

WHO CARES?

Text: I Peter 5:1-7 (KJV + Phillips trans.)

CENTRAL THESIS: No discouragement, however great, should lead anyone to feel that no one cares, since God, and all Christians and pastors do really care.

INTRODUCTION:

Sinclair Lewis was a great writer. Once an Italian editor came to interview Mr. Lewis after one of his speeches. He said, "Mr. Lewis, I have read your many books like: Babbitt-which had to do with the American businessman and his struggles and frustration in a competitive society; Elmer Gantry--which was an exposure of the insincerity of some ministers; Arrowsmith--dealing with inconsistencies of some physicians; Main Street--which discussed the problems of little people in little towns.

Now, Mr. Lewis, I would like to ask you, "Do you have a solution to these problems?" The writer turned to the editor and said, "No, I do not have a solution in these problems, and furthermore, I do not care."

The Italian editor later wrote, "Mr. Lewis is a great writer, but he is not a great MAN. A great MAN not only knows the problems, but he CARES!"

DEFINITION: "Care", meaning suffering of mind, or a burdensome sense of responsibility, or painstaking attention, or a high regard or concern coming from great esteem, a result of personal interest, relation, and love: to be concerned to the extent of hovering attentiveness to one in pain or distress.

I. CHRIST CARES FOR US.

A. It shows in his sincere LOVE which accepts someone as he is, and tolerates failure, and understands weakness.

B. I Peter 5:7, "Casting (or throwing) all (the whole weight of) your care (anxieties) upon him (Christ), for he cares for you (or about you).

"You are his personal concern" (Phillips).

C. The parable of the Good Samaritan.

He got involved with the injured man and had compassion on him and took care of him.

D. With Christ there is great care about us as Christians.

E. Psalms 55:22, "Cast your burdens upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you."

He cares enough to sustain us, or to hold us up, when we are stumbling and staggering beneath the heavy burdens of anxieties and worries.

F. The storm on the Sea of Galilee.

"Master, don't you care that we are going to drown and die and perish?"

"Is it no concern to you?"

But he saw no reason for panic.

After he had stilled the waves and stopped the winds

he said, "Why were you terrified?"

Have you no faith?"

We can always believe that he cares for us.

When the storms of doubt rage,

when the attacks of despair hit us,

When the panic of hopelessness overwhelms us,

we can be sure that Jesus does CARE!

"Oh, yes, He cares; I know He cares;

His heart is touched with my grief.

When the days are weary, the long nights dreary
I know my Savior cares."

He is no hireling who "cares not for his sheep."

His care is shown in his tears over the

Holy City..."How often would I have gathered...

Note also Psalms 103:13, 14, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him."

The deep unexplainable love of a parent for his child is shown in the story of David and Absalom.

Ab. could have well thought to himself in his last moment of life, "No one cares for me!" But that was not true. His father still loved him.

Once in one of our Northern States there was a distinguished clergyman of another denomination who had a son, handsome and gifted like Absalom, but, who, following his father into the ministry, brought reproach to the cause of Christ and immeasurable anguish to his father. The son was deposed from the ministry. Years afterward the father appeared before the synod of the church and pleaded with his brethren to restore the son to the pastoral office. The theologian, the wise counsellor, the man who took thought for the church, the guardian of the honor of the cause---all these were gone, or forgotten for the moment, and only the FATHER stood there PLEADING for his beloved SON.

II. It is not only God who cares, but

OTHERS CARE TOO.

Christians in the family of God CARE what happens to other members of the Body of Christ.

A. Galatians tells us that Christians should bear one another's burdens, although there are some private loads which individual responsibility demands that we bear for ourselves. But there are burdens of grief, disappointment, and struggles which Christians will help one another in bearing.

There is a modern ballad in the folk idiom which speaks the sentiment of many of the young people of the modern generation, which says,

"I'll just ramble round the country,
Travelin' here and there,

Tryin' to find someone,
One who really truly cares."

Christians should be people who really truly care.

A. The Apostle Paul wrote one Christian group saying: "I plan to send Timothy to you soon. Until then I have no one like him who will naturally CARE FOR YOUR STATE--or be genuinely concerned for your welfare.

They all look after their OWN INTERESTS, NOT those of JESUS CHRIST."

What a commentary on the church!

B. A great poet wrote:

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the CARES that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away." (Longfellow)

But you and I know that without the loving, caring, understanding of other Christian friends, sometimes these cares don't just silently steal away. They have to be CHASED AWAY by the explosive power of a new relationship with a very caring person.

C. Folks need a lot of caring and loving. How long has it been since you really inconvenienced yourself to help someone else and show them you really care for them?

D. Story in the O.T. about the prophet of God and his servant who frequently traveled around their itinerant circuit of congregations and needed hospitality, in the absence of a chain of Holiday Inns and Travel Lodges! Elijah said, "See, you have taken all this trouble for us and have CARED enough to have a special guest room ready for us. Tell us what we can do for you to show our appreciation."

The Heb. word for "going to someone" is also used for "caring for someone."

E. There were many times when David felt that no one cared for him.

Ps. 142:4, "I look to the right and watch, but there is none who takes notice of me; No refuge remains to me. No man cares for me."

F. The mark of the Christian Church is that members of the body have a genuine CARE for one another, (I Cor. 12:25). Have "sympathetic relationship with one another" (Philips); "feel the same concern for one another." (NEB).

III. And in a special way PASTORS CARE when you are hurting.

A. Pastoral care is one of the great concerns of the Christian ministry.

Jeremiah wrote about the day when there would be shepherds who will CARE. (23:4). Now specific training in counseling and pastoral care is offered in all accredited theological seminaries.

There has been a giant leap forward in knowledge and understanding of psychology of religion and in the inter-relationships between psychotherapy and pastoral counseling in recent years.

B. Paul wrote in the midst of a passage describing great personal dangers and trials, that he had on him "the care of all the churches." (2 Cor. 11:28).

No matter how much the Apostle was hurting himself, no matter what external pressures he was under, his greatest anxiety, from which he was never for a moment free, was his concern for the people God had entrusted to his care.

Many Christians today are living far below their potential largely because they have never used the opportunity to benefit from pastoral counseling.

B.Kierkegaard tells a beautiful parable in one of his books, about a rich man who brought from abroad, at a very high price, a team of faultless and excellent horses, which he wanted for his own pleasure and the pleasure of driving them himself.

A year or two passed by. If anyone who had known these horses in earlier days how saw them driven by their new owner, he would not be able to recognize them. Their eyes had become dull and drowsy; their pace had no prance and consistency. They could bear nothing; they could endure nothing. The rich man could hardly drive them three or four miles without having to stop on the way, and sometimes they came to a standstill just when he was driving his best. Moreover, they had learned all sorts of quirks and bad habits. Although they got good food in abundance, they grew thinner each day.

The rich man called in the king's coachman. He drove them for one month. At the end of the month there was no team of horses in the whole land which carried their heads so proudly, whose eyes were so fiery, whose pace was so beautiful. No other team of horses could hold out as they did, running many miles in a stretch without stopping. How did this happen? It is easy to understand. The owner, who was no coachman and merely played the role, drove the horses according to the horses' conception of how they should be driven. The royal coachman drove them according to a coachman's conception of driving.

This is a picture of human life. When we think of ourselves and countless other people, how often we say to ourselves in sadness: "Here are capacities and powers and possibilities enough-- but the driver is lacking." Through the ages we human beings have been driven according to our own conception of

what really matters and how much we should care about ourselves. We have been governed, trained, and educated according to man's conception of what it is to be MAN. And you can see what has come from that -- we completely lack spiritual stature and strength.

Sometimes it is just the added assistance from a caring minister, ^{or beacon of s.s. teacher} that makes the difference between MARGINAL Christian living and VICTORIOUS Christian living. Many good Christian people who have never known anything better need to hear the good news:

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE DEFEATED BY GUILT!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE TERRIFIED BY FEARS!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE OVERCOME BY
INFERIORITY!

YOU CAN BE FREE!

YOU CAN BE A TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIAN!

YOU CAN HOLD YOUR HEAD UP AND SAY

"I KNOW WHO I AM.

I AM A CHILD OF GOD.

I KNOW GOD CARES ABOUT ME,

AND OTHERS CARE ABOUT ME,

AND CHRISTIAN MINISTERS ^{and servants} CARE ABOUT ME.

AND I CARE ABOUT MYSELF.

I CARE ENOUGH TO BE MYSELF

AND TO REALIZE ALL OF MY FULL POTENTIAL
BY THE POWER AND GRACE OF GOD!

