

WHO CARES?

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9.

Perhaps you have asked questions like these: "Who cares about me? Who cares whether I am sick or well? Who cares whether I am sad or happy? Who cares whether I fail or succeed? Who cares whether I am lost or saved? Who cares whether I go to hell or to heaven?"

God's Word tells us that there is a place called hell. Admittedly, there are some who do not believe that there is a hell, but their disputing the fact does not obliterate the place. As certainly as there is a heaven, there is a hell. How glorious it is to know that God does not want anybody to go to hell! He is "not willing that any should perish."

Who cares whether souls are lost or saved?

I. God The Father Cares.

From the day that Adam and Eve sinned until the present, God has been warning, calling, inviting and pleading with lost people to repent and believe in order that they may be saved from their sins. God does not want anyone to go through this life without Christ and to die without Him. It is God's desire that every person shall have an opportunity to repent, turn from sin, accept His generous offer of grace and receive eternal life.

God is fully cognizant of our sins. II Chronicles 16:9 tells us, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." Then, in Hebrews 4:13 we read, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." God hears our faintest whispers in the solitudes, He knows the secret imaginations of our hearts. He observes all of our deeds. God gives heed to infinitesimals. He cannot be indifferent to our ill-doing. He knows what sin has done; how it has destroyed souls, wasted and ruined lives, wrecked homes, over-thrown governments, depopulated countries and populated hell. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:18).

That God cares and earnestly desires the salvation of lost people is taught clearly throughout the Bible. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezekiel 33:11). "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:3-4).

To prove to you that God the Father cares if you are lost, I have only to remind you that His call, plea and invitation to the unsaved occurs more than nineteen hundred times in the pages of His blessed Book. That means that, because of His love for lost souls, He does not want any of them to perish. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). How the heart of the Father yearns over lost souls! If you live and die without salvation, it will not be God's fault. Being anxious for you to be saved, God is doing everything possible to bring you to repentance and faith, but, of course, the Lord cannot save you if you will not repent and believe. God is doing His best to turn you out of the path of sin which leads to destruction and to direct you into the path of righteousness.

Don't forget that God the Father cares for you, and longs to see you saved. For this reason He has given you the Bible, which is the final authority in all matters pertaining to the soul. Like a mirror, God's Word reflects man in his true condition. It reveals man's inability to save himself. As one might expect, this accurate reflection of man's spiritual condition enrages or infuriates certain types of mind.

An elephant will not drink water from a clear stream. He is the ugliest animal in all creation. Clear water reflects his actual appearance to himself. He becomes enraged when he sees himself in the water. With his snout he muddies the water, before drinking it, in order to keep from looking at himself. Likewise, sinners refuse to study the Bible or to attend church services where it is preached for the simple reason that they do not want to see themselves in God's mirror. The Bible makes men uneasy in their sins. That is the reason why many people hate it. They are determined to go in their sinful ways, and they find the Bible standing in their pathways. How often a person has been turned aside from the path of sin by a single verse from the Bible such as these: "Prepare to meet thy God," and "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

II. Christ Cares.

So much did He care that Christ left heaven's glory, took upon Himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death in order that people might be saved. Of Him Isaiah wrote, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Wounds are divisions of the soft parts of the body by a mechanical force applied externally and are classified by their different characters. According to the medical profession there are five wounds which can be inflicted upon a person. Our blessed Saviour suffered all of these wounds.

The first is the contused wound which is caused by a blunt instrument. Christ suffered this wound when He was hit with a rod, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 5:1, "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." The second wound which Christ suffered is the lacerated wound. This wound is caused by a tearing instrument. He suffered this wound by the Roman scourge, a many-tailed lash tipped with metal and ivory. It caused our Saviour terrible suffering from the hands of a cruel expert in the person of a Roman soldier. "I gave my back to the smiters" (Isaiah 50:6). The third wound which Christ suffered is known as the penetrating wound. This wound is caused by a sharp-pointed instrument. Christ suffered this wound upon His head, produced by the crown of thorns. This wound was deepened by the blow of the reed when they smote Him upon the head. Matthew 27:30 states, "And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." The fourth wound that Christ suffered is the perforating wound which is caused by piercing through. In Psalm 22:16 we read, "They pierced my hands and my feet." The iron spikes were driven between His bones, separating but not breaking them. He suffered excruciating pain, but without complaining about it. He did this because of His love for you and for me. The last wound which Christ suffered is called the incised wound. This wound is caused by a sharp-edged instrument. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34). Thus, the Son of God suffered every wound that man could possibly suffer upon this earth.

He Died Of A Broken Heart

"Have you read the story of the Cross,
Where Jesus bled and died;
Where your debt was paid by His precious blood
That flowed from His wounded side?

Have you read how they placed the crown of thorns
Upon His brow for you,
When He prayed, "Forgive them, oh, forgive;
They know not what they do"?

Have you read how He saved the dying thief,
When hanging on the tree,
When He looked with pleading eyes and said,
"Dear Lord, remember me"?

Have you read that He looked to heaven and said,
"'Tis finished! 'Twas for thee!"?
Have you ever said, "I thank Thee, Lord,
For giving Thy life for me"?

-- T. Dennis

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Five things about our Lord are clearly set forth in this verse:

1. His promise.

What promise? The promise of His coming. It was foretold in the Scriptures that this promise would be a subject at which some fold would scoff. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Peter 3:3-4). They will not merely laugh at it, but they will treat it with scorn, contempt and derision; seeking to justify their sinful indulgences. Being prejudiced against the return of Christ, they will shut their eyes and their hearts to the truth about it. That our Lord, when He was here, did promise to come back, no honest reader of the Bible will deny.

2. His promptness.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." With Him time is so different than with man, whose days are comparatively few and pass so rapidly. But His faithfulness will not fail. When the time arrives for Him to return, He will appear, not a minute before and not a minute late. At the appointed time He will be on the scene.

3. His patience.

"But is longsuffering to us-ward." His long silence, however, must not be construed as meaning that He is indifferent in the least. He is so patient that He waits to show mercy to sinful men. He is ready to receive, forgive, cleanse and fit them for this life as well as the one to come just as soon as they trust Him as their Saviour. To all who receive Him He grants a pardon full, free and forever.

4. His pleasure.

"Not willing that any should perish," Christ has provided eternal life for all who will receive Him. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Since He is not willing that any should perish, it is such a pity and a tragedy that some are not willing to be saved.

5. His purpose.

"But that all should come to repentance." Christ is waiting and longing for you to

repent and to believe. "Repentance unto life" accompanied by faith in Christ makes possible the preparation for His coming again. Opportunity for repentance and faith will not last forever. Some day that opportunity for you will be gone, and it might be today. Receive Him now because He cares for you. He has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). If you miss heaven, it will be because you refused to receive Christ as your Saviour.

III. The Holy Spirit Cares.

Concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit Christ said, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). In order for the Holy Spirit to do His indispensable work of convicting lost souls and wooing them to Christ, He must have a channel through which He can work. That channel is a child of God using the Word of God and the gospel of Christ. The Holy Spirit is seeking, calling, knowing, wooing, pleading and urging you to receive Christ as your Saviour. Oh, how the Holy Spirit cares for your soul! He is not willing for you to perish, but He is doing His utmost, with every means possible, to turn you out of the downward path and into the heavenward way. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Revelation 22:17).

IV. Some Of God's Children Care.

Think of the earnest prayers of godly fathers and mothers for the salvation of their children. Think of the faithful witnessing which they have done before them and to them while they have reared them. How faithfully they have taught them the plan of salvation, and yet some of them are still unsaved!

Scriptural sermons delivered in the hearing of the unsaved by faithful ministers of the gospel constitutes positive evidence that those who deliver them care. Every gospel sermon is a signal of danger and a warning to the impenitent unbeliever. It is also a call to an acceptance of Christ. It is a call to safety and satisfaction.

V. Those Who Died Without Christ Care.

In Luke 16 Christ told us about a rich man who had been given plenty of opportunities to be saved, but he had refused to repent and to believe. This man died in his unsaved condition. To him the door of mercy was closed when he died. No mercy was available to him beyond the grave. Soon after his arrival in the place of torment, this rich man suddenly began to think of his five brothers whom he did not want to share his fate. To keep them from coming where he was, he asked Abraham to send Lazarus to them and urge them to be saved while they had time and opportunity. He was vitally concerned that they not come there. He had learned that nobody could obtain salvation after he had died. Having learned that the salvation of the soul always takes place this side of the grave and never beyond, he wanted his loved ones and friends to receive Christ and have their sins forgiven immediately, lest they might die and come where he was. Even though this rich man was unsaved, he certainly did not want those whom he knew and loved to remain in their lost condition and be overtaken by death without having made the necessary preparation. Those who have gone where Christ is not do not want anybody else to come where they are.

Because of your own personal need of salvation, and because of those who are concerned about you and want to see you saved, won't you trust Christ as your Saviour and be saved now?