

# God Cares

by Tom Macartney

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*God cares about our human predicament and has provided a solution through His Son, Jesus Christ, who conquered death and offers us salvation and sustaining love.*

**Scripture:** Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1, Philippians 4:6, 1 Peter 5:6

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Eternal Life"

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## Description

Tom Macartney preaches about the sad state of the world due to humanity's abandonment of God, emphasizing God's continuous care and compassion despite our faults. Through the story of Lazarus in John 11, he illustrates how Jesus conquered death, revealing God's desire to be at home with us and share His love. Despite the consequences of sin, God's anger is directed at the tragic outcomes rather than indifference, as seen in Jesus' tears and determination to overcome death, ultimately pointing to the greater miracle of eternal life through the cross.

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## Transcript

It is a sad world we live in, and it is our fault. Yet, while we have abandoned God, He has not abandoned us! The fact is that God cares tremendously about our human predicament. From beginning to end the Bible declares this. The cross proves this. While we have forfeited any claim on God by going our own way, He is still grieved at the terrible consequences of this for us: suffering, sorrow, frustration and death. While we have brought it all on ourselves, God cares as He sees the distress of the fatherless and the widow, the lonely and the fearful, the hungry and the down-trodden, indeed the whole sad picture of His suffering creation. He never meant it to be like this. "Then, why," you may ask, "does God permit so much suffering to go on?" There is no simple answer, but one thing is certain, God is not indifferent, God cares. In fact He has already done everything He can. He has solved the problem of sin and its consequences by sending His Son, if only we could see it. You see, God had a problem: how was He to help a race that had turned its back on Him? How can you help someone who has slammed the door in your face? And this is really how we have treated God as a race and as individuals. We have chosen to run this world and our lives as if they were ours instead of God's. This is the root of all our problems, so if we want to experience God's love we must face up to this first. A day is coming when death, mourning, crying and pain will be things of the past for those who have turned back to Him, and we may enjoy a foretaste of this now, if we will allow Him to take His rightful place in our hearts.

Our theme is wonderfully illustrated in John 11. Please read the story of the raising of Lazarus, now if possible. This is the seventh of the eight signs recorded by John. In each some aspect of man's need is brought to light and dealt with, and some aspect of the glory of Christ seen. Here we see the Lord Jesus as the conqueror of our greatest enemy, death, an unpopular subject but one that everyone is concerned about. Deep down in our hearts we know we were not meant to die and yet die we must. Why? What follows? Christ alone has the answer.

It is clear from John 11 and 12, and Luke 10 that the Lord Jesus was very much at home in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary in Bethany. No doubt He called in whenever in the neighbourhood. He knew He would always be welcome and this must have meant much to Him, especially as He faced the cross. Do we realise how much we mean to God? He created man to be His friend. He wants to be at home with us and in us, and to share His wealth with us, amazing as this may seem. In the family and home at Bethany we get a glimpse of God's intention and desire in creating us.

But all this was suddenly threatened by the invasion of sickness, death and sorrow. Lazarus fell ill and was probably dead by the time that the Lord heard, yet He knew at once that this tragedy would only prove to be the occasion for a momentous display of His love and power. And so, having waited for two days to ensure that everyone realised the hopelessness of the situation, He went to meet the challenge of him who holds the power of death, the devil. Now we too are sick, sick with sin, indeed we are spiritually dead, and it is our fault, but God is not unmoved. God cares! He acted in sending His Son and He is still seeking us by His Spirit.

The actions and reactions of the Lord Jesus on His arrival at Bethany repay the most careful thought. It is clear first that the two sisters and their friends had abandoned all hope of any immediate change in the situation. Sometime in the future at the final resurrection they will see Lazarus again, but that is as far as their faith can go. To this the Lord replies, "I am the resurrection and the life", in other words, "Wherever I am, there is the power of resurrection and life, wherever I am, there is the possibility, indeed the certainty, of an immediate answer to the situation according to the will of God."

Then we note the Lord's genuine sympathy, He shed tears. He did not weep as the sisters for they were really wailing (two different Greek words are used.) He shed tears of sympathy while they wept under the power of uncontrollable sorrow. But He did shed tears, and looking at Him we are looking at God. What a remarkable aspect of God's character is here revealed!

The next point is a surprising one, missed by most of the English versions. The verb translated 'groaned' or 'deeply moved' in John 11:33 and 38, contains the idea of indignation or anger, so that we must say that in the presence of sorrow and death He was indignant. He was not just moved with pity, He was angry. But why? There may have been other reasons, but surely it was chiefly His indignation at the tragic outworking of sin. Even though man has brought it all on himself and stands a guilty rebel at the bar of God's holiness, nevertheless God is moved with indignation and compassion by the sorrow, suffering, misery and death that engulfs man made in His image. He never meant this. Through his disobedience man has fallen into the hands of the evil one, and God's anger at the tragedy is seen in the Lord Jesus on this occasion.

Finally we see the Lord's determination and power to deal with the situation. Amid this scene of death and despair, sorrow and suffering, where death reigned because of sin, the Lord stands strong and sympathetic. "Take away the stone ... Lazarus, come out ... Take off the grave clothes and let him go ... I

am the resurrection and the life." Death is conquered! The whole situation is changed. It is always the same when the Lord comes on the scene. And so we find the family together again in chapter 12, together with Christ, with Mary pouring out her devotion.

But did they realise all this pointed to something greater? Soon He would perform a far greater miracle whereby a race, dead in sins, might be raised to eternal life. This is the meaning of the cross. Here the Lord Jesus dealt with the problem of our sin and its consequences, and provided a way in which we could be pardoned and set free. At the cross we see God's indignation against sin (Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross), but we also see His love for us rebels and His indignation at the tragedy of our situation and His determination to provide a way of escape.

And yet we may know nothing of this. It all depends on our reaction to His initiative. Many of those who saw the raising of Lazarus responded to the Lord, but others rejected Him. Although God has shown His love, we shall be no better off if we do not respond. Only as we humble ourselves in repentance and faith can we experience His caring love in salvation and sustaining of us triumphant in all the circumstances of life. He may change these if this is best, but whenever and wherever He comes He will certainly transform the situation and each of us may prove this now. The key to life is a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ of obedience and trust, and a daily committal of ourselves to Him. He takes care of everything else.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:6, 7).

Bible references: Rom. 3:23;5:1-11; 6:23; 8:18-39; Eph. 2:1-10; Phil. 4:6, 7; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Pet. 2:21-25; Revelation 21 and 22; Psalm 146

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