

“A Man Who Cares”

Summary

What does it really mean to be cared for by God? This message takes us deep into one of the most honest and raw moments in Scripture -- the disciples waking Jesus during a violent storm and crying out, 'Do you not care that we are perishing?' That question, spoken in desperation on a sinking boat, turns out to be one of the most universally human questions ever asked. We have all been there -- in the middle of our own storms, wondering if God is asleep at the wheel. The central revelation here is both comforting and challenging: God's care for us is not defined by how quickly or conveniently He responds to our circumstances. His care runs far deeper than a temporal fix. Through the story of Lazarus in John 11, we see Jesus deliberately delay His response -- not out of indifference, but out of a love that is aimed at something eternal rather than something immediate. The same God who numbers the hairs on our heads and notices every sparrow that falls is not absent in our suffering. He is positioning us for something greater. The invitation extended to us is to stop measuring God's care by our circumstances and start trusting the character of a Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. That is a care unlike anything this world can offer.

Small Group Study Guide – A Man Who Cares

OVERVIEW

This session explores one of the most personal questions we can ask about Jesus: Does he actually care about me? Drawing from the account of the disciples in the storm (Mark 4:36-41), this guide will help your group move past surface-level answers and wrestle honestly with what it means to trust a God whose care often looks different than what we expect.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The disciples' accusation -- "Do you not care that we are perishing?" -- reflects a question humanity has been asking God since the Garden of Eden.
- God's silence or delayed response to our problems is not evidence that He does not care. His care operates at an eternal level, not just a temporal one.

- Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep -- the ultimate demonstration of care.
 - We are called to cast our cares on God, but casting requires ongoing, active trust -- not a one-time transaction.
 - When we truly receive God's care for us, it transforms us into people who carry that same care for others.
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ICEBREAKER

Think of a time someone showed you care in a way you did not expect or even initially recognize as care. What did it look like, and how did you eventually come to appreciate it?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening the Conversation

1. The sermon opened with the disciples waking Jesus during the storm and saying, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" Have you ever felt that way toward God -- that his inaction in a difficult moment felt like indifference? What were the circumstances?
2. Pastor Rob pointed out that God has been "on trial in the minds of man" since the Garden of Eden, when the serpent misrepresented God's character to Adam and Eve. In what ways do you see God's character being misrepresented in culture today? How does that affect people's willingness to trust him?

Going Deeper

3. Pastor Rob made the distinction between God caring for us at a temporal level versus an eternal level. He said, "He cares for us in a way that doesn't coddle your flesh." What is the difference between care that comforts us immediately and care that changes us permanently? Can you think of examples of both in your own life?
4. In the story of Lazarus (John 11), the text says that because Jesus loved Lazarus and his family, he stayed two more days before going to them. How does that challenge your definition of what it looks like when God cares for you? What assumptions about God's care does that story force you to re-examine?
5. Pastor Rob said, "If you're feeling the weight, you're carrying the freight." What does it practically look like for you to genuinely cast a burden on the Lord rather than just saying the words? What makes that difficult?
6. In the account of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), Martha essentially told Jesus how to demonstrate his care -- by instructing her sister to help her. Pastor Rob noted that sometimes we do the same thing in prayer, telling God how to fix our situation. How do you personally navigate the tension between bringing specific requests to God and trusting him to respond in his own way?

7. The sermon referenced 1 Peter 5:6-10, which moves from "cast all your anxieties on him" directly into a warning about the devil prowling around like a roaring lion. Why do you think Peter placed those two ideas side by side? What does that pairing tell us about the nature of God's care and the reality of spiritual opposition?
8. Pastor Rob said, "We all want to help people, but what does help look like?" How does understanding God's pattern of care -- sometimes delayed, always purposeful -- change the way you try to care for the people around you?

Personal Reflection

9. The sermon described a pattern of exchange: surrendering our own way of doing things and allowing Jesus to fill that space. Where in your life are you currently resisting that exchange? What would it look like to yield that area to him?
10. Isaiah 43:1-7 speaks directly and personally -- "I have called you by name, you are mine." If you genuinely believed that about yourself on your hardest days, how would it change the decisions you make, the fears you entertain, or the way you treat other people?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, Choose One:

- **Identify a specific fear or anxiety you are currently carrying.** Write it down. Then, each morning this week, intentionally offer it to God in prayer with thanksgiving -- following the pattern in Philippians 4:6. At the end of the week, journal what you noticed.
- **Read Psalm 139 slowly and personally.** Let it reshape how you understand God's awareness of and attention to your individual life. Bring one verse that stood out to your group next week and share why.
- **Examine your prayer life for the "Martha pattern."** Are there areas where you have been telling God how to show up rather than trusting him to respond in his own way? Confess that honestly and practice releasing the outcome.
- **Ask someone in your life this week: "How can I actually pray for you?"** Then pray for them in the way they asked, while also asking God privately what his deeper work might be in their situation.
- **Memorize 1 Peter 5:7.** Summarized: God invites us to transfer our anxieties to him because his care for us is genuine and active. Carry that truth with you throughout the week and recall it whenever anxiety rises.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Use these prompts to guide your group in closing prayer:

- Confess any area where you have accused God of not caring or have tried to direct how he should respond to your needs.
 - Thank God specifically for one way he has cared for you that you did not recognize at the time.
 - Ask for the peace described in Philippians 4:7 -- the kind that goes beyond natural reasoning -- to guard your heart and mind this week.
 - Pray for one another by name, specifically regarding fears or anxieties that were shared during the discussion.
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FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Mark 4:35-41 -- The storm on the sea
- John 10:1-18 -- Jesus as the Good Shepherd
- John 11:1-44 -- The raising of Lazarus
- Luke 10:38-42 -- Martha and Mary
- 1 Peter 5:6-11 -- Casting cares and standing firm
- Philippians 4:6-7 -- Prayer, thanksgiving, and peace
- Psalm 55:22 -- Casting your burden on the Lord
- Isaiah 43:1-7 -- God's personal care and claim over his people
- Matthew 10:29-31 -- The sparrows and the hairs of your head

Main Points – A Man Who Cares

Sermon Summary:

In this installment of the ongoing series "What Manner of Man Is This," Pastor Rob draws attention to a phrase often overlooked in the account of Jesus calming the storm -- the disciples' accusation, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" Using this as a launching point, the sermon explores the profound and often misunderstood nature of God's care for humanity. Pastor Rob argues that God's care is not defined by immediate responses to human problems, but by a deep, eternal concern for our ultimate transformation and well-being. God's silence or delay is not indifference -- it is often the very mechanism through which he reveals himself most powerfully. The sermon challenges believers to stop defining God's care by temporal circumstances and instead trust in a love that is higher, deeper, and more purposeful than any earthly standard of care. As believers grow in this understanding, they are transformed into the image of Jesus and become vessels of that same care for the world around them.

Key Points:

- The disciples' accusation -- "Do you not care that we are perishing?" -- reflects a common human tendency to measure God's care by his immediate response to our problems
- God's care is eternal and transformative, not merely temporal and circumstantial; he is after deeper root issues, not just surface-level fixes
- Since the Garden of Eden, God has been on trial in the minds of humanity, misrepresented by the enemy as withholding and uncaring
- Jesus consistently reframes the narrative, pointing people back to the truth of God's deep, personal, and purposeful care
- Casting our cares upon the Lord is a practical, ongoing act -- if you are still feeling the weight, you are still carrying the freight
- Anxiety, fear, and stress are among the greatest plagues of humanity, and they are directly tied to a failure to trust in God's care
- Prayer with thanksgiving is the divine strategy for releasing anxiety and receiving the peace that surpasses understanding
- God's care does not always look the way we expect -- his delays and apparent silences are often setups for greater revelation and glory
- As believers encounter the true Jesus and are transformed into his image, they become extensions of his care to the world around them
- True care for others means being an available vessel in step with God, not simply reacting to every need in our own strength

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:36-41 -- the account of Jesus calming the storm, from which the series title and today's theme are drawn

- John 10:10-15 -- Jesus describing himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, contrasted with the hireling who cares nothing for them
- 1 Peter 5:6-11 -- the call to humble oneself, cast all anxieties on God because he cares, and resist the enemy with firm faith
- Psalm 55:22 -- the promise that casting one's burden on the Lord results in being sustained
- Philippians 4:6-7 -- the instruction to pray with thanksgiving in everything, with the promise of a peace that surpasses understanding
- Matthew 10:29-31 -- Jesus pointing to the Father's awareness of even sparrows falling, declaring that people are of far greater value
- Mark 12:13-17 -- the question about paying taxes to Caesar, and Jesus redirecting the conversation to whose image people bear
- John 11:1-44 -- the account of Lazarus's illness, death, and resurrection
- Luke 10:38-42 -- Mary and Martha, with Martha accusing Jesus of not caring while Mary chooses the better portion
- 1 Corinthians 9:9 -- God's care extending even to the practical and financial dimensions of life
- Isaiah 43:1-7 -- God's personal declaration of care, redemption, and love for his people, including promises over their children

Discussion Questions – A Man Who Cares

The disciples accused Jesus of not caring because he was asleep during the storm — in what ways do you find yourself interpreting God's silence or inaction as indifference, and how might that assumption be challenged by what you know of his character?

The sermon draws a distinction between the kind of care we want from God — immediate, circumstantial relief — and the kind of care God actually provides, which is deeper and eternal in nature; which type of care do you most often seek from God, and what would it look like to trust him with the deeper kind?

Peter instructs believers to cast all their anxieties on God because he cares, and then immediately warns them to be watchful of the enemy — how does understanding both God's care and the reality of spiritual opposition shape the way you approach difficult seasons of life?

Pastor Rob said that if you are still feeling the weight of a burden, you are still carrying the freight, meaning you have not truly released it to God — what burdens are you still carrying that you have told yourself you already gave to him?

Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus not because of the death of one man, but because the people around him had no idea who he was or what he was about to do — what does this reveal about the kind of grief God may feel when we fail to recognize his nature and intentions toward us?

Martha told Jesus exactly what she needed him to do — instruct Mary to help her — and Jesus refused while redirecting her attention to what was truly necessary; in what ways do you attempt to instruct God on how to care for you, and what might you be missing as a result?

The image on a coin determined to whom it belonged, and Jesus used that moment to ask whose image is on humanity — how does living as a bearer of God's image change the way you understand your purpose, your struggles, and your relationship with him?

God honored human free will from the beginning, and that much of the suffering in the world is a consequence of humanity choosing to live apart from him — how does this perspective shape your understanding of suffering, and does it change the way you relate to God in painful circumstances?

Scriptures – A Man Who Cares

Here is a list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

****Directly Cited****

- Mark 4:36-41
- John 10:10
- John 10:11-15
- 1 Peter 5:6-11
- Psalm 55:22
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Matthew 10:29-31
- Mark 12:13-17
- John 11:1-44
- Luke 10:38-42
- 1 Corinthians 9:9
- Isaiah 43:1-7
- Psalm 139

****Alluded To or Referenced in Passing****

- Genesis 2-3 (the Garden of Eden, the serpent, Adam and Eve, the Fall)
- Matthew 11:28-30 (come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden)
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 (taking every thought captive)
- Romans 8:28 (all things working together for good)
- Romans 8:35-37 (who shall separate us from the love of God, more than conquerors)
- 1 John 3:2 (when we see him, we shall be like him)
- Acts 3:1-12 (the gate Beautiful, healing of the lame man)
- 1 Corinthians 12:25 (having the same care one for another)

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on "What Manner of Man Is This?" – A Man Who Cares

Day 1: The Storm and the Sleeping Savior

Reading: Mark 4:35-41

Devotional: The disciples were not wrong to feel afraid. The storm was real, the water was rising, and Jesus was asleep. What they were wrong about was their conclusion -- that his stillness meant indifference. God's silence is not God's absence. His delay is not his denial. The very one they accused of not caring was the only one capable of stopping the storm entirely. Before you allow your circumstances to write the verdict on God's character, pause. The God who holds the wind and the waves in his hands has not forgotten your name or your need.

Reflection Questions:

- In what area of your life have you mistaken God's silence for indifference?
- What would it look like to trust him before the storm is calmed?

Practical Application: Write down one current fear or anxiety. Beside it, write one truth about God's character that directly contradicts the fear. Return to that truth every time the fear resurfaces today.

Day 2: Casting What You Cannot Carry

Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-11; Philippians 4:6-7

Devotional: Peter does something striking. In the same breath that he invites us to cast our anxieties on God, he warns us that an adversary is prowling nearby. This is not a contradiction -- it is a strategy. God is not building a people who are sheltered from adversity. He is building a people so grounded in his care that adversity cannot move them. The peace described in Philippians 4 is not the peace of resolved circumstances. It is the peace of a settled soul. If you are still feeling the weight, you may still be carrying the freight. Give it to him again. And again. There is no limit on how many times you can cast.

Reflection Questions:

- What cares have you claimed to surrender but are still carrying?
- How does thanksgiving practically shift your perspective in the middle of difficulty?

Practical Application: Set a specific time today to pray through Philippians 4:6-7 slowly. Name each anxiety out loud, offer it to God, and follow it immediately with one specific expression of thanksgiving.

Day 3: Whose Image Do You Carry?

Reading: Mark 12:13-17; Genesis 1:26-27

Devotional: When Jesus held up that coin and asked whose image was on it, he was doing far more than settling a tax debate. He was pointing to a deeper question every human being must answer: whose image do you carry, and are you living in light of it? You were not stamped with the image of Caesar. You were not formed in the image of your failures, your fears, or your worst moments. You were made in the image of God. That image was marred by sin, but it was not destroyed. And through Jesus, it is being restored. The world is waiting to see what a person who genuinely reflects God's image looks like. That person is meant to be you.

Reflection Questions:

- In what areas of your life does the image of God show clearly through you?
- Where has fear, anxiety, or sin distorted or obscured that image?

Practical Application: Identify one relationship or situation today where you can intentionally reflect God's care to another person -- not by solving their problem, but by being present, unhurried, and genuinely attentive to them.

Day 4: When Love Looks Like a Delay

Reading: John 11:1-44

Devotional: Jesus loved Lazarus. The Bible makes that unmistakably clear. And because He loved him, He waited. That sentence should reshape everything we think we know about how God expresses care. Martha and Mary both said the same thing when they finally saw Jesus: if you had been here, this would not have happened. Their grief was real and their faith was genuine, but their vision was too small. They were hoping for a healing. Jesus was arranging a resurrection. God's care for you is never less than what you are asking for. It is almost always far more. The question is whether you will trust him in the waiting long enough to see it.

Reflection Questions:

- Where in your life has God's delay felt like abandonment?
- Looking back, can you identify a time when God's timing produced something greater than your original request?

Practical Application: Read John 11:4 slowly and prayerfully. Ask God to show you one situation in your life where what feels like an unanswered prayer might actually be a resurrection being prepared. Write what comes to mind and hold it in prayer this week.

Day 5: Fear Not -- You Are Known and Called by Name

Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7; Matthew 10:29-31

Devotional: God does not care for you as a category. He does not love you as part of a crowd. He calls you by name. He knows the precise number of hairs on your head, the weight of every fear you carry, and the depth of every longing you have never spoken aloud. Isaiah 43 was written to a people in exile -- people who had every reason to believe God had forgotten them. And into that darkness God speaks with stunning personal intimacy: you are precious in my eyes, you are honored, and I love you. That is not a general announcement. That is a word spoken directly to you. Fear not. He who formed you has not forsaken you. He is with you still.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you genuinely believe that God's care for you is personal and not merely general?
- What would change in your daily life if you lived as though you were truly precious in God's eyes?

Practical Application: Read Isaiah 43:1-7 aloud and insert your own name wherever the text addresses Israel or Jacob. Let those words settle into you personally. Then spend five minutes in quiet, simply receiving God's care rather than asking for anything. Practice being still in his presence.

This reading plan is designed to be used in sequence over five consecutive days, though each day's content stands on its own. Return to any day as often as needed. The goal is not information -- it is transformation.