

The Spartan Sower

The sower soweth the word... Mark 4:14



February 26, 2006 (Vol. 6)

WHO CARES?

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"No man cared for my soul" (Ps. 142:4)

Have you ever felt this way? Are we right to think this way? Was David correct in his conclusion? Sometimes we may be discouraged, lonely, overwhelmed with worldly cares - and then think to ourselves: "No one cares for me." But that is not true.

FAMILY - God has ordained the family from the beginning (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:24). He created the husband wife relationship in order to resolve the fact that man does not do as well when he is alone (Gen. 2:18). Also, children left to themselves tend to get in trouble and cause shame to their parents (Prov. 29:15).

Now consider this - Are you lonely because your spouse doesn't pay attention? Because your children do not seem to visit, call or care? Then consider this: did you choose to marry this person? Did you consider seriously what kind of person they were before you married and the influence they would have? Were their decisions selfish before you married? And while married, have you been selfish with your time - ignoring your mate's needs and not showing proper attention to them? And regarding children, did you raise them personally? Where you involved? Or were you distant, busy with work or entertainment... other things? In other words, did you contribute to the situation where it seems "no one cares" (Gal. 6:7)?

BRETHREN - Whether we are part of the problem in the family or not, sometimes family doesn't live up to the standard of what God expects. But God has given us a second family, a spiritual one that we are to love (1 Pet. 2:17). It is such that we should consider each other as "brethren" (Matt. 23:8).

Now consider - are you discouraged because the brethren do not seem to know you exist? They do not talk to you when you come to services or call you when you miss? They do not seem to be interested in your well being? It could be that they have failed to do their part; but it could also be that you have neglected a little bit of your part as well. How so?

Did you ever let anyone know you were a member here? Sometimes people assume things which need to be clearly expressed (Acts 9:26). If no one knows you intend to be a member at a certain location, it is doubtful that your absence will be noted as missing services. Also your address & phone number will probably not be noted in the directory... so that few will know how to contact you. And if you did place membership in a clear fashion - did you begin attending at every opportunity? Many have health concerns - but did you come when you could? Did your actions show that you were a part of the congregation every time you possibly could be?

Also, have you called or visited anyone who was sick or absent? Have you sent any cards to visitors? If you have not done these things, how can you complain that others have not done them for you? Do you put out your hand to greet the brethren? or do you just come in and wait for others to do all that? We should seriously consider the log in our own eye before taking the speck out of another's eye (Matt. 7:1-5).

GOD - Now it is true that brethren sometimes fail to do all they should. And sometimes we are guilty of the very things we complain about in others. But no matter the failings of family & brethren - there is One who cares for us perfectly. Yes, it is God the Father - "He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). But some may think, "He is up in heaven... and I have no one here to help me." But we fail to recognize that God's help, though he is physically not present, is very far better for us than any earthly help. At any time, in any place, in any situation - we can go to Him by faith in prayer (1 Pet. 5:7). And we can have every assurance that as we live for Him, He will hear and answer our prayers according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). And His answers will be for our good, our edification and salvation. Always.

Consider Paul, when he stood before the leader of the known world in a trial that could (and did) result in his death. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God

that it may not be laid to their charge." (2 Tim. 4:16). Though he obviously didn't have family there, and even all the brethren failed him - consider his attitude toward the brethren. He prayed for them. he didn't complain just to complain. He told Timothy so that Timothy would give more diligence to come and visit him (2 Tim. 4:9). Yes Paul needed encouragement - but he chose not to let that overwhelm him or cause him to speak disparagingly of his brethren. How could he do this?

Simply this: "Notwithstanding **the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me**; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (2 Tim. 4:17). Paul saw in his circumstances an opportunity. By faith he used the occasion not to fall in on himself in self-pity, but rather served God with what means and ability he had. Paul had true faith. He knew God's promises did not include a flawless and perfectly happy earthly life. But he didn't doubt God's love and trustworthiness. And when some brethren fell short, he prayed for them - showing forth his love and care for them even when what they did was discouraging.

There are times when it seems the world is against us. There may be times when family, friends, and brethren fail. But let us do like David did when his home was raided, his wives taken, and all his friends so distraught they spoke of stoning him: "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: **but David strengthened himself in Jehovah his God.**" (1 Sam 30:6). We can choose

to be strengthened or choose to "stew in our own juices". What will you do? With all that God has provided for us, why not see through the murky moment to the great and precious love He has for us? And why not begin praying for others and seeking opportunities to do what needs to be done?

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Business Meeting** – Sun. Feb.26 @ 5pm.
- **Home Bible Study** – Sat., March 4th & 18th
- **Men's Class / Ladies Class** - Tues., March 14th @ 7 pm.
- **Debate on Security of Believer** - Sparta Civic Center on March 24-25, 2006.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Ron Daly, April 2-7, 2006.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Ron Roberts, Oct.15-20, 2006.

PRAY FOR

Mag Bumbalough, Greg Capps, Sabrina Capps (tests), **Thelma Cunningham, Donald Eller, Wanda Frazier, Holly Jernigan** (Joyce Gardner's niece has cancer), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Roger Kline** (Was in intensive care, but is home again), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Monie Petty, Dave Poteet** (Recovering from surgery), **Kenny Streeval, Rose Taylor, Sissy Wheeler** (friend of Marilyn's, cancer), **Ed Williams, Dorris Williams, Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece).

Those in Iraq: Jason Zelenak (Alisa Fletcher's brother), **Cary Matheny**.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday Bible Study	9 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6 pm
Wednesday Bible Study	7 pm

North Sparta church of Christ

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<i>Place</i>
<i>Stamp</i>
<i>Here</i>