

Does Jesus Care?

Introduction. Franklin Ellsworth Graeff was a popular Methodist preacher in the Philadelphia area at the turn of the twentieth century. In his 40th year, in 1901, he wrote “Does Jesus Care?” In the years prior to 1901, he had lost two-thirds of his immediate family. So what does a person do when surrounded by that level of grief? Franklin Graeff provided a good example: he worked through his heartache, and then used his own experience to help those who would go through the same trials.

We know Jesus existed. There’s no doubt. We know He did what He did. There’s ample evidence of that. When we read that Jesus was thirsty in John 19:28 and that He wept in John 11:35, we have full assurance that He was real. And because He lived, we also have full assurance that He cares. We know this from two lines of evidence: episodes where He was moved with compassion and the Bible writers who discuss the care God possesses for His children. As we study these two we’ll get to see how Jesus truly cares.

I. When Was Jesus Moved With Compassion?

- A. When He saw the world’s pain (Mathew 14:14; 20:29-34).
- B. When He saw the world’s sorrow (Luke 7:11-13).
- C. When He saw the world’s hunger (Matthew 15:32).
- D. When He saw the world’s loneliness (Mark 1:40-41).
- E. When He saw the world’s bewilderment (Matthew 9:36).

II. What Does That Mean For Us?

- A. James, in 4:7-10, and Peter, in 1 Peter 5:5-7, beautifully connect humility and dependence.
- B. James issues a series of ten commands. In each one the language used calls for immediate response. It is a pointed and forceful way to demand action.
- C. In setting their hearts on pleasure, James’s readers had drifted away from God. But the assurance that God will welcome them back is real. To humble ourselves before the Lord means to recognize our own spiritual poverty, to acknowledge our desperate need of God’s help, and to submit to His commanding will for our lives.
 1. Submission is not the same as obedience. Instead, it is the surrender of one’s will, which in turn leads to obedience.
 2. This humility is beautifully exemplified in the tax-collector of Jesus’ parable, who, deeply conscious of his sin, called out to God for mercy. In response, Jesus pronounced him justified (Luke 18:14).
 3. Just as Jesus laid aside His outer garments and put on a towel to become a servant, so each of us should have a servant’s attitude and minister to each other (cp. Philippians 2:1-11).
- D. Such a dependence brings forth the only real independence, for then we face life not in our own strength but in God’s, and we are given victory. As long as we regard ourselves as independent of God, we are on the way to ultimate collapse and defeat.

- E. Peter emphasized that one of the benefits of this kind of relationship with God is the privilege of letting Him take care of our burdens. Peter recognized that a great barrier to putting others first and thinking of them as more important is the legitimate human concern of who then will care for me?
 - 1. The answer is that God Himself will care for our needs. He is able to do so far better than we are, and He wants to do so, for He continually cares for His children.
 - 2. Therefore casting all your anxieties on Him is the path to humility, freeing a person from constant concern for himself and enabling him or her truly to be concerned for the needs of others.
- F. Cast means “to throw something on someone or something else” (cp. Luke 19:35). According to Peter, we must once and for all give all of our cares — past, present, and future — to the Lord. We must not hand them to Him piecemeal, keeping those cares that we think we can handle ourselves. If we keep “the little cares” for ourselves, they will soon become big problems.
- G. The word “care” (NKJV) means “anxiety, the state of being pulled apart” (cp. Psalm 55:22; Luke 21:34; 2 Corinthians 11:28). When circumstances are difficult, it is easy for us to be anxious and worried, but if we are, we will miss God’s blessing and become poor witnesses to the lost. We need His inward peace if we are going to triumph in the fiery trial and bring glory to His name.
- H. If anybody knew from experience that God cares for His own, it was Peter. The gospels show that Peter shared in some wonderful miracles.
 - 1. Jesus healed his mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31).
 - 2. Jesus gave him a great catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11).
 - 3. Jesus helped him pay his temple tax (Matthew 17:24-27).
 - 4. Jesus helped him walk on the water (Matthew 14:22-33).
 - 5. Jesus healed the ear of Malchus (Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10-11).
 - 6. Jesus delivered him from prison (Acts 12:7).
- I. How does God show His care for us when we give our cares to Him?
 - 1. He gives us the courage to face our cares (Isaiah 41:10).
 - 2. He gives us the wisdom to understand the situation (James 1:5).
 - 3. He gives us the strength to do what we must do (Philippians 4:13).
 - 4. He gives us the faith to trust Him to do the rest (Psalm 37:5).
- J. “He cares for you” means that God is not indifferent to our sufferings. This conception of God’s concern for human affliction is one of the peculiar treasures of the gospel. Although Greek philosophy at its highest and noblest could formulate a doctrine of God’s perfect goodness, it could not imagine His active concern for mankind.

Conclusion. Does Jesus care? Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares! His heart is touched with my grief! God delights in being trusted, even in dark times when we feel there’s no place to turn or go. After Peter was sifted like wheat, he was told to strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:31-32). Grief allows us to work on and with each other to comfort hearts in times of trouble.

But one must choose between the values of God and those of the world (James 4:4), between God’s wisdom and demonic wisdom (James 3:15, 17). A person who

lives by God's values is no part of Satan's kingdom. Leave that kingdom today through your obedience to Jesus Christ!