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# Sermon Notes

November 29, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## No Longer Alone... Experiencing the Joy of Emmanuel

The Problem  
Genesis 2:18, 3:1-19

### Loneliness

- ❖ Loneliness may
  - cripple you emotionally
  - wound you physically
  - sap your strength spiritually
- ❖ The impact of social isolation and loneliness is extremely harmful to our health and well-being
  - no stage of life is immune from the fear of loneliness
  - at one time or another, loneliness affects all of us
- ❖ We all long to know that someone cares
- ❖ Causes for loneliness can include: past rejections, insecurity, grief, self-centeredness, a sinful lifestyle, and the depersonalization of society
  - The theme of loneliness shows up throughout Scripture from start to finish

### In the Garden

- ❖ Genesis begins with a love story, not just between man and woman, but between the God of the universe and His creation
  - God places His people in a beautiful, perfect garden, free of all sin and shame
  - everything God creates is a good and perfect gift
  - God gives His people the gift of His presence
- ❖ Yet, in the midst of all this goodness, the theme of loneliness comes into view
  - ***It is not good that the man should be alone*** (Gen 2:18)
  - God creates Eve out of one of Adam's ribs, a reminder that these two companions are intended to face life side by side
- ❖ Sin creates separation... separation lies at the core of loneliness
  - the beautiful wholeness and harmony Adam and Eve have previously enjoyed with God, nature and between themselves is forfeited
  - instead of running to God, they run away from God
  - instead of unity, fellowship, love and trust there is blaming, fear, lying and self-deception: qualities which are often connected in some way to loneliness
- ❖ The history of God's people unfolds like a broken record of brokenness with what seem to be never ending cycles of more rejection, grief, self-centeredness and sin

## ...BUT, There's More!

- ❖ God continues to work out His plan to heal humanity's brokenness, to deal with our headlong rush to embrace alienation and aloneness
  - God DOES something about our need
  - a promise is made: a person will come who will reverse God's curse and put things back together
- ❖ In place of alienation, broken relationships and loneliness, people will once again experience unhindered, unbroken, face-to-face fellowship with God and with one another
  - this is what Christmas is all about
  - God's gift of a perfect, final solution for all the sadness and sorrow we face in this life
- ❖ The promise of true intimacy between God and us, the hope of closeness between us and one another lies at the heart of the angel's great shout out: ***Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!*** (Luke 2:14)
  - Jesus is the remedy for loneliness and disconnection
  - Jesus offers to be with us and never forsake us in any circumstance
- ❖ Paul's personal testimony (2 Timothy 4:9-17)
  - "the Christ of Christmas stood by me and strengthened me"
  - it is a lie for Paul; to think that he is alone

- ❖ Fears and feelings of loneliness are fertile ground for Satan to sow lies in our lives
- ❖ Because Jesus came, because Jesus died, because Jesus rose again, we can truly receive the gift of ***God with us***
  - we must take our thoughts and feelings of loneliness captive and make them obedient to Christ
  - we must hold onto what **God** tells us is true (Deuteronomy 31:6, Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 28:20)
- ❖ You can confidently trust that there is always someone standing by who meets you in the midst of life's messes
  - you have a living, loving, miracle-working God who stays by your side and sticks closer than a brother
  - the promise of Isaiah 43:1-3

## Personal Reflection

1. What impact has the problem of loneliness had on your life? in the past? during these more recent months?
2. Fears and feelings of loneliness are fertile ground for Satan to sow lies in our lives. What lies is Satan sowing in your life at this time? How can you refute and reject those lies so that they don't take root in you?
3. How does knowing that God DOES something about your loneliness strengthen and encourage you?
4. Reread Paul's personal testimony in 2 Timothy 4:9-17. Are there any ways in which you identify with the circumstances Paul is in? What does Paul remind himself of here that can serve as an encouragement to you?