

"NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL"

"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." Psalm 142:4.

Thus David expressed his despair when King Saul sought to kill him. David had killed the giant, Goliath, and for this heroic deed he received the praise of all the people. Samuel had secretly anointed David to be the future king at the death of Saul. David had faithfully served King Saul, but the raging jealousy of the man was terrible, when he found that God had turned His back on him and that God had planned to make David king.

As David played on his harp before the king, who was tormented with an evil spirit, Saul suddenly reached for his javelin (a spear) and hurled it at David to kill him. He did the same thing again. And he offered David the king's daughter, Michal, in marriage if he would kill a hundred Philistines, hoping that David would be killed. David killed two hundred and God protected him. King Saul sent messengers to kill David in his home after he had tried to kill him the second time with his Javelin, but Michal let David down from her window and he escaped.

Seeing that the murderous intent of Saul could not be cured, David fled from the court of the king. The priest gave him some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. David gathered some men who were in distress, in debt, and in discontentment, and hid out in the mountains.

David and his men saved the town of Keilah from an assault by the Philistines; and yet the spirit of God answered that he must leave the city, for the men of Keilah would deliver him to King Saul. "And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand" (I Samuel 23:14).

The Ziphites came to King Saul, revealing David's hiding place, and then returned to spy upon him and bring King Saul word of where he might kill God's anointed man. Saul came after him on one side of the mountain and David and his men went to the other side of the mountain and escaped.

Then King Saul took three thousand men to seek David again. David and his men hid in a cave and the army of King Saul approached. Seeking privacy the unsuspecting Saul left his army and walked alone into the cave. David's men wanted to kill Saul, but instead, he simply cut off the skirt of Saul's garment and later came to show Saul that he could have killed him but would not do so.

Seemingly Saul was repentant, but not for long. When the Ziphite spies reported where David was, during the night God led David to slip into Saul's camp and take a spear and cruse of water by Saul's head, while God kept him and his army all strangely asleep. And then David called in the night and publicly rebuked Saul. Saul claimed to be penitent, of course, but the faith of David wavered.

Concluding that one day he would perish by the hand of Saul, David decided to flee into the land of the Philistines, and thereby escape. Here David was living in caves, hiding from Saul, when he was inspired to cry out in the words of our text: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul!" "No man cared for my soul." Thus David referred to the indifference and neglect of his friends when he was hard pressed by his enemy, Saul.

"No man cared for my soul" is the language of David, when he was shut up in the cave of Engedi. There his enemies had pursued, caged, and surrounded him, while his friends were afar off, unable or afraid to assist him. It was an anxious, lonely, and wearisome time; all the harder to bear because David knew that he was innocent of any evil intentions concerning the Lord's anointed. In his despondency, when everything seemed to be going wrong with him, David concluded that nobody really cared for him. Taught by necessity and grace, he cried to God for help, and he was delivered.

Isn't it strange that God did not raise up good men to stand up for David, and protect his life? But that is not as strange as that millions of Christians go on their way careless and unconcerned over the fact that their own loved ones, their own children, their next door neighbors, and their friends are unsaved and on their way to hell. Multitudes of lost people do not have anybody to care whether they are saved or not. This verse brings to mind one of the most tragic failures of Christians. Poor sinners can truthfully say, "No man cared for my soul."

Christian concern is the only hope of the lost sinner. We know that the Saviour died and paid the penalty for sin when He died on the cross. "He is our propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). But we must never forget that God's plan is that the atonement shall be made known to sinners by Christians, or that the gospel of salvation must be offered them through God's own people. God has never had any other way. You will never hear of a person being saved unless somebody has brought to him the gospel of Christ. Nobody can believe on the Saviour until he has heard about Him. Somebody must tell every sinner of his sins, of his need of a Saviour, and of Christ's love for him, and His offer to him of forgiveness and salvation. God always uses Christians to reach the unsaved, even if it be through the printing and distribution of the scriptures.

It was God's will that lost souls should have a Saviour. To this end He provided the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross for their salvation. Man's only hope of salvation is in the marvelous grace of Christ. Without a doubt there are multitudes who would like to know Christ as their Saviour, if only someone would introduce them to Him.

Present-day Christians are terribly neglectful of lost souls. Many have never been asked personally to receive Christ as their Saviour. For this reason we need to have a revival of concern for the salvation of the lost. We certainly need a new realization of the supreme business entrusted to us. Any church member who is not striving for the salvation of lost souls, regardless of how fundamental his doctrines, or how orthodox his practices, is disobedient, backslidden, and dishonoring to Christ.

Many lost people can say, "Nobody cares for my soul." Through the years they have associated with professing Christians who knew that they did not have any hope of heaven, and who talked to them about everything else except about that which they needed most to hear them speak, the salvation of their souls. They are convinced that nobody cares for their souls because they just let them alone. The reason for their being let alone is not because they would resent such interest and endeavor. Often they really desire someone to speak to them; for they know that they are lost, and they need somebody to introduce them to the Christ Who can save them. The neglect of souls on the part of those who should care is a terrible and distressing fact.

The absence of this longing for the salvation of lost souls on the part of Christians today is indeed appalling. Multitudes of church members never pray for the salvation of lost souls, and never put forth any effort whatsoever to the end that a soul might be saved. It seems that church members have lost an important word out of their vocabulary, namely, "concern." A great need of this hour is a genuine concern for the salvation of other people. Many, who are unsaved, can truthfully say, "No man cared for my soul." We sing, "Rescue the Perishing," but our efforts do not prove that we have a real concern. Do we ever say to the lost what Whitefield said: "I am willing to go to prison and to death for you, but I am not willing to go to heaven without you," A pastor called upon the daughter of one of this church members to talk with her about the salvation of her soul. Among other things he said to her: "It would give your father great joy if you should become a Christian." She replied, "I do not think it would." Thinking that she must have misunderstood him he said, "You do not think so? Why not?" "Because I think if he had cared anything about it he would have spoken to me on the subject, and he never has." Many unsaved people have been wondering why their Christian relatives, friends, and acquaintances have never seemed to care about the salvation of their souls.

This indifference with reference to the salvation of the lost is not only noticed, but it is often keenly felt by those who are not Christians. They may not have any sense of personal danger, but they are very sensitive to our apparent lack of interest and concern. Occasionally, when somebody does speak to a lost person about being saved, in a half grateful and a half reproachful tone he says, "You are the first person who has ever spoken to me about becoming a Christian or being saved." For a long time perhaps that person has been wondering why it was that not a single Christian relative, friend or acquaintance has ever seemed to care about his soul.

Those in heaven and in hell are concerned about the salvation of sinners, but we, the only ones who can do anything about it, care so little. The Saviour said, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

Everybody in heaven has the deepest concern for lost sinners, but they cannot do anything about it. Surprising as it may seem, in hell people have an unceasing concern that their loved ones on earth be saved. In Luke 16 we read about the rich man pleading with Lazarus that someone should go to his five brothers and warn them "lest they also come to this place of forment."

In view of the deep concern that there is in heaven and in hell about the salvation of sinners on earth, is it not strange and we are wickedly guilty that, we Christians on earth who can do something about it, who can warn sinners and tell them how to be saved, do nothing about it? It is strange that we care so little. Is it not an awful condemnation of us that some poor lost sinners can truthfully say: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."