

Prestonwood Connection

Living In The Shadow Of The Almighty #12

Loneliness

Psalm 25

Wednesday, November 12, 2003 • Dr. David McKinley
(Service held in youth area)

[Dr. McKinley, message *Loneliness In The Shadow Of The Almighty*]

What an incredible gathering this is tonight and for those of you still coming in there are a few seats over on this side on the front here. I appreciate each of you helping to bring people in. If you're sitting in the back you're welcome to sit on the steps back there but we've got a little more space here and a little more space here, but we have got a wonderful gathering here at this Connection Service tonight and I'm so excited that you're here and that you've come and Matt I wanna say to you and to our Student Ministry Team how much I appreciate all of the work and accommodations that you guys have made a..., to help us to be able to be here and to enjoy this place tonight. This is one great building and on Friday mornings right now our pastor's doing this series, *Men Of Honor*, and we have somewhere between 750 and 800 men here, 850, I think is even our, our top level we're had and that's been incredible and this building is just getting used and used and used, but what a great place to gather tonight and a..., I'm glad that you're here and a part of it. Our students who normally are here, our middle school students, junior high students are over next door at the Sports and Fitness Center and because of a..., your kindness and gifts tonight we've been able to provide pizza and snacks and cokes and all kinds of things for them over there tonight and just to say thank you for the Connection Service, so thank you for bein a part of that and for makin that happen and a..., I really am grateful a..., it's hard to believe that the reason we're here tonight is because of the fact that the Holidays are upon us. But the reason that we're here is that a..., our auditorium is still in the process of being converted and prepared a..., for the up coming Dallas Christmas Festival. It's gonna be an incredible, incredible presentation this year. I hope that you're planning to bring neighbors and friends and co-workers a..., we're also this year going to add the availability of a buffet, a dinner, where you literally can come right here, have dinner and then go to the festival. And information about that's in you're a..., worship guide tonight. But you might wanna a..., make that plan and make that happen a..., with your family, with your friends as a part of enhancing the experience of being at the presentation. We're believing that there're going to be somewhere between 70 and 80 thousand people who are going to attend. Over 50 thousand tickets are already out and so a..., I just want you to know we are trusting God to do some great and some wonderful things. But because the holiday

time is upon us, Thanksgiving and Christmas a..., we're here tonight making this adjustment, being in this building and somehow being in this season of the year, the season of adjustment and the season of preparation it just has a way of bringing, as though it were a cascade of memories and reflections and, and just thoughts about kind of getting ready for the holidays and walking through the holidays and enjoying that time with family and with friends. And I think especially because I'm back here in these days and making this journey with Dr. Graham, I'm remembering the fact that a..., it was not so many years ago, all though it looks like it a..., when I look at myself in the mirror these days, that a..., we were together in West Palm Beach, Florida and a..., we had this wonderful presentation there, called The Singing Christmas Tree and in that day and time we would pack out that auditorium and tickets would go and we had these 12, 13, 14, I don't remember how many presentations, just as many as you could have. It was just Christmas till you dropped and a..., you know, so we would have a..., we just hoped people didn't drop out of the tree, but, but we had this incredible experience that we shared together. And one of the life memories we made together in those days is that a..., many evenings we would go up to the church and would get the a..., presentation started and then we would slip out to the car and we would shot over to Palm Beach which was just across the bridge from where we were there. I know you've always wondered what we did. I know you thought we went back and got on our knees and prayed in the office for the 2 and a half to 3 hours for that presentation. We do that now. But then we would just get in the car, [slight congregation laughter] and go lookin for some food or some desert or something because we typically had about 2 and a half hours, you know, started and then do the invitation. And so we had this really wonderful place that we would go over on Palm Beach called Testas. And Testas was a little outdoor café and you'd come up at night and they had pick lights, not just white lights, but pink lights shining all over that area and it was a really well known establishment. Really it was kind of a who's, who place. You could see anyone there. It was a..., the Kennedy families favorite place in their years in Palm Beach and so it was a really well known place and we would go there and they had this incredible strawberry pie. I mean this strawberry pie, with the best strawberries and I mean real whip cream on top and you know, I mean, are you gettin hungry? [congregation laughter] I'll be through in a couple of hours. You'll be able to go. [more laughter] But now we're have this strawberry pie and the other great thing about Testas, was not only that they had this pie in the evening, but if you ever went there for breakfast they had these blueberry pancakes. It was an incredible place to eat and always loved going there. To this day when I go back to that area I always try to include the trip to Testas. But Testas was unique because in those days Testas was only open during the season. It would be open from about October until the end of March, early April and it was only open those months of the year and then they would close down Testas and they had another Testas, but it wasn't in Palm Beach, it wasn't in Florida, it was up in Maine. In fact I always remember reading on their menu it always said:

"Palms in the winter. Pines in the summer."

I though, boy, that's the way to live life isn't it? Palms in the winter, pines in the summer and a..., you could have a meal with em during the winter months there in Palm Beach. But if you wanted to be with em in the summer you had to go to Bar Harbor. Now Bar Harbor, Maine is an interesting place. That was where the other restaurant was located. It's well know because of a bar in the harbor. Now before you start thinking that I'm promoting a drinking establishment, let me clarify that Bar Harbor, Maine is not known because of a drinking establishment in the harbor, but because of a sandbar that is in the harbor. It's a sandbar that every day when low tide comes the sandbar appears and every day when high tide comes in the sandbar goes away and it's sort of a tourist attraction in that area. But if you go there it's a common thing for people to go down in the day and even to walk from the shoreline out there to Bar Harbor and to maybe have a picnic or to have some fun or hang out on Bar Harbor. But the thing you've gotta be so very careful about is to watch the time and to watch the tide. Because if you're not careful in Bar Harbor, Maine as the tide comes in, suddenly that bridge will go away and you can be stranded out on that island with the water coming up all around you. I share that story with you tonight because I think that the topic I'm gonna talk about tonight is very much like Bar Harbor. It's a place that many of us find ourselves stranded in life. We find ourselves enjoying life, moving through life. We take a journey. We make a decision. We begin some new associations in life. We take hold of a new opportunity and then the next thing we know we find ourselves somehow out on this island, isolated and stranded and before long we find ourselves alone.

I wanna talk to you tonight about the subject of loneliness. Loneliness, for one reason because I always think it's an important thing to address during the holidays. Many people are away from their families. Some people are going back through the marking of the calendar and remembering a..., things that have gone well this year and things that have not gone that well this year and sometimes in the process of dealing with life a..., and the...and the measures of life, the holidays can be difficult. But frankly it has very little to do with the holidays, it has to do with that ongoing experience in life where sometimes we're out there and the tide is low and we just move out and are moving through life. But then the tide comes in and we find ourselves stranded and alone. I've had that experience. You've had that experience. Some of you are experiencing that tonight and I think that it is so important that we try to address that and to understand that it's something that is addressed in the Scripture.

If you have your Bible tonight I want you to open it to Psalm 25, because there we find a solo of complaint. A man who is crying out to God in a moment of need in his life and it has to do with this issue of loneliness. Now before I read you this portion of Scripture tonight I want to just a..., make a few statements about the subject matter tonight, about loneliness.

First, I wanna just make the observation that loneliness shows up at unlikely times, in unsuspecting moments and in unguarded places; unlikely times, unsuspected moments and unguarded places. Sometimes when you think people would be lonely they're not at all. And sometimes when you think

life should be the most together you find yourself alone. You find yourself stranded on that island and so loneliness is not always predictable in that sense.

And then, I would also say to you tonight that loneliness is not a pleasant subject to speak about. There's so many positive things to talk about, let's get pumped up, let's get ready for the holidays and yet, while that is true it's not a pleasant subject to speak about any more than it is a pleasant emotion to experience. It is one of those emotions that is a... that is difficult and that is grating on the inside. Loneliness has little to do with the number of people around you or the number of people who know you. So many times when we think of loneliness we think of solitude or we think of singleness, of being alone. But that's not at all what loneliness is. Loneliness can be experienced by people who are surrounded by people and they can be...it can be experienced by people who are known by many people.

It was Albert Einstein who said:

"It's strange to be known so universally and to be so lonely."

And then loneliness is a common experience for other believers. If you've ever experienced this, you're not alone. Believers through out the course of history have had to deal with this reality and this issue.

I think of Joseph when he was sold into slavery, down in the bottom of the pit looking up at the faces of his brothers as they would walk away and go and tell their father, Jacob, that their brother had been killed. And of the loneliness and the isolation of being sent off in slavery.

I think of Moses that day that he finally decided to act on the sense of God's call in his life and he took the life of an Egyptian slave and in the process of doing that found himself living on the back side of the desert and not only did he have to deal with the isolation that came then. But then again when he was tryin to deal with leading the children of Israel and all their squabbles and all their grips and all their complaints. Can you imagine some days just how lonely he must have felt? I've always thought, aren't we glad that God and Moses didn't get mad at em on the same day. You know one day God would be mad and Moses would be praying and the next day Moses would be mad enough to, you know, and God would say, now Moses, you know? But Moses dealt with it.

David, David when he was pursued by Saul, when he was being hunted and being tracked.

And Jeremiah the prophet, called to bring a very difficult message and over and over it separated him, in a sense of isolating him from others.

Elijah, of course, I looked over Elijah, but Elijah the prophet of God who was so mightily used of God as a man of authority and of power, but who found himself over in the wilderness crying out saying, "Lord, I alone am

left to serve you.”

And how can we miss Mary, Mary with the news that she was going to have a baby, but out of wedlock, a young girl, misunderstood, misrepresented and yet Mary in that experience of being lonely found the fullness and the grace of God.

And then, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ. If there's one thing that Jesus has tasted for you it is loneliness. For indeed on the cross He cried out: [Mark 15:34]

... *“...My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?”*

Well, each of these experienced that stranded island called loneliness. And tonight I want us to listen to this solo of complaint by this man who was expressing the issue of his loneliness and I want us to consider tonight some ways in which we can address and deal with and overcome this issue when we face it, *Loneliness In The Shadow Of The Almighty*. Psalm 25, verse 1 says:

¹To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ²O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. ³Indeed, no one who waits on You will be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. ⁴Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. ⁵Lead me in Your truth and teach me. For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

He's crying out to God. He's pleading with God. Why? Look in verse 16:

¹⁶Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am lonely and afflicted.

...I am lonely and afflicted. ¹⁷The troubles of my heart have been large. Bring me out of my distresses! ¹⁸Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.

There's that word, lonely. Maybe your translation says desolate, but it means the same thing. I'm, I'm desolate, I'm stranded, I'm on this island by myself and God, I need you to work in my life, I need to experience Your promise to me as Your child. That's where the psalmist found himself and that's where we find ourselves from time to time. Now having said that, I wanna simply ask a question and just consider some observations on this issue tonight and the question is this: What feeds my feelings of loneliness? Why is it that sometimes, sometimes in unexpected places and times and moments I find myself dealing with this sense of loneliness. Well, I think there are several things. Now before I mention those things to you I wanna just mention to you something that I read in a study from the University of Florida, an article on the study of loneliness. And I think they've captured pretty well a concept that I think a..., is significant. It says:

Loneliness is a passive state, that it is maintained by our passively

letting it continue and doing nothing to change it. We hope it will go away eventually and we do nothing but let it envelop us. Strangely there are times when we might even embrace the feeling, yet embracing loneliness and sinking down into the feelings associated with it usually lead us to a sense of depression and helplessness, which in turn leads only to an even more passive state and more depression.

You see, a lot of us do think of loneliness as just being some passive thing that comes upon us and there's nothing we can do about it. But I think that if you begin to understand what feeds loneliness in your life you can begin to address it and to deal with it. What are the things that feed it? Well, one of the things that the psalmist mentions here is found in verse 18, he says:

Look on my affliction and my pain, And...

What does he say? What's the next word? Oh my goodness, we aren't looking together are we? Psalm 25, verse 18, let's try one more time:

Look on my affliction and on my pain, And...

Forgive.

...forgive all my sins.

Forgiveness. There was an issue in this man's life of **ALIENATION** and one of the things that causes us to get lonely is a feeling of alienation. Just because you're alone doesn't mean that you're lonely. Loneliness is something under your skin. It's more than the presence of solitude; it's the presence of something that is unresolved within. And therefore alienation occurs in our lives when we are distant from God and when we are broken in our relationships with other people. One of the common contributors and one of the common feeding sources for loneliness is when we are not right in our heart and in our life with God, when we're not connected to God and when we're not rightly related and connected to others.

J. Oswald Sanders said:

"Ultimately loneliness stems from man-kinds alienation from God. So no remedy that does not take this factor into account, will afford more than a superficial and temporary relief."

The first thing that we have to deal with is that sometimes we're lonely because we're not right with God. Some of us don't even know Him. Some of us don't even have a relationship with Him and until you've come to a place in your life where you are rightly connected to God, you will never ultimately be rightly connected to others. And it all begins with that rightness of a relationship with God and there's no greater alienation in life than feeling that you are separated from God. Now sin can do that to the Christian. We've talked about that in another message, about what sin

does in the life of a Christian and it can break my fellowship with God. Not my relationship, but my fellowship with God. Isaiah chapter 59, describes this very well when it says:

¹Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; His ear is not heavy, That He cannot hear, ²But your sins have separated you from God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

And I think one of the things we always have to start with when we do deal with loneliness is, is there an alienation in my relationship with God? One, is there a confidence that I know Him? Two, am I right with Him? And then is there a brokenness in my relationships with others? Damaged relationships, broken relationships can feed loneliness in your heart and that's why forgiveness is such a cleansing agent in your life and in your heart. It's connectedness to God that every one of us needs. And that's one of the things that will feed loneliness. It's when we feel disconnected. That's why every week when you come in, on the back of your Worship Guide, or right on the inside page, there's this statement about a life connection. Because first and foremost above everything else that we say and that we teach, it all begins with making a life connection with God. That's where you move from alienation to beginning a relationship that is real, personal and intimate with God through our Savior Jesus Christ. And so it all begins there.

But then it's a nurturing and maintaining that relationship with God that we live a full and a meaningful life. Not only is there the issue of alienation, another thing that ~~feels my~~...fuels my feelings of loneliness is **TRANSITION**. Look in verse 6 and 7:

⁶Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindness, For they are from old. ⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness sake.

He's looking at different ages and stages of his life. He's reflecting on his relationship with God at those times. But I do believe that just as the psalmist is doing that, one of the things that we have to recognize and understand is that many times it's in the transitions of life that we face, we've moved to a new location, we've changed jobs, we a..., have been through some transitional issues in life. Financially things may not be as good as they were at one time or another and it's in those life transitions when we're dealing with em and struggling with em that we can begin to battle with loneliness. One of my favorite portions of Scripture in the New Testament is found in the book of 2nd Timothy, chapter 4 and I wanna ask you to look over there for just a minute. 2nd Timothy, chapter 4, because we read the account of the last days of the life of the apostle Paul. Paul is in prison. He spent a good bit of his life in and out of prison, back and forth and a..., Paul was a man who had to deal with that reality. It would be easy to be lonely in prison. But I love the reflections of the heart of this man Paul. It is one thing to go to Romans and to hear Paul waxing eloquent, the conviction of his theology and of the power of the gospel and I love to read that portion of Scripture

because it so boosts the fiber of my faith and the conviction of my heart that righteousness is by faith in Christ alone. But sometimes I enjoy reading this portion to remember that, that deeply convinced and convicted believer was a man who in moments I can identify with in some of his struggles. And in 2nd Timothy, chapter 4 and verse 9 he says to some friends:

⁹Be diligent to come to me quickly;

I need to see you. I need to be with you.

¹⁰For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world,...

Boy how would you like to have the name Demas? You notice that there aren't a lot of little Demas' who are runnin around today? I mean forever in Scripture:

...Demas has forsaken me, having loved this world,...

But then he goes on to identify others. He says that Crecens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

¹¹And only Luke is with me...

And then he says:

...Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Oh, what a healing that is. Back in the book of Acts there was this incredible, unbecoming, distasteful scene where Barnabas who had nurtured and coached Paul, one day said, Paul let's take this young man Mark with us and Paul said, no way he's not goin, we took him once and he turned around and ran home. And they had an argument and they had a disagreement and it was so great that Barnabas went with Mark and Paul went the other way and it was a defining, a..., a defining and a dividing mark in this ministry. And yet, here at the end he's sayin, bring Mark cause he's real useful to me for the ministry. That's precious.

¹²And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

But then he says:

¹³Bring the cloak that I left in Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, and especially the parchments.

What do you think the parchments were? The scrolls. I believe they were whatever portions of copies of Scripture that he had at his disposal and not only did he have the books and not only did he need a, a garment but he wanted the Scripture. And in this moment of life transition Paul is recounting all the things that are different and the things that are needed. But he's addressing the issue of loneliness in his life and I

believe that changes in life location and in life situation, time and stage of life can contribute to loneliness.

And then **OPPOSITION**, opposition is another contributing factor. Here in 2nd Timothy 4 in verse 14 he says:

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm..

Somebody has hurt me. Somebody has stood against me and when you have felt and faced opposition and persecution and ultimately rejection in your life, you read about it back in a..., Psalm 25, verses 19 and 20 when he's talking about his enemies. Opposition in you life, can feed loneliness in your life.

And then **TEMPTATION**, temptation, temptation, when I get isolated. One of the things that Satan loves to do is to isolate you, to tempt you, to trip you, to enslave you, to ensnare you, so that you have no victory in Christ and are not of use to the kingdom. And so you need to understand that temptation can be a very lonely place. It can be a temptation island. Because it is an island, for we feel the pressure and we feel the draw from within to do wrong. While on the other hand there's the knowledge of the Scripture and the work of the Spirit to pull us to do right. And sometimes it's right in that crucible of temptation that you can feel so very alone.

And then there's one final thing and that's **SEPARATION**. Separation, when you're away from people that you love and that you care about. Certainly we heard that in the voice of Paul as he's there saying, come to me. But it's true in many of our lives. Many of us live in cities that are different from our families, the places we grew up, the friends we knew best. And whenever there is a distance and a separation, maybe even some in this room right now have family members who are serving over in the battlefields of Iraq or Afghanistan. There is a genuineness to that separation. I'm not talking about alienation that comes because of sin and fault and failure, but I'm talking about just the physical human separation that comes. It can come by distance, it can come by disease. Sometimes when we're limited in life all of these things can happen and they can feed together the struggles of loneliness in our hearts. We need people. How many of you in here, a number of years ago saw the movie, *Castaway*? Sat there and endured all those minutes of just watchin this guy alone on an island. Do you remember that? Well, how many of you remember the fact that, *Castaway*, Tom Hanks was so alienated and so separated from people that he had to create a person. And so he designed this best friend, a volleyball, named Wilson and he has his handprint on Wilson and Wilson went with him everywhere because he just needed companionship. In much the same way we all need a Wilson, we need people in our lives. And it's when there's separation that we can experience loneliness.

Well, have I got you isolated enough on this island out in the middle of a sandbar of being by yourself? Well, if so, let's try to turn the page. And instead of just talking about the things that feed it and fuel it, I do

think it's important to understand it. Let's talk about how I can focus my feelings in loneliness. What can I do when I face loneliness in my life, and those alienating feelings and that a..., that a..., depreciating experience, what can I do to begin to turn the page and to break out of that pattern in my life? Well, there are several things that we can do and as you might hope I have put it in an acrostic for you tonight. [slight congregation laughter] Alone, A-L-O-N-E, alone, I like the way Billy Graham says that, "Alone." And so I wanna help you to know what to do when you are, Alone! Psalm 25, verse 5:

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; and on You I wait all day long.

It all begins with this. When you're alone you have to...

Acknowledge God's promise of His presence. All right, I knew it! You're gonna tell me that God is with me. That's right! He is! And it's true and while you may be lonely, you will never be alone if you are a child of God. Now, I understand the feeling of loneliness. I heard about a little boy, it was a very dark and a very stormy night, he's been put to bed, he was in his room alone and he called for his mom because he was afraid. And she came in there and said, sweetheart, what do you need, what do you want and he said, mommy I just, I just am so afraid, will you sleep with me tonight mommy? And she said, oh no honey I can't sleep with you tonight I have to sleep in the other room with daddy. She said, but honey, Jesus is with you and she said, and the angels are gonna watch over you and he said, I know mommy, but I just need something with skin on it. Heh! [slight congregation laughter] She said, honey, Jesus is with you, you'll be fine. I'm gonna go back and sleep with daddy and as she went out the door she heard him say. "The big scardy cat." [more slight laughter] I know that sometimes just saying that God is with us is not sufficient in our minds, but it is an all-sufficient truth, that you will never be left alone. The Bible tells us this over and over again and that's why we go back to this idea of I am waiting on God all day. If you were here last week you know we talked about waiting on God. What does it mean to wait on God? Does it mean you sit there twiddle your thumbs and say, okay God whenever? No! Waiting on God is attending to His presence and fulfilling His purpose in your life, to do exactly what you know to do right now. And it's attending to His presence, it's acknowledging His presence and God has promised you His presence. The word alone appears many times in the Bible, but not in the sense of being lonely. Jesus said in John 16:32:

"...you will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone for My Father is with me."

In the book of Hebrews the Bible says that God promises and says: [13:5]

... "I will never leave you or forsake you."

And therefore if when you do face times of loneliness you have to begin with realizing that that loneliness is not being alone, it is solitude and

therefore I want in that solitude to begin to practice the presence of God.

A. W. Tozier said:

"Retire from the world each day to some private spot, stay in that secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and you sense in the sense of God's presence envelopes you. Deliberately tune out the unpleasant sounds and come out of your closet determined not to hear them. Listen for that inward voice till you learn to recognize it. Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work."

Practicing the presence of God. Acknowledge God's promise of His presence. Secondly..

Learn how to show love rather than to seek to feel loved. Now this is a really big issue. ~~Learn how to show or excuse me...~~ learn to show love rather than to seek to feel loved. Loneliness is the feeling of being unloved. Now the thing that I love is that here in Psalm 25 the psalmist is focusing on the tender mercies and the loving kindness of God. He's trying to get his mind centered on mercy and the loving kindness, the wonder of God's love and to let that fill his life and his heart and that's exactly what needs to happen to you and needs to happen to me. You see when I am lonely instead of sitting around saying nobody loves me, I need to stand up and say I'm going to find somebody who needs me. I'm not gonna sit here and just simply deal with the fact that I feel unloved, instead I'm going begin to find people who need love and I'm gonna express that love and share that love and give that love. The years that I've been a pastor and been in administration, there're been days in leadership that while I love the privilege and the blessing and the joy of fulfilling God's calling that sometimes just the responsibilities and the decisions and the issues, sometimes dealing with church member and their life issues, sometimes dealing with staff members and their issues that I've just had days where I've just felt very overwhelmed, sometimes alone, sometimes tryin to figure out what do I do next. And one of the things that I learned to do over and over again in my ministry, is that when I'm having that day and having that feeling I get in my car and I go visit somebody in the hospital. I go back to the root of serving somebody else. I get in my car and I go find someone in a sh...a shutin who's in a home and who is not being visited and I remember their need to be loved. Now if I ever come visit you don't assume that I'm havin a bad day and I'm on the edge of depression okay? [slight congregation laughter] That's a part of my ongoing life ministry and responsibility, but I share that because I've learned that secret, that when I don't feel that my life is all together, when I feel alone or maybe even when I feel unloved or under-appreciated that the greatest thing that I can do is to extend that love to someone else. Love is the antidote to loneliness. Not feeling love, giving love and when you start giving that love in the loving kindness of the Savior then you're amazed at how that loneliness begins to leave you. You see loneliness is a lot of self-focus and when I quit focusing on me I'm able

to focus on others.

Organize your schedule to steady your heart. Organize your schedule to steady your heart. Idleness is your greatest enemy when you are lonely and one of the greatest things that you can do to find emotional fulfillment when you are emotionally deprived is to effectively manage your time. If you will use time management and seek God's guidance in the use of the hours of the day, you will be amazed at how the management of time, the development of a schedule, the implementation of a pattern can begin to change the direction of those emotions. You see when we get lonely we tend to back off, back out, get alone and get idle and I'm telling you the Devil just has a hay day with you when he does that. It's like he gets you in the corner and just throws punches at you left and right and it's so very important that you understand that to manage your time and to manage your schedule can be a critical thing in this process. I like the guy that said:

"If I can't be where the action is I'll create my own action."

Negate the rehearsal of negative experiences. I love the fact that near the end of this Psalm the psalmist cries out in verse 21 and says:

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait on You.

God I wanna be a man of integrity, I wanna be upright in my heart and I do not want in any way Lord to simply be here just living in the desolation of loneliness I wanna be upright. And that means that I have to negate the rehearsal of negative experiences. When you're lonely it's easy to let negative feelings get imbedded in your heart and you're no use of God or anybody else. Instead of rehearsing the past and rehearsing the hurts and rehearsing the issues refuse to let those negative things operate in your mind and heart. Is it any wonder in the book of Philipppians chapter 4, that Paul, in prison would say: [verse 8]

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true and just and noble and lovely and pure, of good report,...think on these things.

You have to keep your mind focused. One final thing.

Explore new horizons and renew your view of life. When you're lonely, don't just sit there and wait for the world to come to you. Explore something new that you can do. Take a step forward.

To You, O God, I lift up my soul. And my God, I trust in You; Don't let me be ashamed...

Lord I want to begin to engage life again and whether it involves taking and action of personal growth and development, whether it be reading or maybe getting some exercise, or maybe a..., taking on a new hobby; whatever it may be that you could do there are things that you can begin to

explore, new horizons in your life that will get you away from just the repa...rep...repetition and deprivation of condescending emotions and you begin to break free and begin to live in the power and the strength again of God's purpose and of God's plan for your life. I don't know where you are or what you're facing tonight but I can tell you this right now you are not alone and the feelings of loneliness that would destroy you can become the platform of loneliness that will take you to a new level of maturity and of faith and of intimacy in your life with Cr...with Christ.

Alone in a garden one night facing alienation, transition, facing opposition, facing the reality of separation Jesus knelt alone in a garden and said: [Luke 22:42]

"...Father, not My will but Your will be done."

And from that garden He went up and went out and was arrested and was betrayed and was crucified and on that cross He cried out: [Mark 15:34]

... "My, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

He took our sin. He took our shame. He took our separation. He took our loneliness on the cross. He was buried. He rose again. He has promised us life forever in His family. He is preparing a place for us in heaven where we will never be alone but we will be forever with those who are with the Lord. And so ladies and gentlemen tonight though you may feel alone, you will never be alone with Jesus Christ. And I don't want you to live in these days in the shackles of loneliness but to live a life that is full in Christ. My life promise is Isaiah 41:10, God used it to call me to ministry and it hangs on the wall in my office, both here and at the house.

Fear not for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am you God. I will strengthen you, yes I will help you and yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.