

Does Jesus Care?

Mark 4:35-39

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Life can suddenly become harsh, causing us to _____ whether the Lord cares about us. When I'm hurting, does Jesus care about me? We know that the Bible will give us the truth, so we keep on looking to it for the _____. Our goal is to _____ God because we love Him and we want to be close to Him. Longing to be close to God is _____, especially when you're hurting. The sons of Korah described the heartache of longing for God – **Read Psalm 42:1-3.**

When tough times come, many feel that God is _____. They wonder if the Lord is watching or if He cares. They long for God's help and _____. Does Jesus care when our hearts are broken with grief, when the bills pile up, when the children are hungry, or when we can't seem to get well? Does God know what you're going through and hear your _____?

Nothing escapes the _____ of God. Luke 12:6 says that not even a _____ can fall to the ground apart from God's knowledge. God not only sees what happens outwardly, He can also see the troubles _____ your heart. He knows all about you, because He created you. He knows your every need and knows your every heartache. There's never been a single moment in your life when God has closed His heart and not wanted to be close to you and _____ you.

Our reading today gives us details about an event in the life of Jesus, in Mark 4:35-39.

Frightening, life-threatening _____ happened suddenly on the sea of Galilee. In this storm Jesus is _____, with "his head on a cushion." The disciples cry out "Master, don't you _____ that we are perishing?" We all ask questions like this, and we need an answer. We see the world's agonies and _____ if God is paying attention. We need help from Someone bigger than we are and we need His help _____.

Jesus didn't answer their question immediately. Instead, He rebuked the storm and made the water _____. Then Jesus asked the disciples, "How is it that you have no _____?" In so many cases in life, the question is not whether God cares, but whether we _____.

Of course, Jesus cares. Mark five, in the first 20 verses, describes how the Lord Jesus delivered Legion, a demon-possessed man who lived like a _____. Later in the chapter, verses 25 to 34, Jesus _____ a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years; and then later on, verses 35 to 43, He _____ the daughter of Jairus.

Someone objects, "But why doesn't God _____ every problem? Why is it the Lord _____ asleep and uncaring?" Here is the assumption: if God doesn't stop _____ our problems, He doesn't really care about us. We want God to keep us _____ from any struggles or difficulties. It's tempting to question God's love when we _____ challenges or disappointments. We think if God loves us, He will protect us from any and _____ problem. But, is a painless world free from any problems, really the _____ for us? It may be convenient and comfortable, but is it best for our character? Doesn't the person who faces no problems and gets everything his

own way think that the whole world revolves around him?

Challenges shape us into people of _____. James 1:2-4 says, “Consider it all _____, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect _____, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” We may see trials and struggles the _____ way. God permits them because He sees a greater _____ with them than without them. Struggles help us become the _____ people that God desires. So, let’s rejoice in our trials, because God uses them to _____ us into His people.

James 1:12 says, “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” It doesn’t say, “Blessed is the man who has no troubles,” but “blessed is the man who perseveres under trial.” He’s the man who won’t quit on God on a rough day. Because he loves God, even in tough times, God will reward him with the crown of life.

The Lord demonstrates that He cares. You might ask the question, “How?” First, He shows that He _____ suffering in that He himself suffered for our sins. He Himself _____ the punishment that rightfully was our own. First Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His _____.” It was personal, and He did it on the cross, “so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” God loved His Son Jesus, but He didn’t _____ the crucifixion. Jesus prayed with _____ in the Garden to let this cup pass, but God sacrificed His Son because He loved you and me, just as He loved His Son. Atoning for sin was more _____ to Jesus Himself than freedom from suffering. Have you considered how greatly our Father suffered in sacrificing His Son? No one has grieved over human _____ more than God Himself has. No one has suffered more than Jesus, who bore the cross for our sins. He showed unmistakably how much He loved us. This loving God asks us to _____ Him when we and our loved ones cry out for help.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-23. This is what the disciples in the boat needed and what we need: trust God! First Peter 5:7 urges us to cast “all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Read the question the apostle Paul asked and the answer he gave in Romans 8:35-39.

God didn’t stop the apostles from being _____; He didn’t stop Stephen from being _____; and He didn’t stop James from being beheaded by the sword. God didn’t keep Paul from imprisonment. They knew God would _____ by them. Suffering may _____ us to quit on God. Remember, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not _____ to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted or tested beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

These temptations or tests don’t single us out, but they are common. We all suffer, and that suffering can challenge our _____. God isn’t _____ when the trials come. He is faithful! You can trust Him! Nothing that you encounter today, nothing tomorrow, or nothing at any time will ever be _____ than what God and you together can handle. He doesn’t remove all of our problems, but God does give us the strength and the ability to _____ those challenges and

those temptations and those tests. When the problem gets so big that we can't handle it, God makes a way of escape so that we'll never be overcome by it.

God sometimes uses the physical struggles that we face to keep us from doing ourselves _____ harm. God gave the apostle Paul some tremendous, miraculous revelations to help him in his ministry. But, God didn't want Paul to _____ himself, so He gave him "a thorn in the flesh" to torment him and keep him from exalting himself (2 Corinthians 12:7). Paul prayed three times for the Lord to take away his "thorn in the flesh"; but God refused and said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for _____ is perfected in weakness."

Paul realized that this thorn was not going away. Was he bitter? No! He learned something valuable: God's power is perfected, made stronger, in weakness. Paul said, "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather _____ about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Struggles remind us that we _____ God. Many folks think that they can manage without God; but in our darkest moments, we see how much we really need God.

God's grace is indeed sufficient. Yes, it is! Suffering may torment your body, but it can't take away your _____. Suffering may open up for you an opportunity to see the great power of God, to help you _____ yourself even in times of weakness. Jesus does indeed care. Just as Jesus wept with Mary and Martha at the _____ of Lazarus, so He weeps with us. The Lord knows when we _____, and He provides comfort and strength that we need, to overcome.

Sometimes people continue to ask, "Why the Lord doesn't stop all evil right now?" But if the Lord stopped all evil, wouldn't that also include the evil that you do? You know if we ask God to stop all evil, we need to consider the wrongs that we do. Your sin hurts; it hurts God; it hurts you; and it hurts others. The Lord patiently loves you enough to lead you to a better way. He asks you to _____ your life by repenting.

Repentance is not punishment, but _____. The Lord knows that there is a _____ person inside of you, wanting to come out. He knows that your repentance will not only bless your life, but bless all the people that you _____. When you come to Christ and stop the old way of sin, you bless people that you formerly _____. He graciously gives us time to repent. "The Lord is not _____ about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for _____ to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Jesus loved you and gave you the righteous _____ to follow. He showed us how to _____ and how to be forgiven. He gave us his Word to _____ our lives. He could say, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you _____. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Times of crisis call for the _____ in people. Bravery, heroism, love, self-sacrifice—all of these things flourish in times of _____. People who exhibit such traits are cherished and honored as having gone "above and beyond the call of _____." Was this not the very point that

Christ was making when He said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his _____” (John 15:13).

The most important question is not, “why did this happen to me?” but rather, “what shall I do now?” Some reject God and abandon Him when _____ comes their way. Some turn _____ in self-pity. Others exercise their _____ and find that God has not forgotten them. They entrust their souls to Him and find His _____ is true, which says “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Not everything that happens to us is _____; but let’s not assume that the only way that God can care for us is to _____ our troubles. God also shows His care by taking the harshest things in our lives and using them for _____, not only to bless us, but also to bless others. God has the power to prevent; and we have no idea all the _____ from which He has protected us already. But, God also has the power to take the things that are at their _____ and make good out of them. He can also do that for you.

Instead of blaming God for _____, look to Him for _____. Struggles remind us that God never intended this world to be our _____. We are _____, and our lives here are brief. Paul said, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the _____ that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). We too must learn to see with the _____ of faith and trust. The last chapter of our lives has not yet been written. When Jesus comes again, He will bless and comfort His own.

Jesus cares about you. He wants to be your _____. He cares about your physical welfare, your finances, your family, and your future. More than anything, Jesus cares about your _____. The Lord Jesus knows all about you, the good and the bad. He even knows the number of hairs upon your head. In spite of it all, He loves you and He cares greatly about every detail of your life.

Sometimes we concentrate so much on our longing for God to _____ that we forget God is longing for a relationship with us. The Lord deeply _____ that we draw close to Him. When we forget Him or get caught up in _____, He yearns for His people to come back. The Lord Jesus died on the cross for _____ people, yearning to have a relationship with them.

Do you have a close, loving relationship with God? Does the Lord see you as someone who is _____ to Him? In your quiet moments as you look into your _____, do you see yourself as a friend to God? If you have not given yourself to the Lord; today, is the right day to come to Him. Come to the Lord in _____, trusting in Him and His Word. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. In repentance, make Jesus your Lord; let Him _____ your life.

Having done these things, be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. In baptism, the Lord will cleanse you from sin (Acts 22:16); He’ll cause you to be born again (John 3:5); He’ll give you newness of life (Romans 6:4). In baptism, the Lord will also add you to His _____ (Acts 2:47). When you become a Christian, you’ll find the strength and grace to _____ with all of life’s struggles. God cares enough to give us the strength to bear what He does not take away. Trust Him! Trust Him!