggs and their diligent parents were perched atop a 10-story building; we are on the 19th floor of the building next door. Geese will urge their hatchlings out of the nest and onto the nearest water within a few days of emerging from their eggs. Unfortunately for this family, that water was 10 floors down. The downtown traffic they would have had to dodge while crossing the roads to the nearest fountain, about two blocks away, would have been challenging but not insurmountable. However, those newly-hatched goslings would have been unable to fly, and would not have survived the fall off the roof of that building.

We contacted the building's facility managers, the wildlife rescue groups here in Kansas City, and even the conservation department for the state, but beyond that, we could only watch and hope rescue would come when those little ones emerged.

When April turned into May, we looked anxiously for signs of hatching. The first week of May crept by, then the second, and finally a third. This was much too long for those eggs to hatch. Geese typically sit on their eggs for about 25-28 days. We knew before Mom and Dad knew that those eggs weren't going to hatch. Still, Mom sat on the nest and Dad checked on her often.

This past week, Mom and Dad finally guessed the truth; they flew away one last time and we haven't seen them since. While I am glad the little chicks did not fall over the side of the building to an early grave, it is just as sad to see those eggs, once so full of promise, now alone and unattended.

Save by One. The God who knows where each sparrow falls surely grieves the loss even of these goslings. The apostle Paul knew this grief too. Why else would he have faced the dangers of travel in the ancient world, and persecutions from hostile governments and religious leaders of all kinds?

In his letters to the Ephesians and Philippians, Paul reaches out with a parent's concern for the growth and nurture of new Christ-followers: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11).