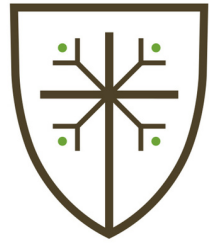


# TO CARE & NOT TO CARE

Lent Sermon Series

Art: "Solens" by Dawn Waters Baker

# SERMON NOTES



## February 18, 2024

### SERMON INFO

#### TITLE

"Grieved to the Heart"

#### PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

#### TEXTS

Genesis 6:5-14, 7:15-17

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Consider our sermon series title, "to care and not to care." What are some things that you know you care too much about? And what are others that you know you don't care enough about?
2. How does giving up things or taking on certain practices during lent help to realign our cares with God's cares?

### SERMON IN SUMMARY

This Sunday was the first Sunday in Lent, and Tim began our new sermon series with the question, "What do we care about? What is it our heart runs to?" The title of our new series comes from a poem by T.S. Eliot, Ash Wednesday, written soon after his conversion to Christianity – "Teach us to care and not to care." But how do we learn how to care and how to not care?

#### Our Intentions

Our Old Testament passage today tells the story of Noah. And it says about the people in Noah's day, that every intention of the heart was only evil all the time. It doesn't say that their actions and words were evil, but the intentions of their hearts. God's chief concern is with our heart. And Lent is a season in which we are particularly called to examine the intentions of our heart.

#### God's Right

So, what does God do with the intentions of our heart? He judges them. In the story of Noah, he judges them with a flood. And note that it is violence in particular that brings about the flood. Human violence wins out if there is no divine judgement. Unless there's a God outside the material world who created us and all things, we don't have an intellectual defense against the naturalness of violence. As Nietzsche and others have said, there is no absolute right or absolute wrong.

We will pick up the sword if we believe that God can't or won't do it. And if human anger is left unchecked, it begins to twist our soul. There is a judge, but it is not you or me. Only when we see this and embrace this will we be able to move on.

#### God's Heart

In verse 6 of Genesis chapter 6, there is a shift from looking at the state of the people in the land, to looking at God and his response. All the previous joy and delight in human kind is gone and instead it says he is "grieved to the heart." We are inextricably bound up in God's heart because we are his children, made in his image. In his grief, God sends the flood. But the flood is not the solution, it is only the pattern. Waters are sent both to destroy and to lift to salvation. Salvation through judgement.

The cross is the ultimate flood. God's heart breaks fully and in the death of Jesus, divine judgement is reconciled with divine grief. And this lent, as we meditate on the cross and journey towards Christ death and resurrection, we are invited to enter into God's grief, to learn how to care and not to care about the proper things, to care for others and the world more than ourselves, to care about the intentions of our heart, not just our appearances and actions.