



02/26/2023 "Does God Care?"

Jesus' teachings show that relationships work best when we lead with love. Too often, our presuppositions and our opinions cause us to lead with judgment. Sunday's message focuses on the question, "Does God Care?"

1. What things help you feel most cared for? What things communicate "I don't care"?
2. What things cause you to question whether God cares?

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, God responds with this phrase "I have heard your cries". The Hebrew word for "heard" is *shema* (שמע), meaning to hear, hear with interest, listen, understand or obey. When God is the subject of the verb, it often occurs in a time of need or oppression. God hears when his people are under oppression and this hearing moves him to action.

Read Luke 4:1-12

1. What stands out to you or surprises you from this passage? Why?
2. Jesus' journey into the wilderness for 40 days is an allusion to Israel's journey from Egypt to the land God had promised them (Deuteronomy 8:2). How is Jesus' testing in the wilderness similar and different from Israel's journey?

Read Exodus 3:1-10

3. One defining moment in Israel's history comes when God hears their suffering in Exodus 3. How does hearing or listening convey love in these verses? What does God's hearing result in?
4. When you think about God hearing you, what reaction do you have? Is it positive or negative, hopeful or discouraging?
5. Have you ever felt like God had heard your prayer? When was that?
6. Deuteronomy 6:1-8 challenges Israel to "hear" or "*shema*" the words of God because God heard or "*shema*" them. How does listening or hearing God result in action? What expectations come with hearing someone?
7. Being heard and understood are vital to feeling loved. What happens when being heard is not followed by action or response? What impact is that to the relationship?
8. As you think about your relationship with God, how do you hear from him? What do you need to do to move from just hearing to understanding and responding? Are there any areas where you are choosing not to hear?
9. As you think about your relationships with others, are there any relationships where you have shut down—stopped listening? What can you do to bring restoring that communication and trust?