



**May 11-12, 2024**

### **Break the Ice**

Discuss the following statistics with your group:

- According to a recent *Gallup* poll, Americans are among the loneliest people in the world.
- According to the most recent U.S. Census, more than a quarter of the U.S. population (28%) live by themselves.
- Half of Americans, especially young people, feel lonely.
- 1 out of 10 adults say they do not have a close friend.
- The average person has only one close friend.

Ask your group the following:

- Which of these figures is most relevant to you or those in your social circles right now?
- What leads people to experience feelings of loneliness?

Transition: Thankfully, God's Word speaks to the issue of loneliness and reveals that God is near.

### **Up**

One truth we read from God's Word is that Jesus experienced loneliness. **Read out loud Isaiah 53:3.**

Ask your group to provide specific times when Jesus most likely faced loneliness...

Because Jesus experienced loneliness, He can speak to it in a way that no one else can. Not only has His experience of loneliness trumped anything we can go through, His wisdom allows Him to speak into our loneliness like no one else can. Read this following quote from Jon Bloom and ask your group to discuss it:

“Imagine what living in this world was like for Jesus. He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). That might sound like a pleasant problem to deal with. I don't think so. I think it was tormenting. Peter described sinful Lot's experience in Sodom as being tormented day after day by the 'lawless deeds that he saw and heard' (2 Peter 2:8). How much worse

was it for sinless Jesus living in a world of sin. Imagine what his childhood was like. He would have been odd sticking out morally like a sore thumb, never quite fitting in with any group, even his own family. Even his loving parents wouldn't have fully understood him. Nor would they have been able to protect him from others' stinging remarks and maybe cruel mocking over his unsullied strangeness.

I wonder how much came from his siblings? His brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:55-56) would have grown increasingly self-conscious around him, aware of their own sinful, self-obsessed motives and behavior, while noting that Jesus didn't seem to exhibit any himself. What resentments accrued? All was not harmonious because Jesus' own brothers didn't believe in him (John 7:5), possibly until after his resurrection (Acts 1:14). Jesus was a sinless person living with sinful parents, sinful siblings, sinful extended relatives and sinful neighbors. No one on earth could identify with him. No human being could put an arm around him as he sat in tears and say, 'I know exactly what you're going through.' His sorrow and grief (Isaiah 53:3) began way before Gethsemane.

But Jesus' loneliness reached its apex the moment he became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) on the cross and was 'forsaken' by his Father (Matthew 27:46). First, he was estranged by sinlessness and then from being sin. Jesus knew supreme rejection and loneliness.

**Which makes him perfectly suited to understand yours. He is a high priest who can sympathize with this weakness** (Hebrews 4:15).

But Jesus doesn't just understand your loneliness; he's destroying it. Because he died on your behalf, you are no longer truly a stranger or alien, but you are a fellow citizen with the saints and a member of God's family (Ephesians 2:19). Because Jesus was alienated from God and man, you will enjoy the full family fellowship of God and all of his redeemed saints forever.

Child of God, your loneliness is passing away. The day is nearing when you will know as you have been fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12). And the fading loneliness you still feel Jesus understands. So 'with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that you may receive mercy and find grace to help' with every lonely need (Hebrews 4:16)."<sup>1</sup>

## **In**

What types of situations have the greatest impact on if you feel lonely or not?

How does loneliness affect you personally? How does it impact your mental state, interactions with others, and your walk with Christ?

Ultimately, what at the core of your identity is loneliness attacking?

---

<sup>1</sup> Jon Bloom, "Jesus Understands Loneliness," October 12, 2012. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/jesus-understands-loneliness>. (Accessed May 8, 2024).

### **Read the following Scriptures:**

- Deuteronomy 31:6
- Psalm 18:1-6
- Psalm 25:16

Ask your group which of these passage impacts them the most right now and why. Ask them to think through some practical ways they can engage their loneliness and overcome it.

### **Out**

There are many people who experience loneliness daily. And because we may be focused on our life (and loneliness), we often fail to see what is going on in the lives of others. Ask your group to ponder how they can be more aware of the lives of those in the following groups:

- Our neighbors
- Our work colleagues
- Our friends
- The barista at the local coffee shop
- Other groups of people

### **Prayer**

Conclude your time in prayer by focusing on the following:

- Praise God that He never leaves us alone.
- Ask Him to remind you of His presence especially those times you feel lonely.
- Ask God for wisdom in knowing how to overcome your own feelings of loneliness.