

# Insights

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores the depth of God's care for His people through scripture, emphasizing the significance of the unseen and the power of prayer amidst life's challenges.*

**Duration:** 31:33

**Scripture:** Exodus 16:14-15, Deuteronomy 29:5, 2 Samuel 23:13-17, 2 Kings 4:8-37, Isaiah 45:3, 1 Corinthians 10:10, 1 Peter 5:7

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the verse 1 Peter 5:7, specifically the phrase 'He careth for you.' He begins by highlighting examples from the Old Testament where God showed his care for his people, such as providing food, water, and clothing in the wilderness. The preacher then emphasizes that even in the midst of darkness and trials, God can reveal spiritual blessings and diamonds. The sermon also touches on the power of prayer, stating that God answers prayer in various ways and sometimes gives us something better than what we ask for. The preacher concludes by mentioning the unnamed heroes in God's eyes and shares the story of three men who risked their lives to bring David water from the well of Bethlehem.

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## Transcript

...single verses of scripture and try to extract some honey from them. And the first verse I'd like to turn to tonight is 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 7. 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 7, and maybe the first brother who gets it would read it out in a loud, clear voice. "...all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." Yes, and I'd just like to take the last part of that verse tonight, just those words, "...he," in the King James, "...he careth for you." Does the Lord really care? Well, the Bible is filled with tokens of his care.

We go back to the Old Testament and we see God leading his people through a waste, howling wilderness, where there were no Safeway stores, no Lucky Markets. And yet he fed them for 40 years with the food from heaven, the manna. And not only that, he provided a bountiful water supply in the midst of the desert, and he gave them clothes that never wore out and shoes that never needed to be tapped.

Wasn't that wonderful? For 40 years. And they should have had no doubt as to the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob really cared. Then when we come over to the New Testament, we find the Lord Jesus borrowing figures from nature to tell us of his infinite care for us.

He cares for sparrows. And that's really wonderful. So small, so insignificant, so many millions of them.

And he provides their food. I was impressed to read again in the Gospels. It says not one of them is forgotten before God.

Just think of that. Not one of them. I've forgotten most of them that I've ever seen.

I wouldn't know them if I met them again. But not one of them is forgotten before God. And it says not one falls to the ground without your heavenly Father.

My, what a God he is. That his care for sparrows is so great that not one of them dies without his knowing all about it and being there. Because that's what it says.

Not one of them dies, falls to the ground without your heavenly Father. And then the Lord Jesus goes on to give us the moral of the story. You are worth more than many sparrows.

It's marvelous, isn't it? And then the Lord Jesus borrows that figure of the lilies of the field, the wild anemones there on the hillsides. And he says that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. God cares for wildflowers.

The divine artist takes such care, such precise care in designing them and in growing them. And yet they're just born for a day and then they're cast into the oven. And he says, why, if I care for wildflowers like that, how much more do I care for you? And then, of course, Paul reminds us, doesn't he? In writing to the Corinthians that God cares for oxen.

Isn't it wonderful that in the Old Testament, God legislated about oxen? He said, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. You have an ox and you're using it to tread out the corn. That ox has a right to partake of the fruit of its labor.

Does God care for oxen? Yes, God cares for oxen. But it wasn't just written for oxen. It was written for our sake as well.

And the God who legislates about oxen is interested in the provision of his people's needs. We have a God who cares. We're reminded in the Old Testament that in heaven we have a great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And just as the priest in the Old Testament, he had the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders, and he had the names of the children of Israel on his breastplate. The shoulders, of course, speak of the place of strength, don't they? And the breast speaks of the place of affection. And that reminds us that we have a high priest and he carries our names on his shoulders and he carries our names on his breast as well.

And if that isn't touching enough, just remember, he said, I've graven your names on the palms of my hands. And it's quite impossible for us to think of that without thinking of Calvary and the nails that pierced those hands there. At such a cost, he engraved our names on the palms of his hands.

It says he numbers the hairs of our head and in the Psalms, it tells us that he numbers our tossings on our beds at night. Just think of that. Are you an insomniac tossing around, thrashing around in the bed? He counts every one of them.

And not only that, he keeps our tears in his bottle and keeps an accurate account of every one of them. Does he care? I'll say he cares. He says in Zechariah, whoever touches you, touches the apple of my eye.

Just think of that. I think the apple of the eye is probably one of the most sensitive parts of a human body. And God uses that figure of the human body.

And he said, whoever touches you, it's just the same as touching the apple of my eye and no weapon formed against you will ever prosper. Isn't that wonderful? No weapon formed against his people will prosper. There's a lovely passage in the book of Isaiah.

It says that the heathen carry their gods on their shoulders. You know, gods of wood and stone. The heathen, the pagans, they carry their gods on their shoulders.

But God carries his people. Quite a difference, isn't it? And he not only says he carries us, it says he bears us up on eagles wings. When we go through the waters, the rivers or the fire, he is with us.

In all our afflictions, he is afflicted. The good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep will not withhold any good thing from them who love him. We read in Deuteronomy, he cares for us.

He cares for us from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. He bears us even to old age. In fact, he will never leave us, nor forsake us.

Just remember when you leave the meeting and go home and go to bed and sleep. God isn't going to do that. He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Does God care? Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Or as one translation says, it matters to him about you.

For the second verse, would you turn back to 2nd Kings chapter 5 and verse 4. 2nd Kings chapter 5 and verse 4. This is a familiar story of Naaman the leper. I'm not going to go into the story tonight. I don't have to.

But you remember there was a little Jewish maiden, and she said, if my master Naaman would just go and see the man of God in Israel, I believe he could get healed of his leprosy. And I'd just like to read to you verse 4. And one went in and told his Lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. The maid that is of the land of Israel.

What was her name? Somebody tell me. Unknown. She's one of the great unnamed persons in the Bible.

And I think there's a deep spiritual insight here. Some unnamed people in the Bible did great exploits for God. We have our personality cult in evangelical Christianity today.

But I want to tell you, God has God has his heroes, and he doesn't even record their names in the book. I think of those three men who heard David. David.

All he did was practically whisper. If I could just get a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem and between him and Bethlehem were the enemy's forces. That's all he just breathed the wish some of that lovely water from the well of Bethlehem.

Three of his men, they heard it. They said, that's all we need. They broke through the enemy's lines.

They went and they got the water and they brought it back to David and David looked at the water. He couldn't drink it. He couldn't drink it when he thought that these men risked their lives to get him that drink of water.

He poured it out on the ground as a holy offering to the Lord. But the beautiful thing is their names aren't recorded. You just don't know what their names were.

But God knows that's really all that matters. In second Kings chapter four, you have the great woman of Shunam. Isn't that lovely? That's all we know about her, the great woman of Shunam.

She said, I think we should build a chamber for the prophet so that when he comes by, he'll have a room to himself and her husband and she, they did that very thing. And her name is really eulogized in the Bible, but we don't know what her name was. The great woman of Shunam.

Somebody has said, it's wonderful how much you can do for God if you don't care who gets the credit. Apparently these people didn't care who got the credit. They just wanted to do it for God.

I think of the woman who anointed the head of Jesus. As far as Matthew is concerned, at least her name isn't given. And yet the Lord Jesus said that wherever the gospel would be preached from that day on, what that woman had done would be told as a memorial for her.

Our country has its unknown soldier down in Arlington Cemetery. Well, I want to tell you, God has his unknown soldiers too. And people who were great for him.

I think of the widow, the poor widow who cast in her two mites. And the scripture says the Lord Jesus said she cast in more than all the rest. She cast in all her living.

I think of the lad who gave his five loaves and two fishes. We don't know his name, but the Lord took them and blessed them and broke them and fed 5,000 men plus women and children. The Spirit of God hasn't seen fit to give us the name of that little boy.

God knows his name is written in heaven. And there's a lovely touch when Paul is writing to the Corinthians in the second epistle. He's sending Titus down to Corinth to get a collection for the needy things in Jerusalem.

And he sends two unnamed brethren with Titus. Their names aren't given. We don't know the commentators all conjecture, but there's no way of knowing who they were.

God didn't want us to know. But you know what? Paul speaks of those two. He says they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ.

That's a startling expression. The glory of Christ. Two unknown brethren who just went to pick up a collection.

That's what they're called. And I don't know that. I don't know that that expression is used to describe anybody else in the Bible.

The glory of Christ. Those of you who are familiar with Gray's poem, The Elegy in a Country Churchyard. You know, Gray is traveling through this churchyard and he's looking at all the stones, the gray stones, and he thinks of people whose bodies are lying there.

And there was a real greatness about them. But the world never heard of them. And Gray said, full, many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its fragrance in the desert air.

That's what Gray said. But I want to tell you something. There's no fragrance wasted with God.

Although many of these people in the Bible are unseen and unknown, God knows all about it. And God is a faithful record keeper. So I like that.

I like to come across those passages. The maiden of Israel, a little maiden, is a great woman of Shunem, the three men who broke through the enemy's ranks to get the water for David. Keep me little and unknown, loved and prized by Christ alone.

That's enough. Really is enough. Isaiah chapter forty five and verse three.

Isaiah chapter forty five and verse three. Of course, we're taking verses just in isolation. But I believe, as I said before, that you can do this with any verse from the Bible, that every every word of God is pure and the spiritual meaning and teaching in every phrase and clause in the word of God.

It says verse three, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that thou mayest know that I, the Lord which call thee by thy name and the God of Israel. I just like to take the first part of the verse. I will give thee the treasures of darkness.

Now, first of all, in the context, these words were spoken by God to Cyrus, the king of Persia. And when he uses the expression, the treasures of darkness, I have no doubt that he's telling Cyrus, Cyrus, you're going to go and you're going to conquer many dark nations, and I'm going to give you booty treasures from those nations. I believe that's what it means in a context.

The treasures of darkness, that is the spoils of war from countries that he would conquer. We don't have to be limited by that. We can use the expression, the treasures of darkness in quite another way.

We can apply it in a spiritual sense. And the insight in this verse would be this. There are treasures to be found in the dark nights that you'd never find in days of unrelieved sunshine.

And I just know that there are many people here in the meeting tonight who know the truth of that. There are treasures in the darkness, spiritually speaking, and you never find them when all is rosy in life. God can give songs in the darkest night.

Poets that in many a rapturous minstrel among the sons of light will say of their sweetest music. I learned it in the night and many a rolling anthem that fills the father's home sobbed out its first rehearsal in the shade of a darkened room. And I guess if you and I could look over the history of the Christian church, we would find that the sweetest hymns and the greatest messages, the greatest acts of valiance for the Lord were born out of the deepest trials in life.

Chase Stewart Holden says there is the darkness of life's inexplicable mysteries, the calamities, the catastrophes, the sudden and unexpected experiences which have come into life and which all of our forethought has not been able to ward off. And life is dark because of them. Sorrow, loss, disappointment, injustice, misconception of motives, slander.

These are often the things that make life dark. Praise God, the darkness passes, yet what we learn in the darkness is with us for eternity. Humanly speaking, none of us would choose the darkness, and yet its

benefits are incalculable.

Leslie Weatherhead said, like all men, I love and prefer the sunny uplands of experience when health, happiness and success abound. But I have learned far more about God and life and myself in the darkness of fear and failure than I have ever learned in the sunshine. There are such things as the treasures of darkness.

The darkness, thank God, passes, but what we learn in the darkness we possess forever. God says, I will give thee the treasures of darkness. Maybe someone in the meeting tonight is going through a period of darkness, and you wonder what it's all about.

Let God reveal his spiritual diamonds to you in it. John chapter 14 and verse 14. John 14 and verse 14, a little meditation on prayer.

Steve was speaking to us about prayer earlier, and we've been in prayer. John 14, 14 says, if ye ask anything in my name, I will do it. Spiritual insight.

God answers prayer. Sometimes he gives us what we ask. Sometimes he gives us something better than we ask.

Always he gives us what we need. Sometimes God answers prayer quickly and promptly. At other times, he teaches us to wait patiently.

The poet said, God answers prayer. Sometimes when hearts are weak, he gives the very gifts his children seek. But often faith must learn a deeper rest and trust God's silence when he cannot speak.

For he whose name is love will send the best. Stars may burn out, nor mountain walls endure, but God is true. His promises are sure to those who speak.

We must realize there are conditions to prayer in the Bible. Sometimes you come to a verse of scripture and it seems like a blank check. Just fill in anything you want and get it.

But read carefully and you'll find there are conditions to prayer. In my name, according to my will. If ye abide in me and my words abide in you.

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything. And so individual verses of prayer, promises of prayer, must be taken in the light of all that the scripture says on the subject. I confess there are mysteries to prayer.

But I would rather pray than solve all the mysteries connected with prayer. And the reason I would rather pray is because when I pray, coincidences happen. And when I don't pray, they do not happen.

When we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, I mentioned before, it's the same as if he were making those requests to the Father. And for that reason, when we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, we come the closest that men will ever come to omnipotence. We will never be omnipotent.

We will never have all power. We have tremendous power at our disposal when we come into the presence of God and plead the merits of the name of Jesus. Tremendous power.

The best prayer comes from a strong inward necessity. We can pray best when the trials are the greatest. When all is smooth and serene in life, our prayer life is apt to suffer.

Hudson Taylor said, learn to move men through God by prayer. Learn to move men through God by prayer. And Derek Prince said, and I like this, we can change world events and shape history through the simple yet powerful tools of prayer and fasting.

When we pray, we see things happen that would never happen according to the laws of chance or probability. God answers prayer. One man said this, and I think it's very good.

He said, I measure my influence by the number of people who need my prayers and the number of people who pray for me. I measure my influence by the number of people who need my prayers and the number who pray for me. That isn't the way we usually measure our influence.

I mean, if I could get up and speak to 10,000 people in an auditorium, you'd say, well, that's quite an influence. No, no. Prayer.

The work of God is more done in prayer than in any other way. And our influence is greatest when we're the object of the prayers of people and when we are praying for them. Okay, maybe we have time for one or two more.

First Corinthians, that five minutes we took on the hymn didn't count. I forgot to tell you that. Okay.

First Corinthians chapter 10, verse 10. And that says, neither murmur he, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. This has to do with the sin of complaining.

Neither murmur he, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. The Israelites were chronic complainers. Well, you know the story in the Old Testament, going through the wilderness.

God, I told you, he gave them that marvelous food. What did they say? They said, oh, for the leeks and the onions and garlic of Egypt. Imagine.

And the leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt didn't come alone. They came with the lash of the taskmasters. That is what they wanted.

And God provided this wonderful water supply. And they said, he said, let us out in the wilderness to kill us out there. Let us die in the wilderness.

They complained about their leadership. And they said concerning the manna, we loathe this light food. How awful.

We loathe this light food. God provided for all their needs, and they were ungrateful every mile of the journey. And times haven't changed.

Men are still the same. The heart of man is still the same. And then complains about the weather.

It's either too wet or it's too dry. It's either too hot or it's too cold. Never right.

Now, how could God make it right for everybody? Some need the moisture and some need the hot, dry weather. Complain about the food, lumps in the gravy. Somebody said, how did you enjoy the conference? Oh, it was all right, but there were lumps in the gravy.

Um, burnt toast. People complain about their work and their wages. They have a job.

They're working. They complain about the work. And then when they're out of work, they complain about the unemployment.

Isn't that right? Neither murmur he is. Some of them murmured. People complain about the government.

The taxes are terrible, aren't they? And yet the same people who complain about the taxes are always demanding increasing benefits from the government, which doesn't lower taxes. Unhappy with other people. With the car.

With the service in the restaurants. Minor pain, pains and aches. Wish I were taller.

Wish I were skinnier. Wish I were better looking. No matter how good God has been to us, we say, what has he done for me lately? It must be a trial to God to have people like us on his hand.

Isn't it? Must be a trial to God to have people like us on his hand. He's been so good to us. Providing not only for us the necessities of life, the necessities of life, but luxuries that his own son didn't enjoy when he came to this earth.

Ever think of that? I think of the Lord Jesus coming to earth 1900 years ago. He never slept on a beauty rest mattress. Never.

I don't think he was ever in a house with running water. Do you? No modern facilities? I don't think they had them. Most of those countries, they don't have them today.

I mean, he could have come to the world, I suppose, in the 20th century with all its modern conveniences, but he didn't. And many nights when the disciples went to their home, he went to the Mount of Olives. We have good food, pure water, comfortable homes, clothes in abundance.

Sight. Hearing. Appetite.

Memory. And so many other mercies that we take for granted. He's protected us, guided us, sustained us.

Best of all, he's given us eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. And what thanks does he receive? Nothing but a tirade of complaints. I used to have a friend in Chicago.

Some of you may have known him. His name was Jim Humphrey. And when you ask Jim, how are you, Jim? He'd say it would be a sin to complain.

That was his invariable answer. It would be a sin to complain. And I often think of that.

It is. It really is a sin to complain. The antidote to complaining is thanksgiving.

When we think of all the Lord has done for us, really, there's no reason to complain. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. I spoke on that last night out at Bethesda.

And after the meeting, I said to a sister, how are you? And she said, what can I say? She had been listening. Shall we look to the Lord in closing prayer? Father, we do thank you tonight that you are a God who cares. And we just stand amazed when we think of your individual and infinite care for each one of

your people.

We thank you that you're a good record keeper, too, and that so many of the things done by your people, unknown and unnoticed by men, they're all known by you. And they will be rewarded in a coming day in a manner that's worthy of yourself. We thank you tonight, Lord, for the treasures of darkness, for the lessons that you teach us in the dark places of life that we could never learn in the light.

We thank you for the promises of prayer that we have in the word of God and pray that we might avail ourselves more of them than we do. And finally, Lord, we pray that you'll deliver us from a complaining spirit, help us to be buoyant, thankful Christians pouring out in our heart, pouring out our hearts in praise and adoration and worship to you who are supremely worthy. We ask it in the Savior's name, giving thanks.

Amen.

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