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Refuge for the Loneliness of Youth



Part 7 (050724AM)

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One of the amazing paradoxes of our times is that we have come to the place in human history when people are totally alone—yet surrounded by crowds. Life in the 21st century is very lonely for many people.

Though there are more humans than ever before alive and around us—many find less fellowship, companionship, and fulfillment each year. We move past, around and by, more and more people each day—but know fewer and fewer.

We often move faster—but not closer. We often have more contact—but less touch. We have more and more relationships—but less and less depth. And all of this leads to that aching hollow of the soul known as loneliness.

Loneliness is when God takes something or someone out of my life—so He can be closest to me. This means that loneliness is a tool in God's hand, an opportunity for a right response by us His children. Don't let loneliness abuse you, use it to draw close to the Lord!

Open with me to Genesis 2. God has something to say about loneliness—it isn't good! From the pages of Genesis 2 before the Fall, God speaks His very first recorded words to man. Amazingly, in God's first words to man He addresses loneliness.

- [Genesis 2:18](#) *And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

God solved that problem with Eve, and Adam was no longer alone. But soon after, sin arrived as Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Then came the sting of the most dreadful form of loneliness—alienation from God.

Because we are all fallen in Adam, we now experience loneliness in all of its many forms; none of them are good. Loneliness appears at times as that sense of emptiness, like we have a vacuum inside of us. Other times it is a feeling of desolation or of unsatisfied longings. Probably the most acute form of loneliness is when we lose someone close to us through disagreement, distance or death.

Loss of a life partner is a deep void; moving away from cherished places also cuts deeply. The loss of the comfortable and familiar can leave gaps in our hearts and painful voids. And as we see all around us, everyone involved in a divorce—the marriage partners, friends, family, and children—all are touched with an aching void and begin down a pathway of loneliness.

But, the loneliest person to ever live on this planet was Jesus Christ. Turn with me to John 16. Think of it—He left the best, closest, most intimate relationship in the Universe to come, to seek, and to save the lost. But even after all that He came and did, He said that even His closest friends on earth would abandon Him.

- [John 16:32](#) *"Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."*

Then on the cross Jesus experienced the ultimate loneliness. He was forsaken by God.

- [Matthew 27:46](#) *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

So even this grief and sorrow we feel of loneliness—He is acquainted with; and even loneliness can be conquered by fleeing to Him as our refuge.

	Unexpected Changes of Life
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Loneliness has many forms—but one purpose. Loneliness is when God takes something or someone out of my life—so He can be closest to me. This means that loneliness is a tool in God’s hand, an opportunity for a right response by us His children.

Loneliness—if you ever feel it, know that He felt it. If you ever suffer feeling friendless—know that He is the friend who will stick closer than a brother. If you ever feel forsaken—remember He said that He would never leave you or forsake you. If you feel alone—trust the One who said I am with you always, to the end!

Turn with me again to Hebrews 6 as we look again at these precious words of security, comfort and hope—again there is so much MORE from God's Word for us!

- *Hebrews 6:18b ... we might have strong consolation, who have fled **for refuge** to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

Jesus Christ is presented to us as the refuge or place to go when we face six areas of our weakness: uncleanness, weariness, loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, and temptation. We will stop at the third—**loneliness**.

First we saw an offer for those who have felt unclean and defiled by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus is the refuge for the unclean. He can remove any stain that sin may leave upon your life. Christ's offer is "flee to me, I can cleanse" as we saw in [Mark 1:41](#).

- *Mark 1:41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**"*

Then we saw an offer for those who have felt weary, worn out and unable to go on. Christ says, "come to Me—I can refresh you, I will renew you, I will comfort and strengthen you." That is what we saw last time in [Matthew 11:28-30](#). So Jesus is the **refuge for the weary**. There is no sheep of His pasture that He doesn't invite to find rest in Him. He seeks us, finds us, and offers to us His perfect rest. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

- *Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

We now come to the third promised ministry of Christ—He is the **refuge for the lonely**. He offers to us the promise that He is the closest; His fellowship is the sweetest; and He is the only unailing source of companionship we will ever find.

Some of God’s greatest servants were forged in the furnace of loneliness. **Moses** in the back side of the desert, **Daniel** in far off Babylon, **Joseph** in a pit, a palace and a prison in the very foreign world of Egypt, **Paul** in jail after jail in distant Roman cities, **David** in the caves and deserts of Judea, and the list could go on and on.

Christ is Portrayed as Our Lifelong Refuge from Loneliness

HEBRON the third Old Testament city of refuge means "fellowship," suggesting our fellowship with God in Christ, and also our fellowship with other believers. So the Lord Jesus is the **refuge for those who are alone and feel homeless**. Like Noah's dove, man is spiritually a homeless wanderer. There was no rest, no safety, and no fellowship outside of that ark. The repentant homeless prodigal found a refuge in his father's house and in his father's fellowship.

So Jesus is the **refuge for the homeless**. Jesus promised to always be with us. He leads us through life, meets us at death, carries us to our eternal home, and is with us (Emmanuel) forever. Remember these words from Christ's lips:

- *Matthew 28:20b "... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."*

So what are we to do the next time we feel the pangs of loneliness swirling around us?

There is one person more than any other who shows us the hope we can find in Christ for our loneliness. More than any other person mentioned in God's Word this person's life is laid down for us to see from every angle. His name was David, his discoveries about the Lord in the midst of piercing loneliness are recorded as testimonies in the book of Psalms.

As a mere mortal man, David was truly so much like us. He faced life and all its problems with a fervor and gusto that thrills our souls 3,000 years later.

Did you know that God has carved the life of David in the bedrock of His Word? David's testimony of how God is a refuge for all who are lonely is captured by the Psalms. In fact, David wrote Psalms or testimonies to God's faithfulness from each of the three stages of his life—from his youth or growing years, from his peak or his strong years, and from his old age or his waning years.

God's Word records these three eras of David's life, and in each of these segments David experiences intense loneliness. Lets examine them together and learn lessons from David's loneliness.

First We Find David's Testimony of God's Closeness during His Youth or Growing Years

It is amazing but true according to researchers, that the most acute loneliness is thought to be felt by teenagers. Teens feel neither old nor young. They feel between

both worlds and can't seem to connect with either, so they desperately try to find the acceptance and approval of their fellow teens. Loneliness is unexpected by teens when it comes, they are taken off guard and are ill prepared for its fierceness. Unlike the elderly who have felt the sting of being alone often, teens often haven't. So David's testimony from his teen years is especially powerful.

David suffers the intense loneliness of youth as he worked for his family. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy writing Psalms 19 and 23. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods, and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God.

- **Psalm 19 has three basic lessons:** v. 1-6 explains that David meditated upon the character of God when he was alone; v. 7-11 explains that David listened to the Word of God when he was alone; v. 12-14 explains that David feared the disapproval God (heeded His Word) when he was alone.

Remember that one of the prime characteristics of teens is their incredible need for acceptance and approval? David was a teen, he felt this need deeply—yet he chose to focus that desire towards God. He wanted to have God's approval and acceptance of all that he did and said. [Psalm 19:14](#) is a clear cry from a teen who was after God's own heart.

- **Psalm 23 is the testimony of what you can learn about God in times of loneliness.** As I read this familiar passage and you hear these well known truths—stop—and ask yourself, "Have I experienced this, or is it just a fact that I carry around in my head and not my heart?" Here we go, listen to David's testimony of what he experienced, what he clung to from his long dark nights, and long lonely days. As you listen, ask the Lord to give you the same desire, then echo each of David's affirmations and make them your own testimony. Confess these loneliness lessons and find them true!

Psalm 23:1-6

- v. 1a The Lord is my shepherd; *(Lord, when I'm alone--shepherd me.) I am the Good Shepherd John 10.*
- v. 1b I shall not want. *(Lord, when I'm alone--satisfy me.) Whoever comes to me will never hunger or thirst John 6.*
- v. 2a He makes me to lie down in green pastures; *(Lord, when I'm alone--rest me.) And I will give you rest Matthew 11.*
- v. 2b He leads me beside the still waters. *(Lord, when I'm alone--lead me.) I am the Way John 14.*
- v. 3a He restores my soul; *(Lord, when I'm alone--restore me.)*
- v. 3b He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. *(Lord, when I'm alone--sanctify me.)*
- v. 4a Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *(Lord, when I'm alone--walk with me.)*
- v. 4b I will fear no evil; *(Lord, when I'm alone--protect me.)*
- v. 4c For You are with me; *(Lord, when I'm alone--remind me.)*
- v. 4d Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. *(Lord, when I'm alone--comfort me.)*
- v. 5a You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; *(Lord, when I'm alone--calm me.) Let not your heart be troubled John 14.*
- v. 5b You anoint my head with oil; *(Lord, when I'm alone--empower me.) fill me with Your Spirit.*
- v. 5c My cup runs over. *(Lord, when I'm alone--fill me to overflowing.) Out of them shall flow rivers of living water John 7.*
- v. 6a Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; *(Lord, when I'm alone--surround me.) And of His fullness we have received grace upon grace John 1.*
- v. 6b And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. *(Lord, when I'm alone--point me heavenward.)*

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