

NO ONE CARED FOR MY SOUL

The 142nd Psalm contains “a prayer of David when he was in the cave.” David, while hiding from King Saul, thought he had been deserted by all his friends. In one of the saddest verses in the Bible, David said, *“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul”* (Psalm 142:2).

Is it possible that we have a friend or neighbor who, like David, feels that no one cares for their soul? In all likelihood, within the last two years one of our friends or neighbors died unprepared to meet God. What did we do to prevent this tragedy? Did they know that we cared for their soul?

Do our children know we care for their soul? If we do, they will know it from our instruction in the Word of God. Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Moses told the people, *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Do our friends know we care for their soul? One of Paul’s greatest desires was for the salvation of his nation (Romans 10:1-3). The obligation he felt to preach made him cry out, *“woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”* (I Corinthians 9:16). When was the last time we invited our friends to a Bible study? It seems as though we can find time to discuss everything in the world except the salvation of a soul which is worth more than the world itself (Matthew 16:26).

Do our brethren know we care for their soul? *“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous...”* (I Peter 3:8). Love for the brethren is expressed by action. Do we help or hinder the public assembly? Are we an encouragement or a constant complainer? We cannot encourage and complain at the same time.

At the judgment, our concern, or lack thereof, will be made known. Imagine the heartache of one of our neighbors saying, in the words of one of our songs, “You never mentioned Him to me; You helped me not the light to see; You met me day by day, and knew I was astray; Yet never mentioned Him to me.”

God warned a prophet by saying, *“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul”* (Ezekiel 3:18-21).

-David Padfield

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

**IDENTIFYING THE CHURCH  
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Identifying the Church by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. Identifying the Church by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. Identifying the Church by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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**BUILDING UP THE BROKEN**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Paul's \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. Paul's \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. Paul's \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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**THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM**

"I want to file a complaint," a man said to his landlord. "On Saturday nights from midnight until about three in the morning, the tenants upstairs keep shouting and stomping on the floor!" "I'm sorry, I'll speak to them at once," the manager replied. "It must be impossible to sleep." "Sleep? Well, no," the man replied, "but they're interrupting my tuba practice."

**THE DAY THE CRICKET ATTENDED**

As a youth, I squirmed through many a worship service. This particular Sunday was to have an added distraction. As soon as the preacher got up to deliver this sermon, a cricket walked out onto the stage. He probably came from one of the cracks that was to be found most anywhere in that old building. Everyone in the first three rows saw the cricket. He looked dazed, and stumbled near the edge of the pulpit area, and our eyes followed his every step. We could see that he had come to the other edge again, and so we internally shouted to ourselves, "Jump! Jump!" But alas, the cricket did not jump. Time after time he walked back and forth. I didn't know if the sermon was any good that day, but the cricket was sure fun to watch.

When the invitation song began, we all stood up and watched the cricket run. He almost got stepped on when the song leader walked toward the microphone, and we all laughed. Then my laughter turned to amazement. Someone had gone forward! My Dad. He wasn't a Christian and my mom and I had been trying for years to get him to come to church with us, to no avail until today. Now the preacher was taking him back to baptize him.

"Dad," I asked later. "What made you want to be baptized today?" Dad said, "Didn't you hear how Jesus gave His life for us so that we could be saved?" I hung my head in shame. The beautiful message of the Bible did not reach me that day. I was watching the cricket.

THOUGHT: A lot of things will tend to distract a person from worshipping God. But I learned my lesson. God is more important than anything.

**JUST COULDN'T MAKE IT**

Brother and Sister Zellner live twenty miles out of Munich, Germany. They arise at 4:00 AM each Sunday morning to get ready for the morning assembly. They walk 45 minutes to the station and leave on the 6:55 train for Munich, arriving at 7:45. There the street car takes them to Lain for the 8:30 prayer meeting. Their Bible study is at 9:00 and their worship at 9:30. Then they make the return trip home, including the 45 minute walk, and get home about 1:30 PM. Sister Zellner is 61 years old. Someone said, "Now, let's see, what did you say was the reason you were not at worship or Bible study?"

**HE'S GOT A POINT**

A business man who was well known for his ruthless behavior once told Mark Twain, "Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top." Mark Twain said, "I have a better idea. You could stay in Boston and keep them."

**THE BOOK OF THE JUDGMENT**

The second epistle to the Thessalonian church was written just a matter of months following the first. It, unlike II Corinthians, apparently was not a rebuttal letter in order to address changes in the church since the first, but rather as a continuance of those principles he sought to establish in the first. The Thessalonians had been misled in a drastic way regarding the second coming of Christ. In the first epistle Paul went about to ease their anxiety regarding those already dead in Christ. Now, in the second epistle, he goes about to clear up further misunderstandings and to encourage them in view of eternity to come.

The exact source of this error into which the church had fallen is unknown; however, Paul does give some insight into why this misunderstanding has taken place. In II Thessalonians 2:1-2, he encouraged the brethren to not be deceived by every wind of false doctrine and identified the means by which they had come to their unsettling conclusions. *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”* As Dunn noted, “This suggests that they were misled by false teachers who claimed to be divinely inspired, who quoted traditional sayings to support their view, and who misrepresented Paul’s first letter concerning the Lord’s coming.” Thus their anxiety over the second coming of Christ had not been cured but had, in some ways, actually been deepened. The false teachers would attempt to deceive, but if they would live faithful lives and worry not about the morrow, then peace and comfort could be theirs’.

As with others of Paul’s letters, II Thessalonians is arranged in sermon form, each chapter providing distinct instruction and encouragement in view of the end day and the comfort they could have amidst the unsettling lies with which they were confronted. First, in chapter one, Paul enlightened his brethren regarding the events of that day and their involvement in it. They, as Christians, might have been suffering in the present, but they could glory in their tribulations because they would be but for a while. At some point those who troubled them would receive the just recompense of their deeds. Therefore,

*“...to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

There is a day coming in which the earth and all its elements will be melted with fervent heat (II Peter 3:10,12), but as terrifying as those events sound, glory will be found in the Lord. Thus by having the facts of that day laid out before them, the Thessalonians could more easily be instructed out of their fears.

Second, in chapter two, Paul eased the worries the Thessalonians had developed over what they believed would be an imminent return. Apparently in the midst of the deceivers’ ramblings, they had convinced the Thessalonians that Christ’s return was immediate, causing both excitement and trouble in the church. The apostle, though, could comfort their troubled minds and did by informing them that Christ’s return would in fact not be imminent and immediate, but rather would follow a certain event that would first occur.

*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”* (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).

There is, from several sources, a falling away prophesied in the New Testament (I Timothy 4:103; II Timothy 3:1-8,13; Matthew 24:24; etc.). Thus does Paul once again refer to it as an event that would precede Christ’s coming. However, Paul likewise refers to the revealing of a man of sin and son of perdition that would precede it as well. And while Paul does not explicitly identify who this is, it is evident that they are affiliated with this falling away. Therefore the people could ease their minds from worry, knowing that Christ was not coming immediately.

Third, in chapter three, Paul encourages them on toward faithful service amidst the trouble they faced. He began by asking for their prayers that the gospel might have free course, a prayer we should continue to pray today. But then he goes on to recognize their struggles in dealing with disorderly brethren and tells them to withdraw from them and go on about their business of serving God. It is easy to become discouraged when surrounded by sin (especially when committed by fellow Christians), thus Paul instructed them to *“be not weary in well doing”* (II Thessalonians 3:13). If they would ignore the busybodies and busy themselves in the service of God they would receive peace from the Lord of peace, and thus relieve their worries about the judgment.

The judgment is a day about which sinners should worry and a day to which Christians can look with anticipation. Perhaps you struggle with similar anxieties as did the Thessalonians. Obey God, and in the words of Paul, *“rest with us.”*

-Andy Brewer