Nov. 15, 2020 p.m.

“TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE”

Reading: **Eccl. 4:8-12**

A sermon request - I don’t know that I have ever preached a lesson on loneliness.

* Other lessons certainly have made points that touch the subject. (especially last week – encouraging those who suffer – be ready for a little overlap in this lesson)
* At the end of this lesson, I hope most of us realize how blessed we are to never have to be completely alone, at least for a long time.

**Loneliness is Hard**

* By design, solitary confinement is a miserable punishment. POW stories, prisons, used to get some to talk before they go insane. Can we be alone and keep our wits about us?
* Loneliness can be very hard at first – a part of grief – someone we love is no longer there.
* Is the hardest, the loss of a spouse? Young children left alone because of the death of parent(s) or divorce. Wanda – a young widow felt invisible.
* Much has been said about the effect the pandemic is having on mental health.
* “We all know, isolation is seldom good for the ‘spirit of man’ long-term.”

 (David Morrison, October 2020 Report)

* The feeling of being isolated – unexpectedly place upon us and those we love.
* Introverts and extroverts – stay at home orders – hard on some more than others.
* Have you ever been among people you love and felt alone?
* Do you ever have moments when you realize that as good as our relationships can be, they cannot satisfy our deepest yearning for fellowship? Only God can do that.

**Is there a need for companionship?**

* Are we talking about friendship? Brotherly love? Companionship? Fellowship with God?
* *“It is not good that man should be alone….”* (Gen. 2:18)
* Do I exhibit any behavior that makes it hard for others to connect with me?
* Some are alone because of selfishness – it’s all about them. Boorish, rude behavior.
* On the other hand, I should seek to be a friend, a brother to those who are not like me.

**What does the bible say about being alone? Dealing with loneliness?**

* Read **Eccl. 4:8-12**
* We don’t need 1000 friends on Facebook – we sometimes just need one. (Jonathan)
* Who dump endorphins into our systems via their likes, loves, cares emojis! ☺
* *“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. … But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me ….”* (1 Tim. 4:16-17)
* How did the Lord do this? Personally appear to Paul? Angel? Brethren?
* Sometimes, some moments, we will have to stand alone for the truth.
* *“I lie awake, and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.”* (Ps. 102:7)
* Thinking we are alone in serving the Lord faithfully is not always spiritually healthy.
* Elijah had to learn this lesson. (1 Kings 19) He was not alone.
* Jesus was alone praying in the garden – the three disciples slept, Judas was coming with others to bring Jesus before the Jewish leadership, all of the other disciples would run away, but even then, *an angel appeared to Him, strengthening Him.* (Luke 22:43)
* Michael came to the aid of Gabriel. (Dan. 9:21-22; 10:13-14)
* Did Jesus send out the 12 and the 70 in twos so they would not be alone? (Mk. 6:7; Lk. 10:1)
* *“Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.”* (1 Tim. 5:5)
* The church was to look out for her needs. Emotional needs? (James 1:27)
* Some people don’t need our money – they need our time – a listening ear.

**The church is a family built to provide companionship.**

* It is especially so for those who have no physical family who are Christians.
* We cannot fight the good fight of faith alone. We are not supposed to.
* We seek to help and be helped.
* Consider all of the *one another* passages in the NT.
* *Members of one another* (Rom. 12:5)
* *Kindly affectionate to one another* (Rom. 12:10)
* *Be of the same mind toward one another* (Rom. 12:16)
* *Therefore receive one another* (Rom. 15:7)
* *Admonish one another* (Rom. 15:14)
* *Members should have the same care for one another* (1 Cor. 12:25)
* *Bear one another's burdens* (Gal. 6:2)
* *Bearing with one another in love* (Eph. 4:2)
* *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another* (Eph. 4:32)
* *Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* (Eph. 5:19)
* *Therefore comfort each other and edify one another* (1 Th. 5:11)
* *But exhort one another daily* (Heb. 3:13)
* *And let us consider one another … exhorting one another* (Heb. 10:24-25)
* *Do not speak evil of one another* (James 4:11)
* *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another* (James 5:16)
* *Be hospitable to one another* (1 Pet. 4:9)
* *Submissive to one another* (1 Pet. 5:5)
* *Greet one another with a kiss of love* (1 Pet. 5:14)
* *Fellowship with one another* (1 John 1:7)
* *Love one another* (1 John 3-4)

 ***For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*** (Heb. 13:5)

* *“… and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Mt. 28:20)
* God’s promises – comfort to the lonely in heart.
* Song – No Never Alone
* We all need alone time. (mostly for prayer and meditation – alone time with God)
* When Jesus went off to be alone, get away from the crowds, it was usually to pray.
* Even if we did not have another faithful person to associate with, God is with us.