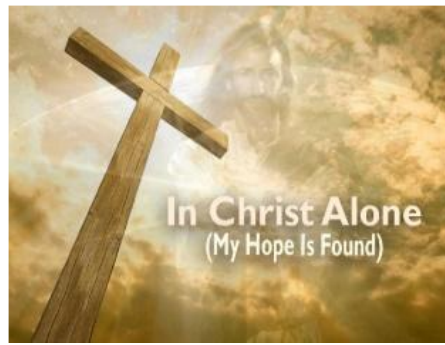




SERMON - MESSAGE – JUNE 17, 2022

Title: “I’m Alone, or Am I?”

Selected Scriptures For Loneliness

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Most everyone here today has suffered the loss of a family member. Most often, this loss creates various degrees of personal aloneness. As a pastor who continues to interact with individuals and family's during those difficult times, I've come to understand that personal loss of a family member is just one part of Almighty God's design of life. For those of us who have come to recognize his devotion and love, we find God's design of life both comforting and rewarding.

There is a book entitled A Fellowship of Differences by Scot McKnight that says: “*a fellowship of differences (differences meaning individuals changes/transformations in direct relationship with God), and how to share a better life with one another through God's love, justice, and peace.*” God has designed each of our very being to be one with Him but yet individually. And loneliness is just one of the thousands of personal parts of who we are. But then I quickly say that loneliness should not become an overpowering part of who we are.

I believe many of you know that my wife of 60 years had graduated to her heavenly home last year? Since that day there are times that I feel alone mainly because of the close relationship we had together. I also realize that I'm not the only person with this feeling of loneliness as many of you have also experienced the death of a person; be it spouse, child, parent, friend or even a beloved pet. A simple dictionary definition of death is; *the cessation of physical life. The physical life has ceased to function...it has ended its earthly course.* But there is more to the finality of our earthly life. For the Christian, there are many many scriptures relating to death and recapturing the personal renewal of a better life. Yes,

this physical body ceases to function/live but the spirit of that person receives a new life...(pause) if you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said" *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25-26) I'm sure you have read that scripture before but has it spoken to you? Have you come to understand it as truth? What did Jesus say? He said: "do you believe me"? To believe in something is to understand it. This passage of scripture by Jesus is an assurance/guarantee that we who believe in him...the resurrected Jesus Christ, will have an eternal life with him...but we must understand and believe. Friends, that is so exciting. Think about it, we will never be alone in any way shape or form again. The freedom of eternal life is what Jesus has provided for each of us who believe in him.

One of the primary commitments and obligations of any Bible-based preacher is to bring individuals..."*to believe*". To believe that the human Jesus Christ actually did die an earthly death for each of us so that our sins will be forgiven and we will have eternal life. I'm here to tell you that this has become one of my primary responsibilities throughout my ministry. I want everyone to know who and why Jesus Christ, the human but divine incarnation with Almighty God, came to this world. He didn't do this to simply walk around on earth's soil to enjoy the "fun in the sun". Jesus did this to save the souls of individuals who want to have an everlasting life with him in heaven.

Another key point to my message today is that the spiritual truth of Christ's earthly mission doesn't allow me to be too lonely as I navigate through the rest of my life. This is also a very good reason for you too not feel continually lonely in your life but to get closer to Jesus Christ.

A recent Harvard study revealed that 3 out of 5 Americans are lonely with more than 40% of seniors reporting various stages of serious loneliness. Not only that, but the loneliest generation is "generation z," those who are currently young adults born in the years from 1965 to 1980. However, that said, age really doesn't have any classification when we experience loneliness. Even while we're more connected through social media and other technology we encounter greater life problems. As I said earlier, everyone feels alone from time to time in various ways. We experience moments of "foo" (acronym for fear of missing out). Example; like not being invited to an event or something important. Or maybe you've moved away from family and friends? Perhaps you no longer have the type of close relationships that you once had and you're yearning for? Or a close relationship has ended for any reason? No matter what the circumstances surrounding our loneliness may be, there are times it can feel like a hopeless place to be. Loneliness, if not properly understood and corrected, can lead to increased isolation, anxiety, or depression.

So, what are we supposed to do when we feel alone? Where can we find hope? Does God have anything to say about our loneliness? For the Christian, who establishes a relationship with God, we need to realize that we are never totally alone. The Holy Spirit entity of Almighty God is always with us, and he will never leave us. God is with us in Spirit yesterday, today and tomorrow. That may sound like just a cheesy phrase to make us feel better, but it's true. We may dismiss such a simple-sounding truth, but there's nothing more powerful than to realize that our unseen God who made the mountains, seas and universe is with us always through his Holy Spirit. The creator of this world desires a real tangible relationship with us. Friends, we have the most powerful force of the universe by our side! In any difficult moment, we can be confident knowing the unseen Holy Spirit of Almighty God is there with us and He wants to help us, guide us and provide the comfort we need, especially during loneliness.

Spend time talking to God about your loneliness... he'll hear you. Nothing is too big or small to bring to him in prayer...he'll hear you. Take time to be in his presence and feel his peace and comfort...he is there with you. God is vast enough to care about all the issues in our lives. Whether your loneliness is a big or just a little part of your life today, God wants to carry that burden for you. God knows exactly how you feel. Remember that Jesus knows how it feels to be alone. Remember, Jesus came to this earth as a human but divine entity. He went through many of similar experiences and feelings we may have. He was publicly rejected and abandoned by his friends. Recall, at one point, Jesus asked his trusted friends to pray for him in a time of distress when he was about to be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and go to the cross. You know what the disciples did? They fell asleep! Imagine how alone Jesus felt in that moment? Jesus knows what you are going in your life, and he is with you in every moment, ready to comfort you.

Now, what does the Bible tell us about loneliness and how God is with us through our time of isolation and despair. Here are 7 verses in the scriptures that can help you when you feel alone. Have faith in these words because God's promises are true! Put them in places where you go when you feel lonely. Write them on your bathroom mirror with a dry erase marker or tape them on your computer. Maybe even memorize them in order to recall them whenever you feel alone. Say them out loud often until they are deep within your heart.

These are helpful Bible verses for loneliness, depression, despair and anxiety, or any time you may feel overwhelmed. They can and will be a great encouragement to you and your well-being.

- ***"the Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them."* (Psalm 145:18-19)**

- ***"be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."* (Deuteronomy 31:6)**
- ***"come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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)**
- ***"so do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (Isaiah 41:10)**
- ***"when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."* (Isaiah 43:2)**
- ***"cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."* (1 Peter 5:7)**
- ***"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)***

This is not a complete list of all Bible verses about loneliness, but it's a start. I encourage you to also search through the scriptures to add more spiritual encouragement to your list. Please remember (and I say this over and over) that God is with you always. In fact, he wanted to be so close to us that Jesus Christ came to earth to dwell with us, for us and left us with his Holy Spirit to continue to dwell in our hearts. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the best way to experience hope, joy, love, comfort and peace.

I've said a lot of meaningful words in these past few minutes, but they are important to us all and I hope you were listening. They have helped me through my times of being alone and Almighty God wants to help you during your own times of loneliness and despair. Also, please, never feel desperate in your time of loneliness and truly believe that you don't have to give up or give in to these feelings. But rather stop...stop long enough to read the suggested scripture verses and pray to Almighty God to find the answers to move forward...yes, move forward with Almighty God and the presence of his Holy Spirit with you.