

# Friendless & Alone?

Presented By Pastor Scott Walters on 04-26-20

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Introduction: “UNAFRAID: Living w/ Courage and Hope

While we all experience fear and anxiety, we don't have to let  
that fear rob us of joy and have the last word.

Today, we're going to focus on fear that researchers have called an  
epidemic even before the COVID-19 pandemic -- loneliness.

Right off the bat, I want to distinguish between loneliness and solitude.

All of us have felt lonely -- in a crowd or at a party  
Moments of being alone and not feel lonely – a walk on  
the Ice Age Trail or playing a round of golf by  
myself.

So, solitude can be good – even necessary. But that's not the way  
we were fashioned by God.

We need community and connection; we were created for  
relationships.

Loneliness: When Adam was in the Garden of Eden by himself, God  
says, “It is not good that the man should be alone.”

What happens when we don't have those relationships?

{not talking about spouses or life partners}

I'm talking about friend, coworker, relatives

Our imaginations get involved in those situations:

We find ourselves asking questions about why no one likes us;  
or because we alone, we're not going to have any more  
meaningful relationships.

So, we may begin to withdraw from public gatherings to protect  
ourselves – cycles in on itself – leads into a feeling of chronic  
loneliness.

The world is so much different than 100 years ago.

MOBILITY: People would spend their entire lives in the same  
community.

NOW, average American moves 11.5 times in  
their lifetime.

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THAT'S WHY BEING A NEIGHBOR IS SO IMPORTANT!

Instead of holding 2 or 3 jobs in their life, now, millennials are told they need to change jobs every 3 years or so to stay on top of their game.

Hard to grow relationships when one needs to move so often.

BBC/Univ. of Manchester study on Loneliness: 40% younger; 27% older more likely to feel lonely. [55,000 participants]

TECHNOLOGY: Is amazing. It allows us to worship like this while we need to maintain social distancing; we can fellowship and pray and have meetings online.

But having 800 friends on Facebook or having your cat's cute video going viral in an Instagram post is not the same as being deeply connected with another person.

Plus, sometimes, technology can distort. One's pictures and posts can make it look like your friend has the perfect life when he or she may be suffering at that very moment – and you've got a sink full of dishes to do.

One of the positive things the COVID-19 pandemic has accomplished for many churches is to make sure everyone is connected even if they don't have a computer. Do you have needs we can help you with?

Church has a responsibility to be communities of welcoming and compassionate connection – while respecting boundaries.

Being welcomed rather than just greeted.

The other help for loneliness is checking our relationship with God.

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
...If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.”

To me, these words are a blessed assurance of God's presence & love in my life.

Words like the psalmist are words worthy of meditation and reflection.

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It is my hope that with words like these, you can dwell on God's compassion.

Instead of only being alone, know of the friendship and the ongoing relationship that God wants with each and every one of us.

That relationship is persistent and never-ending –even when we've given up on God – even when we don't feel good enough to make any kind of approach to God because of the miserable things we've done,

God approaches us.

How deep and how wide is this love of God!