

S.N. Nov. 15, 1981 A.M.  
Walden -

"WHO CARES?"

(Psalm 142:4)

The Man of God in this Psalm, cried unto the Lord with his voice.... pouring out his complaints.... troubles overwhelmed him. He looked to his right hand for help. There was no one who cared. He turned in the other direction and could not discover one single refuge. At last, he simply said: "No man cared for my soul!"

Von Hugel was right, "Caring is everything."

John expressed it with a question, "Did you love?"

An elementary school teacher, who worked with socially deprived children, was riding home from work one afternoon with her husband.

"Charles," she said, "I want to run by Riches and buy little Sherry some casual shoes."

"Sherry who?" he replied.

"You know! She's one of the youngsters from the Hope Children's Home who was transferred to my room in January.

Charles answered disgustedly, "Those kids are always needing something. They are either sick or in some kind of trouble. I wish you wouldn't get involved with them!"

Do Christians have a right to avoid getting involved with people in trouble?

Christ was always "taking a towel and girding himself" in order to minister to others and set an example to preach "deliverance to the captives".

The elementary teacher knew the plight of a child who needed shoes like the others in her classroom wore. So she purchased them and presented them to the youngster whom neither of the parents wanted.

People who care, are (a vanishing breed.) Some agents in the name of religion build fortunes off the poor.

The list of (care-pretenders) is endless. Genuine care-givers are scarce. There is most of the time, present, the attitude of "look out for number one!" Ministering to people is just a supportive human venture seeking increased profits.

In our State Meeting this past week, Mr. Gilliam, the President, a layman from Crozet, Virginia, where he has a hardware business, spoke of the Cooperative Program and how Virginia Baptists care. Gifts reach highest of all time. Love of God made known by our expression. Layman Gilliam said he had been away from his business for 60 days in the interest of Virginia Baptists.

We have a caring God. (Jeremiah 31:3) says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."



It is imperative, too, that we understand that this loving, this caring for others, is the mission of all who belong to the body of Christ....each of you who name the name of Christ.

This illustration might put some light on this fact. I read about a Catholic Chaplain who, at the risk of his life, crawled many yards in a battle zone to minister to a wounded boy.

"But Chaplain," the injured lad remonstrated, "I don't belong to your church." "No son," came the answer, "But you belong to my Christ."

Another story by Paul Scherir might give further light. It is about a stenographer and a Navy lad. During the war, he went to her business establishment for the purpose of talking to the office manager. He left moments later entirely different. But let him tell about it himself, in a letter to that employer.

"Dear sir:

( I'm a sailor and I'll be pulling out in a few hours, but first I've got something I want to say. I came into your office this morning lonely and scared to death about sailing again. I wanted to talk to somebody pretty bad. So when the girl at the desk said hello, I went in and asked her if she had a job for me. She said for me to sit down for a few minutes, so I did. I told her maybe there wouldn't be jobs or anything afterwards that if a fellow could only be sure something would come through, worth dying for, it wouldn't be so bad.

She smiled and said, "That's easy. Christ is coming through and he's worth dying for." I just looked at her and she talked as if he were alive and a good pal of hers. I sort of expected to see him walk in the door, it was so

I was only there for about 10 minutes and I don't know why, but her talking like that sort of did something to me and I'm not lonely anymore and I'm not scared. It was like she had said, "I want to make you acquainted with my friend, Jesus. You ought to get to know each other since he'll be going your way."

I'm nineteen and I never knew before that there was a God like that who would go along with a fellow. It doesn't matter so much now if my ship goes down and I go down, so long as there's a God that no sub can sink.

In our experience we can make some observations this morning:

I. THERE ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT CARE AT ALL.

Judas-----Matthew 27:4. The broken hearted Judas realized what he had done by betraying Jesus. Taking the 30 pieces of silver back to the priest and elders, he confessed he had done wrong. Listen to this heartless answer:  
"What do we care about that?"

These were the spiritual advisors of Judas, the shepherds of his boyhood. If he could have received help from any source, it would have been there. But he did not get it.

I think of young people who have come to see me when they have gone wrong seeking guidance. The bad days are gone now and some of these are happily married with nice families. God used us in a crucial time. But I wonder what might have happened if I had said, "What do I care about that?"

Sometimes I wonder if I have neglected what I have or have not done, to offer courage to those in deep waters.



There are thousands today whose lives are troubled and whose hours are desperate. It might be just the knowledge of a person who cares, could transform darkness into day break.

Someone has said, "Sometimes a Christian only makes a little difference. But sometimes that little difference makes all the difference."

## II. THOSE WHO CARE ONLY WHEN BEING SEEN.

We know there are some who do not care. Now let us look at those who seem to care but only when being seen.

We are all touched by this a little bit. This upset the Pharisees, they criticized Jesus for talking to sinners with deep needs.

Jesus explained his purpose to them, "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

In other places in the Bible, Jesus said something about giving and praying.

↳ Matthew 6:2.. "When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you."

↳ Matthew 6:6.... "When you pray, go into your room and shut the door."

↳ Matthew 6:3.... Evidently Jesus meant real business when he said, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

↳ No doubt that poor widow had very few eyes upon her, and certainly her gift of 2 coins caused no trumpets to blow.

But Jesus felt that the offering she brought was the supreme contribution that day in Jerusalem.

The greatness of the story is not only that the gift was all she had, but that it was not done for applause.

There was a farmer in Tennessee who had great compassion for people. He was concerned especially when there had been accidents or sickness and families were in need of financial assistance. He would send them money through the mail. But he always made it a habit to disguise his handwriting and cross the river so there would be a different postmark on the letter.

III. THOSE WHO CARE, BUT ONLY FOR THEIR OWN.

Jesus' outreaching love, his beautiful offer of friendship for all people, was a new dimension in his Messianic mission.

John 1:11-12. The saviour came to the Jews, but we read that in his own land and among his own people he was not accepted."

But we read, "to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God."

That word "ALL" is the theme of his tidings and the world is found in John 3:16.

William Barkley said:

"We are God's chose few.  
All others will be damned;  
~~There is no room in heaven~~ for you....  
We can't have heaven crammed."

Luke 3:6 reads, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." It is good news of the whole world.

We must not miss the fact that the Gospel is bigger than any church, or nation, or one color.

Did you know we as Southern Baptists have at Southwestern Seminary, more students for the ministry than the Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherns and Episcopal demoninations put together! Over 4,000 training for Chirst. Where professors are not ashamed of the Gospel.

We must commit ourselves to larger ministries.

I found another story:

"I read about a young man who was serving a life sentence in a penitentiary. Like many of the other inmates, his life was acquiring a bitterness and hardness that was deplorable. Life held no promise, and he was making no contribution. One day, he discovered a paragraph in a newspaper that spoke to his heart. It was about another prisoner who had offered himself as a guinea pig to the Medical Corps and had subsequently died. He asked to see the warden. Granted the interview, he showed him the clipping and said,

"Warden, I would love to do that."

The warden replied, "You mean you want to die?" "No," was his answer. "I want a chance to come alive. I want to give myself for a cause that is bigger than I am."



#### IV. THOSE WHO CARE, BUT ONLY AT PARTICULAR TIMES.

Their emotions are picking certain seasons. During Christmas or perhaps another occasion, they feel the need to share in a ministry of love to people.

It would seem to the outsider that the rest of the year they could care less.

People who shun Christian fellowship are often quite thoughtful. They have manufactured excuses why they should abstain. Every now and then we look at one's defense that really seems justifiable.

What is our answer, when someone says that two or three times a year we show a bit of concern and the remainder.....no interest, no love, no expression?

Look at Thomas. When Jesus felt constrained to go to Bethany, and that meant opposition, Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:16). But where was Thomas later, when our Lord needed him so greatly?

Think of Peter. In the shadow of Calvary, he said to the Master, "I will lay down my life for you." (John 13:37)

But when the hour of the Crucifixion had arrived, how conspicuous was the fisherman by his absence.

Last December, a businessman who had genuine concern, said, "I have decided to make Christmas and not buy it." And this is what we are talking about. Buying Christmas....that is a onetime gift. But making Christmas... that is a lifetime service.



V. THOSE WHO CARE ALL THE TIME.

Fix our subject in mind:

Some do not care.

Some care when being seen.

Some care for their own.

Some care at particular times.

Finally, those who maintain a constant concern for others.

In my ministry, I have found God-kept people with staying hearts and trusting hearts that care most for the needs of people.

As Isaiah 26:3 says, "Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee."

Make no mistake about it. The one way we prove our love for God is by our love for others.

It is the most beautiful when it is most lasting.

Maude Fortesque was a caring person. For many years, she nursed her mother in her home, worked her job and maintained a close relationship with her church. Every Christmas she stopped by with an Appropriate tie for her preacher. She died a few days ago, but left a trail of loving care.

Here is what I am trying to say in the words of a poem that means a great deal:

I sometimes think about the Cross,  
 And shut my eyes and try to see  
 The cruel nails and crown of thorns,  
 And Jesus crucified for me.

But even could I see him die,  
 I could but see a little part  
 Of that great love which like a fire  
 Is always burning in His heart.  
 (Leslie Weatherhead)

You see, Christ's cross is always because Christ's love is always.

I read the account, <sup>man</sup> which is true about care. It moved me deeply.

One cold rainy night while he was waiting at a bus stop, an elderly  
woman got off a bus and stood beside him. "Can you tell me when the next bus  
 is due?" she asked. When the man asked which bus she wanted, she answered his  
 query.

"But you just got off that one," he observed. "Well," she stammered a bit  
 shyly, "you see, there was a terribly crippled man on that bus and nobody  
 offered him a seat. I knew he would be embarrassed if an old lady like me got  
 up for him, so I just pretended it was time for me to get off.

I rang the bell just as he was standing by my seat. He wasn't embarrassed  
 and I....well, there is always another bus."

If a person acts like that, it is because the person lives like that.  
 They have in their hearts the permanent disposition of Jesus Christ.



Jesus asleep in the Boat....a storm, about to sink, the Disciples said,  
"Don't you care...wake up."

He did care, he stilled the storm.

He still cares and will still your storms.