

No Man Cared for My Soul

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal invitation and consistency in living and witnessing for Christ, highlighting the contrast between the world's indifference and God's love and care for the soul.

Scripture: Psalm 142:4, Matthew 28:19, Luke 15:7, John 3:18, John 3:36, Romans 10:14, James 4:17, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Soul Winning", "Evangelism"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches on the importance of caring for the souls of others, drawing inspiration from the contrasting life of King David who wrote the Psalms. He emphasizes the need for Christians to personally reach out to those who may feel neglected spiritually, sharing the message of salvation and the love of Christ. Chapman highlights the impact of personal invitations to accept Christ, urging believers to be consistent in their faith and to not miss opportunities to speak to others about salvation. He stresses that God, Christ, ministers, and many others care deeply for every soul, and encourages listeners to trust in God, accept His conditions, and follow Him.

Transcript

"No man cared for my soul," Psalm cxlii. 4. All about us people are saying these words, and they really think we do not care. I believe there has never been a story of a man in which was found more contrast than in this account of the man who sobs out the words, "No man cared for my soul." He is a shepherd boy, then a king, a saint, writing the twenty-third Psalm, then suddenly turned into a sinner blackening the pages of the Old Testament with the story of his transgressions. The world has not had better poetry than that which came from the heart and brain of this marvellous man. In addition to all this, he is a musician, and all through the Psalms he is keeping time to heaven's music until, when he comes to the close of the Psalter, he stands like the leader of a mighty chorus, and calls upon every living breathing being to praise the Lord. He is a pursuer of men, and the hosts of the enemy run and cry and flee before him.

Suddenly the scene is changed. He is himself pursued. He is in the cave of Engedi. The cave is dark, and it is in the gloom that we hear him crying out, "I looked upon my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me." And as he said this I think he must have said, with a sob, "No man cared for my soul." But it is not my intention so much to tell the story of this man whose life was so filled with contrasts, but rather to speak of those who live to-day, and who think they have a right to use the same words as the Psalmist, "No man cared for my soul."

They walk on the streets of our cities; they live in our homes; they meet us in our places of business; they are members of our circle of friends; they know that we are Christians, and they are often thinking or saying, "No man cared for my soul." It is strange that we should permit this, because we read in the Bible, "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It seems strange that one could say he believes the Bible to be true; that he accepts these statements concerning the one who is not a Christian, and yet lives and works and associates with him and never speaks to him about the salvation of his soul.

It would seem as if they at least had a right to say, "No man seems to care." But some may say, "They have the Church, and the doors are wide open; they have the minister, and his message is faithful." Yet, the average man who sits in church and listens to the most impassioned appeal of the preacher, rarely considers the sermon personal. He finds himself saying, sometimes against his will, that the preacher is professional, that his plea is perfunctory, and so he goes out of church and says again, "No man seems to care for my soul."

There came into my church in an Eastern city a man who worshipped with us for a time. His family were in the mountains. I made it a rule never to allow one to attend the church that I did not speak to him personally. One day I called on this business man. He took me into his private office. When I took him by the hand I said, "I have come to ask you to be a Christian." He looked at me in amazement; and I said, "I am not asking you to join my church, that may not be the church of your choice, but I am asking you to be a Christian." He drew his hand out of mine, walked away to the window, and stood looking down upon the busy street for fully five minutes. I thought I had offended him. Then he came back, and, brushing the tears out of his eyes, he took my hand again and said, "It is the first invitation to be a Christian I have ever had in all my life. Nobody ever asked me before. My mother never asked me; my wife has never asked me; no minister has ever asked me." Then, sinking back into the chair by his table, he used the words which are almost identical with the words of David, "I thought no one cared."

Such men are all around us; men in deepest need; men with sore aching hearts. There was a man in an American city who occupied a high position among men. He took his own life. Under the stress of political excitement he misappropriated the funds of the bank, thinking he could repay them, and in his beautiful home he put the revolver to his temple and shot himself. The saddest letter I have ever seen was written by that man. He wrote to his wife asking her forgiveness. He told her to pray for the children whom he had dishonoured. Then he concluded his farewell letter with this statement: "Through all the months I have been wishing somebody would speak to me about becoming a Christian." In the light of such facts I believe that what we need in these days is not so much, more men to preach--although that would be a great blessing--as people in the church who will be absolutely consistent. If they say they believe God's Word to be true, they must speak to those over whom they have an influence, about the personal acceptance of Christ.

I was waiting one day outside the office of the Governor of one the Western States, and while I waited, the Lieutenant-Governor spoke to me. He said, "I was in your service last night, and I want to take issue with you on what you said. You told your hearers to go up and down the streets asking the people to become Christians. I think if anyone should come into my office and ask me to become a Christian I should tell him to go about his business." "You surely misunderstood me," I said; "what I told them was this, that if a business man was not a Christian, his friend who is a Christian ought to speak to him kindly about his soul." I had been introduced to the Lieutenant-Governor by one of the great politicians of the State, who was a sincere Christian, and I said, "Suppose our mutual friend here should come to you and say, 'I am a

Christian. I think it is the best thing for a man to be a Christian. I am not always what I would like to be myself, but I should like to invite you to become a Christian.' Then suppose he should tell you what a strength and help it had been to him, what would you say to him?" He looked at me for a moment, and said, "I think I should say 'Thank you.'" I am sure thousands could be won to Jesus Christ if the members of the Church were consistent in the matter of living in Christ and giving an invitation to people to become acquainted with Him.

It is not fair to charge the minister with being professional, nor to say that in his appeal he is perfunctory. Nor is it always just to criticize those who are in the church, for not speaking to the unsaved, for there may be an explanation. Sometimes we feel a sense of our own unworthiness. There are business men who know that if they should speak to their employees, the first speech would have to be a confession of failure. There are women who know that if they should go to their husbands or children, and ask them to come to Christ, they would have first of all to say, "You must forgive my inconsistency." There are fathers who know that they could not go to their homes and call their children around them, and bid them come to Christ without first saying, "You must forgive your father." But if a confession is necessary, then make it. It is sometimes a sense of unworthiness that seals one's lips, but remember if you have a friend who is not a Christian, and to whom you have never spoken of Christ, your friend counts you inconsistent because of your failure.

I said to the officers in my church one evening, "How many of you have ever led a soul to Christ?" About half of them said they never had. One officer said, "That is a sharp question for me. If you will excuse me I will go home and speak to my children, to-night." He did so, and I received two of his sons into the church shortly after.

Again, we seem to have failed to warn our friends because we have such a slight conception of the meaning of the word "Lost." A mother in Chicago one day carried her little baby over to the doctor, and said, "Doctor, look into this baby's eyes, something has gone wrong with them." The doctor took the little child and held it in his arms so that the light would strike its face, He gazed at it only for a moment, then, putting it back into its mother's arms, he shook his head, and the mother said quickly, "Doctor, what is it?" And he said, "Madam, your baby is going blind. There is no power in this world that can make him see." She held the baby in her arms close up against her heart. Then with a cry she fell to the floor in a swoon, saying as she fell, "My God--blind!" I think any parent must know how she felt. But Jesus said, "Better to be maimed, and halt, and blind than to be lost."

If you believe the Bible you cannot be indifferent. But you say, some would not like to have you speak to them. I have been twenty-seven years a minister, and have spoken to all classes and conditions of men and women, and only in one single instance have I ever been rebuked. I was once asked to speak to the president of a bank. I went into his office, and was introduced to him by the pastor with whom I was staying. I said, "My friend is very interested in you, and I wish I could lead you to Christ." He looked at me in perfect amazement. Then, rising from the chair, he took me by the hand, and said, "Thank you, sir." I saw him that night, make his way down the crowded aisle of the church, give the minister his hand, and say, "I will."

But I had a sad experience at college. I roomed with a man when I was a student for the ministry, and never spoke to him about his soul. When the day of my graduation came, and I was bidding him good-bye, he said, "By the way, why have you never spoken to me about becoming a Christian?" I would rather he had struck me. I said, "Because I thought you did not care." "Care!" he said. "There has never been a day

that I did not want you to speak; there has never been a night that I did not hope you would speak." I lost an opportunity. I fear some day, I must answer for it.

You had an idea that you had no influence, but you must remember that when you speak in the name of Jesus Christ, God stands back of you; that when you plead for the salvation of a person, all the power of heaven is working through you. Some may ask, What is the best time to speak to my friends about Christ? I should say, speak to them when they are in trouble, seek them out when others are being saved, but, best of all, go to them when the Spirit of God says go, that is the best time. Whenever God says "Go," He is always making ready the heart for our coming. I was one day walking down the streets of an American city with a Methodist minister, when he said to me, "What would you do if you were impressed that you should speak to a man?" I said, "Speak to him." He said, "But this man has not been in church for thirteen years." "Nevertheless," I said, "speak to him." He turned and made his way to the great house where this business man lived. He rang the bell, and the door was opened by the gentleman himself, who said, "Doctor, I am glad to see you. I have been in all day thinking you might come." And in a very few minutes he was kneeling in the library with this gentleman whom he quickly led to Christ.

A year later I was passing through the city of Chicago, when, picking up a newspaper, I noticed that this man whom the minister had won to Christ, had died suddenly. I got a letter from the minister not long afterwards, and he said, "I was with him when he died. He sent a messenger for me to come and see him, and when I arrived he turned his face towards mine and said, "Dr ----, thank you for coming that day, for if you had missed that day, I might have missed this. Then he began to sing as best he could. He raised himself on his pillow, with his arms outreaching, and said, "Jesus Lover of My soul," and passed away. The minister's letter was marked with tears, and down at the foot of it was written this sentence; "God helping me, I will never hesitate again." They are all about us, men with aching hearts, men caught by the power of sin, young people and older people as well. They are waiting. Preaching may not win them; singing may not touch them. But personal effort will.

I might change the text and make it read: "The world does not care for your soul," You may win it, and it will mock you. Satan does not care for your soul. He will fascinate you and snare you, and when you say, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" there will be no deliverance. But God cares. Christ cares. The minister cares, and thousands of others care. Some are saying, "What must I do to be a Christian?" A gentleman once said to me, "I do not love God." Another person once said, "You talk about love for Christ; is it like love for my mother, because if it is I have not got it." No, it is not like that. That is not the first step in the way. Tell them God does not say, "Love me, and I will save you." God says, "Trust me. Accept my conditions, believe on my Son and follow Him."

There was a great man in a Western city who had a little girl who was deaf and dumb. He loved his child so much that he would not allow anybody to teach her. She had a kind of sign language which they both understood, but nobody else was allowed to teach her. This gentleman at one time had occasion to leave home and go abroad. He could not take his daughter with him, so his minister persuaded him to send her over to an institution where she could be taught to use the sign language of the deaf and dumb. He took her over himself, never for a moment imagining that she would learn to speak with her lips, as she did. The months passed by, and when the father returned, the minister went with him to see his child in the institution. The little girl had been told that he was coming, and looking out of the window she saw her father coming through the gate. She sprang to the door, and ran down the steps, and along the walk until she reached her father. Then she climbed up into his arms, and, putting her lips up against his ear, she said, "Father, I love you, I love you." The great man held her out at arm's length, looked into her face, then

pressed her more closely to his heart and fell in a faint--when he recovered consciousness he was sobbing. All the day he kept saying, "I have heard her speak, and she loves me, she loves me." So tell the people very plainly that God does not say, "Love me." He says, "Believe on me; trust me; follow me." Then ask them, Will you do it? And if they will follow Him, having accepted His Son as their Saviour, and with his help having turned from sin, then if they will obey Him, they will come to love Him with all their hearts.

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