

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

Edited by George W. DeHoff

VOLUME VII

NUMBER 2

SEPTEMBER, 1952

WHO CARES IF MY SOUL IS LOST?

I. A. Douthitt

Psa. 142:1-4

David on one occasion, when his spirit was low, his heart was sad and he was in distress and trouble, cried out and said, "No man careth for my soul." That states a sad condition. It is sad in a child's life when it thinks no one cares for it. Indeed it would be sad in any person's life to feel as no one cared for him. People who have felt like nobody cared have been led to commit great sins, even go into rebellion and end up in suicide. Try to imagine the condition in your own life if you felt like no one cared for you. Some people act in such a way that we cannot care for them as we do for others. We are responsible, in a large measure, as to whether or not people care for us. We should always be very careful to say and do those things that will make people care for us. Surely, we cannot go through this life without the care and help of other people. But it is good for us to know that others care for us. It is next to impossible to realize the care and interest that is being and has been manifested in our souls. If my soul is finally lost, just who will care?

I. GOD CARES. In I Peter 3:4 we learn that the spirit of man is of great price in the sight of God. II Peter 3:9 teaches that God is not willing that any should perish, but His will is that all men come to repentance and be saved. John 3:16. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." It was for this purpose that God sent His son into the world and sacrificed the presence of His only beloved son for a third of a century, during which time He was suffering all the temptations that came to Jesus in this life. All that is a manifestation of just how much God cares for us. There is no way to exaggerate the interest and care that God has in our souls. We can see it, in a measure, by realizing how much we care for our loved ones, our own flesh and blood. Then try to imagine the deep love and care that Almighty God has for our souls.

II. CHRIST JESUS CARES. In Romans 5:8-9 we learn that "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by His blood shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him." These words tell us that Christ

cared so much for our souls that even though we were at that time sinners and rebels against God, Jesus willingly died to save us. In Matthew 11:28-30 we have a picture of Jesus standing, like a mother from her long lost child, begging wayward and sinful men to turn from the world and come to Him and let Him save them. Hear Him in these words. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Near the end of our Saviour's stay on the earth among the final statements of His life, we hear Him in this sad wail. Matt. 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem that killest the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus cared so much for our souls that He willingly died to save them. He gave Himself for us. Have you ever cared enough for anything to suffer a sacrificial death for the accomplishment of that thing? Would Jesus have done all He did if He had not cared? Yes, we know Christ cares. If our souls are lost, God, the Father, and Christ, the Son, are going to be sorely disappointed.

III. THE SPIRIT CARES. In Acts 7:51 the spirit is pictured as caring so much for our souls that we have to resist it if we are lost. Ephesians 4:30 we learn that the spirit is grieved if our souls are lost. In Romans 8:26-27 the spirit intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered—all in behalf of our souls. Revelations 22:17 the spirit invites us to be saved. With heaven's message giving us the information not to resist the spirit, not to grieve the spirit, and that the spirit intercedes with groanings on our behalf and invites us and pleads with us to accept the salvation that has been made possible through the blood of Christ, then we know that the spirit cares for our souls.

IV. THE ANGELS CARE. After Jesus had been baptized and come up out of the water He was

led by the spirit into a mountain, and there fasted forty days, being tempted of the devil, and having overcome every temptation, when the devil was driven from His presence the angels came and ministered unto Him, showing beyond all question that the heavenly bodies are interested in our souls. The Psalmist tells in Psalms 34:7 that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them. Oh! taste and see that Jehovah is good. Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in Him." In Psalms 91:11 we are taught that God will give His angels charge over us to help us and to keep us in the ways of God and in the trying hours of our life. On the mount of temptation we see the angelic host coming to strengthen and deliver the Christ. In Luke 15:7 we are told that there is rejoicing among the angels of God with all the heavenly characters when people do right. But on the other hand, all the heavenly beings have occasion to mourn and be sad when we do wrong. All of this is unimpeachable evidence of just how much they care for us.

V. ALL GOOD PEOPLE CARE. In Romans 9:3 Paul says that he could wish himself anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake. Here Paul is saying that he would be willing to make any sacrifice even to the extent of being accursed himself in order to save the souls of his people. Then in 1 Cor. 11:1 Paul admonishes us to be imitators of him even as he imitated Christ, and as surely as Paul was interested in the souls of others, all good people should be and are interested in the salvation of the souls of their fellowmen. In II Corinthians 11:22-29 Paul gives the longest list of the sufferings, persecutions, and hardships that he was called upon to endure and after all of these sufferings, through which he passed, he states that there was heavily upon his heart all the time "anxiety for all the churches." In 1 John 4:20 God tells us that if a man loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, he cannot love God, whom he hath not seen. From such statements from inspiration we know that all good people care for the souls of all men. That is why Christians are willing to sacrifice their time, give their money, put forth efforts to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost world that the world may have an opportunity to receive it, obey it, and be saved.

VI. DEPARTED LOVED ONES CARE. All of the conscious dead are concerned about our salvation. In Hebrews 12:1-2 is described a great crowd of witnesses looking down upon us and admonishing us to lay aside every weight and every sin and everything that would in any way interfere with our Christian race, and to look to Jesus who is the author and the perfecter of our faith. These witnesses are saying to us in their testimony that they endured similar experiences to what we are now having and they overcame, and they are admonishing us to overcome the evil one and all of his influence in order to sit down with Christ in a better world. These words show very clearly that our loved ones who have gone on before us are concerned about where we will spend eternity. This is further verified in Luke 15:7 where the Lord said there is joy in the presence of the angels of God when a sinner repents. In Luke the sixteenth chapter, beginning with the nineteenth verse, we have a graphic description given by our Lord of

two men who lived in this world and passed into eternity, as all others will, and a conversation between them—somewhere beyond death. The rich man is pleading that something be done in order to save his five brothers back in this world. He did not want them to come to the place of torment and have to endure what he was experiencing. Yes, he cared for his loved ones back in this world. And our departed loved ones are deeply concerned about our souls. If we are lost, they too will be sorely disappointed.

VII. MOST OF ALL I WILL CARE IF I AM LOST. In Matthew 23:21-23 in that memorable sermon on the mount our Lord describes men as pleading, begging and praying to enter into the joys of eternal life. But He tells them that they have waited too long to make such a decision, and there is nothing for them in the future but eternal punishment. In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus describes people being cast out into outer darkness and punishment that is endless, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. In Luke 13:24-28 He tells us that many will seek and strive to enter in and will not be able. These statements from our Lord reveal very clearly the fact that there is a time coming when we will be concerned about our own souls. One may push the Lord aside now while he is enjoying health and happiness and prosperity as though he will never need the Lord, but the time is coming when that condition will change and he will be pleading and begging for mercy when the day of mercy shall have ended.

VIII. WHO IS IT THAT DOES NOT CARE IF I AM LOST? We have learned that God, Christ, the spirit, the angels, all good people and our departed loved ones care about our souls and are concerned about our future. Now who is it that does not care? All the heavenly bodies care. All the earth that is worthwhile cares. All of our many loved ones in Hades care. In fact, the devil, the arch enemy of all that is good, pure, holy and true, is the only one that does not care. This enemy of all righteousness alone is pleased if I am lost. Yes, the devil who: corrupts all that is pure, seduces all that is virtuous, hates all that is lovable, lowers and tries to destroy all that is lofty, saddens and opposes all that is joyous, denies and tries to make false all that is true, opposes and fights all that is profitable, profanes and defies all that is holy. He advocates only that which is evil and destructive, and he offers you a reward of being burned forever. It is he alone that does not care if you are lost.

IT IS SAD FOR ANYONE TO BE LOST. Then think, my friend, how bad it will be for a soul to be lost forever. Have you ever been lost from your friends and acquaintances? Imagine yourself being lost in a strange land to starve. Then try to imagine how bad it will be to be lost in eternity. The Bible describes one who is lost as being bound hands and feet, that is reduced to utter helplessness, then cast into outer darkness where the snakes and the vicious are, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, a position in which it is too dangerous to move and too painful to remain still, Matt. 22:13; 25:30. God describes those who are lost as being sent away into eternal destruction, everlasting punishment, from the presence of the Lord, II Thessalonians 1:7-9. As being

cast into eternal fire, Matthew 25:41. Being sent way into the hell of fire, Matthew 5:22. As being cast into a furnace where the smoke ascendeth upward forever and ever. Rev. 14:11. Into unquenchable fire, that is fire that cannot be extinguished, Mark 9:43. In this terrible hell of fire, they are to spend eternity among the unbelievers, abominables, hypocrites, sorcerers, liars, idolaters, thieves, seducers, home-breakers, fornicators, murderers, and such like, Revelation 21:8. Think of having to spend eternity in the midst of such a group! That within itself would make a real hell. And to keep us out of such a place is the reason there has been such an interest from heaven manifested in our souls.

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO AVOID BEING LOST?

The only way to escape being lost is to be saved and the only way to be saved is to accept the Lord on His own terms of salvation in becoming saved:

1. He must hear the gospel of Christ. John 20:30-31; Romans 10:13-17.
2. He must believe the gospel with all of his heart. John 3:16; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:16.
3. He must repent of all of his sins. Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30-31.
4. He must confess Christ as his Lord. Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37.
5. He must be buried with his Lord by baptism into the sacred death of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-5; Colossians 2:12.
6. He must continue to live the faithful Christian life until death. II Peter 1:1-11; Revelations 2:10.

This life of Christian service and faithfulness in the worship to the Lord is to be spent in the New Testament Church which was:

1. Built by Jesus Christ. Matthew 16:18; Psalms 127:1; I Timothy 3:15.
2. Built in Jerusalem according to the words of the prophets. Isaiah 2:2; Acts 2; Acts 11:15.
3. Built on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Christ from the grave. Acts 2.
4. Built on Christ as the foundation. Isaiah 28:16; I Corinthians 3:10-11.
5. Purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25.
6. To wear Christ's name in honor of its head. Romans 16:16.
7. To accept the Bible, and the Bible alone, as a complete guide in all matters of faith and practice. II Timothy 3:16-17.
8. To recognize congregational autonomy with Christ in full and supreme authority. Matthew 28:18.
9. To meet on the first day of the week to break bread in memory of the sufferings and death of Jesus, the head of the Church. Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.
10. To be supported by free will offerings of its members, each member giving freely as the Lord has prospered him. I Corinthians 16:1-2.

Do you care enough for the salvation of your soul to be willing to do what Jesus says do in order to save it?

How Long Is "Too Long" To Locate

Otto Foster

How long should one preacher stay at the same place? No doubt many preachers, as well as elders, have wondered about this over a long period of years.

The Central Church of Christ, Cleburne, Texas, has had some outstanding Gospel preachers, being one of the first churches to employ a local preacher for full time work. Such men as G. A. Dunn, Sr., W. K. Rose (deceased), F. L. Young, (deceased), G. Dallas Smith (deceased), G. C. Brewer, E. W. McMillan, C. A. Norred, Roy Cogdill, P. D. Wilmeth, Glenn L. Wallace, and Elbridge Lynn have worked with us for various periods of time up to five years.

This month we begin the tenth year with Reuel Lemmons working with us for the Master. We believe Matthew 28:19 and 20 is the work of every congregation of disciples on the earth. Whether a preacher works with a congregation for one month or a lifetime should depend on the ability to adjust themselves to each other. Should a change be made when all are working together and accomplishing things worth while, those things that magnify the Church of Christ at home and abroad and that multiply the disciples serving our Lord?

During the past nine years we have undertaken to help plant the church more permanently in more than seventy-five different mission efforts. We found a preacher that goes our gait (to use a Texas expression) and likes it. In fact, he works in the lead. Then why a change, even at the end of nine years—more than twice the average length of the ordinary sojourn with a local congregation?

We have made only two or three reports in those years, for our work has been freely publicized. But hoping it would cause you to rejoice with us and be encouraged to join us in greater efforts to take the world for Christ, we are making a report now.

Our last year was our greatest year in many ways. In 1951, as in recent years, we have been on the radio in the "Back to the Bible" broadcast in South Africa, as well as over KCLE in Cleburne, Texas every week. Brother Lemmons actually preaches the Gospel over the radio to millions of listeners. (John 14:12).

In recent months we have been interested in raising funds to build the first church building in Johannesburg, South Africa, now said to be the fastest growing city in the world. Many who are

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