

Sermon Outline

Theme: Who Cares?

Key Bible verses: Psalm 8; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 13:2

Introduction

'Who cares?' That's a phrase that is often said with negative connotations, which often really means 'No one cares!'

As we celebrate the International Day of Older People, this question can also be asked in a positive manner as we take time to delve a little deeper into finding out who does actually care.

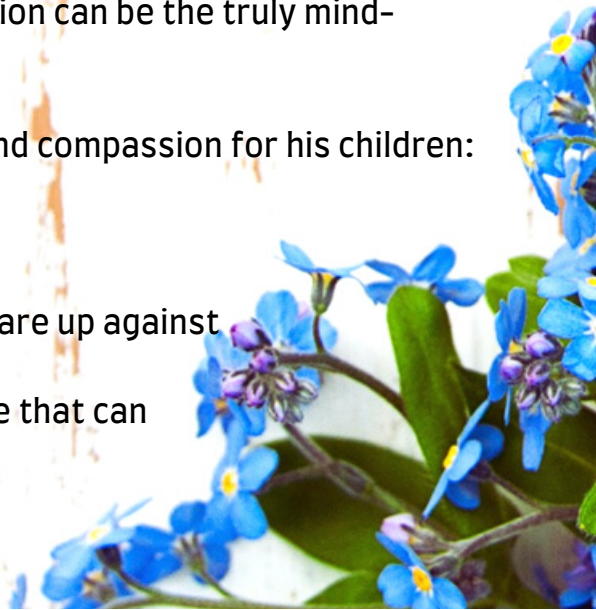
God Cares

Firstly, and most importantly, God cares. God cares for you! Yes, you! The Bible reminds us of God's everlasting love and care for all his creation. Psalm 8 is a beautiful reminder that God doesn't just 'care' but he is 'mindful' of you. This means God is constantly aware of you, constantly conscious of you and constantly focused on you: 'When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?' (vv 3,4).

Our creative God who flung stars into space is mindful of you and me? That's amazing! When you think of creation, what is the one thing that blows your mind? Is it the fact that there are an estimated 100-400 billion stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way? Or is it that there are eight planets in our solar system and we live on one of them called Earth? Or is it that the moon is about 240,000 miles from Earth? Or is it that the God who created billions of stars and set the Moon to light our night and the Sun to warm our day is the God who is 'mindful' of you? This last question can be the truly mind-blowing thing, and yet it's true.

Elsewhere in the book of Psalms we hear of God's care and compassion for his children:

- God does not abandon us (Psalm 22:24).
- God will always help us (Psalm 22:19,26).
- We can trust God to be with us through whatever we are up against (Psalm 22:3-5).
- With God, there is not a single person or circumstance that can permanently defeat us (Psalm 22:27-28).



God is concerned about your cares, your anxieties, and we read this in 1 Peter 5:7: 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.'

On this celebration day we honour and pay respect to all those who have lived on this Earth longer and learnt more lessons than the rest of us. The stars have shone brighter and longer for them, the Moon lit our night sky and the Sun warmed our Earth more times for them because they have been blessed to live longer than us. However, we acknowledge that whilst growing older is a privilege and joy, it can also come with its challenges. But isn't that the reality of life for everyone?

To live life is a privilege and a joy, but it can be challenging at times, and it's in the challenging times that our anxiety levels rise and we can often feel alone with our worries. It is then we need to remember that our caring God wants us to give him our worries and, as the Scripture says, 'to cast our cares on him'. It doesn't matter how big or small you feel your worry is, God is concerned and wants to lift that from you.

In the song written by Major Yvonne Field we hear these beautiful words:

'Who are we that you should care for us? Father God, you love us so. We are yours and Oh so precious, honoured and held in your love.'

We are held in his love. Those who are older and have walked this life longer than others, can celebrate that they have been held in God's love at every moment of their life – in the times when they felt God close and in the times they didn't. And even now they continue to be held in his love. Each one of us is held in his love and this is such a promise and reassurance.

We Care

Who do you care about? Who are you mindful of? Who do you hold in love?

We are going to consider this fact for a few moments. If God is mindful of us, then whom should we be mindful of? The simple answer is everyone God places in our path. Those younger than us, those the same age as us, those who are older than us and those who are different from us.

To care for each other is what Jesus taught when he said 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).
So how can we do this?



Think for a moment about how you might be able to be mindful of others, or care for and love others in a new and vibrant way. Could you look around for someone who might need a friend? No matter our age, we all need friends. Could you meet up with this person, invite them in for a cuppa or even commit to writing a letter to keep in touch. Often people of all ages have mobile phones that means we can send 'thinking of you' texts to show that we care and that 'others' are on our minds.

If you are a care giver for someone, we thank God for you today. Caring constantly can be a joyful and rewarding role but also tiring and difficult at times. Know God's care for you today, and also that we care for you. Make yourself known, please, as it can be difficult to know each other's circumstances. But we want to pray for you and thank God that he has placed you on this Earth for such a time as this.

You Care

In celebration of the older members of our congregations, families and friendship groups who are observing this day around the globe, we want to leave the words of some favourite Disney friends as our challenge to put into practice in our everyday lives, as we care for and are mindful of others.

- Olaf from the movie Frozen: 'Love is putting someone else's needs before yours.'
- Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh: 'A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference.'

Which quote will you take as your challenge today?

Prayer/Benediction

(The Christian writer Debbie McDaniel reminds us in this short poem about the care of God in every circumstance of our lives)

He is always within reach, he is never far away.
He is close, he is with us.
He cares, he heals, he restores, he redeems.
Go in peace. Walk in his freedom and healing.
May his huge grace cover you this day.

Amen.

