

Who Cares?

Life, for many people, has become virtually meaningless. What a tragedy that is. For once upon a time God created mankind “*good and in His own image*”. A four hundred year old statement of faith says He did so that human beings might “*Glorify God and fully enjoy Him forever*”¹

The American novelist Theodore Dreiser, raised in a poor family during depressing times once said in his statement of philosophy, “*I can make no comment on my work or my life that holds any interest or importance for me.I catch no meaning from all I have seen, and I pass quite as I came, confused and dismayed.*”²

I would imagine this feeling of futility with life and its cares is probably shared by many in our day and age. For many people life is a treadmill or merry-go-round devoid of happiness and purpose. Those who are on it just trudge along day after day but they really don't know where they're going.

It could be that such people, are caught in a trap of depression, inertia in which the burdens of the day beat them down and take away perspective and joy in life. As a result they are found throwing up their hands and murmuring, “*Who really cares?*” They answer their own complaint with “*No one, No one at all!*”

This in a day and age when mankind seems to have solved many of the mysteries that perplexed generations. He's unlocked the secret of the atom, though that has had not only salutary but also frightening consequences. The intricacies of the human genome have been laid bare. Yet, as someone has said, “*We've become masters of science*”

¹ Answer # 1 of The Larger Catechism, of the Church of Scotland, (1648)

² Quoted by the late Rev. Peter Eldersveld in “Who Cares?” a radio message of The back to God Hour, 1957

but victims of despair.” Today we live in a post-modern era in which the rejection of absolutes is but all too common. Although human beings do yearn for intimacy and understanding, yet the path to these things seems to be unknown and out of reach for many.

But then, the world is still considered by many to be no more than a giant machine. One that operates automatically, so *without God*. Is that perhaps a good part of the reason why there is so much callousness, as well as selfishness, and carelessness in the world? For a world without God would leave one having to fight one’s own battles, physically, emotionally, spiritually. Yet for all mankind’s pretensions to do so is an exercise in miserable frustration.

But we are living souls. We are human beings who are not machines, robots with no desires, but people who are alive, need comfort, hope, relationships that matter, security, love! Nor is this world no more than self-perpetuating robot yet one with no-one to guide it and care for it.

Is there no one who cares? No one to turn to? No one who understands? **Yes, Yes there is!** There is more than one beautiful passage in the bible, God’s infallible Word which directs us to Him who is that Hope and Consolation. I think especially of the first letter of Peter, chapter 5, verse 7 which reads, “ *Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*”

The apostle didn’t grab that statement out of thin air. The people to whom he wrote his letter lived in the midst of a polytheistic society . They were Christians and Peter called them “ *elect exiles of the dispersion*” (ch. 1: 1) The dispersion which had taken them to various places in Asia Minor.

It appears that because of their Christian convictions they were

*Being marginalized by their society, alienated in their relationships, and threatened with - if not experiencing a loss of honor".*³

They were already suffering for their faith and before long outright persecution was to be their lot.

They, having been “*grieved with various trials*” (ch. 1:6), were pointed by Peter to Jesus Christ time and again. He reminded them that they were God’s special people, “*A chosen race, a royal nation*” even (ch. 2: 9). Always they were to remember that Jesus Christ suffered for them in their place. Should they in turn suffer, from their opponents and from the enormous difficulties they would face en route on their spiritual journey?

They were not to be rebellious and to fight fire with fire. No, Peter encouraged them to humble themselves under God’s mighty hand. “that”, as he went on to say, “*God, at the proper time will exalt you.*” (ch. 5: 6)

That “mighty hand of God” is one of amazing strength, and far-reaching-rescue-power. God ‘showed his hand’ in rescuing his people Israel from Egypt. Because of Christ Jesus’ sacrifice He rescued Peter’s readers from the curse of sin and death.

This great God, though requiring humility from his people would give them grace, “*amazing grace*” to resist even the attempts of Satan, the evil one, to who, as Peter went on to say, was, “*prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*” (v. 8)

While humbled, - not rebelling against God, nor throwing caution to the wind, they were to cast their anxieties on him. An older translation has “*Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.*”

³ Karen H. Jobes in I Peter p. 1

That first “care” referred to their anxieties, frustrations, worries and other burdens. But that second “cares” in “ *He cares for you*” refers to God’s gracious ministry to a believer’s every need. Surely God’s care is his wondrous *love*. That love in which someone suffering, a person facing the taunts and trials of determined opponents and the burdens of the day, is given *an open window*, - a stream of hopeful ‘air’ in the knowledge that God is very near and Christ is at one’s side.

Jesus Christ, God’s “only begotten Son” crawled into our skin that he might suffer the burden of God’s wrath. He did so while being and remaining! “true God of true God”⁴ . Because of his divine nature he was able to sustain God’s terrible anger because of our sin.

Many, very many cares and much opposition does result from confessing the name of Jesus Christ in an anti-Christian environment, yesterday and today! Yes, “*And Today!*” Not a week goes by and we hear of the torture, even the beheading, of Christians in the Middle East, by fanatical ISIS militants. There is suffering in North Korea, where even the possession of a bible can result in a lengthy jail term . Although China puts on a benevolent face and officially there is “freedom of religion”, yet the truth is far different. There is a great deal of persecution.

What about in the western world? Do Christians here not have all the freedom in the world to serve their God and Maker according to His Word? Sad enough we see those freedoms being eroded, even right here in Canada. Not God’s right, not His Law but human rights, and courts of human fallible judges, and their decisions, are more and more considered *supreme*. The lives of the most vulnerable, babies in the womb are left unprotected and are being robbed of life by the scores of thousands, year after year. The freedom to serve the Lord according to his Word is slowly but surely being threatened more and more.

⁴ The Nicene Creed

But Yes, Jesus Christ does care. Even now he is in the process of returning to make public his judgement. On that day he will see to that final rescue of those who cast their burdens on Him. He'll give them everlasting peace. He promised that even in the closing words of this first letter of Peter.

So then, dear listeners, remember, This earth and this universe is not some vast icebox, some heartless machine. Nor are we disposable dust, of no significance to the Lord our Maker. He who holds stars and planets, including those not yet undiscovered, in his hands, lives! He lives and he cares yes, also for you and for me.

Turn to him then and humble yourself under His mighty hand. Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Cast them on him, and don't reel them in! Instead:

Turn to the Lord, who on our way
provides for us, and day by day
upholds us by his power.
God of salvation is his name;
this glorious name do we proclaim
He is our shield and tower

Amen, and thank you so much for listening.