



Gospel Answers Nov 11: The Answer to Loneliness

Series Summary: The Gospel is the good news of our salvation. That we are no longer condemned by our sin but forgiven through God's grace. Therefore, the Gospel provides the answer to our greatest need: a savior. Yet we have many other needs: answers for our pain, loneliness, shame, meaninglessness, and our desire for justice. What about these needs? The Gospel is still the answer. It is the vastly better answer to our most fundamental questions and needs.

Big Idea: Our younger generations (Gen-Z and Gen Alpha) have been coined "the lonely generation". What's ironic is that we live in the most "connected" age ever. How is the Gospel the answer to our loneliness problem?

Schedule:

- Live Teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Overview of the series: We have been discussing life's biggest issues and questions, and how the Gospel is the perfect answer for all of them.

INTRO

Have you ever been in a position where you know the right information, but can't seem to see any progress or change?

One of the situations where we see this most often is in seasons of loneliness. We are living in the loneliest generation ever, so how is the Gospel the solution?

THE QUESTION

(What about loneliness?)

No man in Scripture asked this question more often than King David. Whether he hid in caves to escape Saul or fled Jerusalem after the palace coup led by his son Absalom, he was no stranger to loneliness. This was true even when loyal followers (his mighty men) surrounded him.

Psalm 25:16–17 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish.”

Psalm 38:10–11 My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes. My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.

David wrote the next Psalm while on the run from Saul, hiding in a cave (1 Samuel 22 or 24).

Psalm 142:4–5 Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, LORD; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’”

David did, in fact, have faithful men at his right and his left. About 400 men risked their lives so David would not be alone. They cared, and they had concern. But that is the nature of loneliness; it is an emotion. One that is not solely rooted in reality.

Despite David's willingness to ignore the full reality of his situation, God still listened patiently to David's cry for help.

- God was not afraid of David's questions
- God did not shun him for his honesty
- God welcomed his transparency amid David's anguish and loneliness.

How does this apply to our day and age though?

OUR SOCIETY'S ISSUE

We are the most “connected” generation ever, yet we see the loneliest and most isolated generation in world history...how is this possible?

We value quantity over quality. We think more is better because that's what the world teaches...but is more actually better? You would think that with how “connected” we are, and how we can value the amount of people who follow us, that we would be way better off as a society. However...

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** Around **20.9%** of 13- to 17-year-olds worldwide are affected by loneliness
- **Global Youth Surveys:** Approximately **25%** of young people aged 15 to 18 feel "very lonely" or "fairly lonely"
- These next stats don't tell all of the reason why, but they do tell a sad part of it...

• **Strong Parasocial Bonds:** 52% of individuals surveyed in a University of Essex study (covering over 1,080 people in the UK and US) reported having a strong parasocial relationship with a creator.

• **Feeling Close to YouTubers:** 36% of participants reported feeling personally close to a YouTuber they watch.

- In other words, we feel like we're hanging out with people because we can relate, laugh with them, and they don't "leave"...but it's all a mirage.

So in other words, even with all of our "connectedness" you can still have:

- 500 Instagram followers
- 100+ likes on what you post
- 20 people you regularly talk to
- a group you sit with at school
- a Discord server
- A favorite youtuber
- Snapchat streaks...and still experience profound loneliness and emptiness.

Does this mean we have to completely ditch Youtube or social media? Not necessarily, (even though it may not be the worst thing), but we shouldn't replace genuine relationships either because it can have heavy negative side effects.

Here's the good news: God has not changed since David's time. He still welcomes us in. He calls us into a relationship defined by honesty. Therefore, we should take our questions and emotions to the feet of Jesus. Not so that God may give an account to us, his accusers. We take our questions, doubts, and problems to Him who is both able and willing to bear our burdens.

This includes the burden of loneliness. I challenge you to ask God why you are alone. Bring your feelings of loneliness to Jesus' feet. His answer to your feelings of loneliness will be the same as it is to so many of our real problems and questions: the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL ANSWER

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

The Word (Logos) was there in the beginning; before anything was, he was there with God (co-eternal). Not only that, but He made everything through Him.

He saw mankind fall through Adam's sin. He saw sin spread up to the time of Noah and continue to spread even after the Flood. He saw the very worst of God's creation in its sinful rebellion from His vantage point at the right hand of God the Father.

I would never leave! Who would ever leave perfection for this mess? Yet that is exactly what he did.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Word (logos) left perfection at the right hand of God the Father (Heb 1:3) to be with us. The sinful and rebellious people who corrupted God's good creation. He took on flesh, knowing our weakness, pain, and temptation (Heb 4:15).

Jesus traveled far further and suffered far more than even the heroic Desmon Dass. That is why one of Jesus most celebrated names/titles is Immanuel.

Matthew 1:22-23 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

This was the plan from the very beginning. That is why God revealed Jesus coming to the prophets (Isaiah 52). God loved us so much that he refused to allow our sinful rebellion to permanently separate us from Him. We could not go to Him, so he came to us, Immanuel.

That is why Jesus came: so we could be with Him eternally. Sin is what separated us from God. Jesus' death on the cross made a way for our sins to be paid for, our debt canceled so that we could enter into an eternal relationship with Him.

Jesus' death on the cross provided the ultimate answer to not only our feeling of loneliness but, even more so, the reality of our alienation from God. That is why,

before His death, Jesus reminded His disciples that His future death would not leave them alone. Quite the opposite.

John 14:1-4 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. **2** My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. **4** You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Rebuttal - “But that is a future answer that is great, but I feel alone today. What about that?” That is a valid point.

Jesus did not leave you alone when he rose and ascended.

John 14:15-17 “If you love me, keep my commands. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—**17** the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **18** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you

We were not left alone as orphans. Christ is coming again. Until he comes, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit indwells within every believer. We are the furthest thing from being alone.

Transition - One day we will never feel alone again. We will be incapable of such a feeling because the reality before us will leave no room for it.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Jesus provided an eternal answer to our loneliness on the cross.

Small Group transition: The gospel being the answer to our loneliness does not mean we ignore, downplay, or shame one another for feeling lonely. Even as believers in Jesus Christ, we will feel alone. In some seasons of life, we will be more alone than others. But in those seasons, we remind ourselves all the more of the Gospel. We speak the truth of the Gospel into our lives and others’. Tonight, we’ll talk about how and when we do that in small group.

Transition to small groups:

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **The message described loneliness as an emotion that isn't always rooted entirely in reality. What are some ways our perceived loneliness can lie to us?**

Leader Note: Even if our feelings of loneliness are not fully rooted in reality, we still should take that trouble to Jesus.

2. **David was remarkably honest with God about his loneliness. Why do you think we sometimes hesitate to be that honest with God about what we're feeling?**
3. **Jesus didn't simply promise to be with us someday. He gave us the Holy Spirit, who dwells in believers now. How should that reality affect the way we think about loneliness?**

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-11 AS A GROUP

2 Corinthians 1:3-11 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **5** For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. **6** If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. **7** And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. **8** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. **9** Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. **10** He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, **11** as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

4. **Vs 4: What difficult season of life has God comforted you through? This can be a season of loneliness or any other difficulty.**

Leader Note: So often, when we face difficulty, we want God to take it away. We are not wrong for desiring this. But sometimes God's answer to our heartfelt prayers is no, or even not right now.

**5. Why would God respond to our prayers with “no” or “not right now”?
Especially if we feel like we’re struggling?**

Leader Note: God can, and will, answer like this for many reasons. One reason is that when the difficulty remains we learn to rely on God’s strength, and value His comfort in ways we never would have before. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in his own life in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

**6. Vs 4-5: How can the comfort that God provided for you in that season
comfort others in similar situations?**

Leader Note: Another way of phrasing this that may help the group is: What Biblical (Gospel) truth brought you comfort and assurance in that difficult season? Now who in your life would benefit from that same Biblical (Gospel) Truth? For example, if you faced a difficult season where you faced rejection, yet you were comforted by the Gospel Truth that God has not rejected you. Instead, he has chosen you (Eph 1:3-5). Who in your life needs to hear that Truth? Tell them with boldness.

7. **(Lead-In)** Vs 9-10: The Apostle Paul wanted the Corinthian church to know that he and his partners in ministry, Timothy and Silas, had learned to rely on God’s strength and the hope they had in Christ to get through their difficulties.

What does it look like to rely on Jesus' strength and the Hope of the Gospel in a season of loneliness rather than your own?

Wrap-up/Challenge: Who in your life, who you know is going through a tough time, needs to be told the goodness of Jesus’s Gospel? Tell them with boldness this week.