



# Sermon 3 Facing Loneliness in Your City

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John 16:32

*“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.”*

## Introduction

Loneliness in cities is a growing issue worldwide. With the urbanization trend and changes in family dynamics, many people feel a deep sense of loneliness. In recent decades, the urban population has surged. In 2020, according to the UN, over 55% of the world’s population lived in cities, and this trend is expected to continue. Ironically, despite the density of people in cities, a significant portion of the population experiences loneliness. A survey by the American Red Cross found that over 20% of adults in the United States often or always feel lonely.

Loneliness is not evenly distributed and affects certain groups more profoundly. The elderly, newcomers to the city in search of opportunities, workaholics, and those with demanding jobs often bear the brunt of this loneliness. Loneliness is not merely physical isolation; it’s also feeling disconnected and isolated from others, which can lead to serious issues like depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

## Development

### I. The Problem of Loneliness

Loneliness is something we have all experienced at some point, haven't we? It's that sinking feeling in your stomach when someone you care about is far away or when you believe no one cares about you. But it's essential to understand that being alone is not the same as feeling lonely. Sometimes, being alone is perfectly fine. Even Jesus Himself would retreat to quiet places to pray or spend time with His friends (Matthew 14:13; Mark 1:35; 6:31). Some people spend a lot of time alone but don't feel lonely. For example, a scientist engrossed in research or an artist creating a masterpiece can be alone but not feel lonely.

Being alone is more of a physical state, like when you choose to be alone for a while. But feeling lonely is emotional; it's when you feel disconnected, isolated, or lacking a meaningful connection with someone else. Sometimes, being alone can be good, such as when you need time to think or pray in silence.

Loneliness, on the other hand, usually feels bad. It can follow sad events like the loss of a loved one, divorce, severe illness, or problems like unemployment. We may all experience loneliness at some point in life because we all need relationships with other people, and sometimes those relationships get damaged or fail. When we feel lonely after a painful experience, that's when we truly need the support of someone we can trust.

### II. The Remedy for Loneliness

The issue of loneliness is repeatedly addressed in the Bible. Did you know that the word "alone" appears around 118 times in the Bible, but it rarely means feeling "lonely"? Here's another interesting fact: the word "loneliness" didn't even have its current meaning until recently, in this century, and it didn't appear in any major dictionary until after World War II. In other words, the concept of feeling lonely as a mental state is relatively new.

When we read the Bible, we find a crucial point at the beginning: God never intended for humans to live alone. After God created the world in seven days, it says, "*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*" (Genesis 1:31). But there was one thing God didn't find good:

*"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'"* (Genesis 2:18).

If we pay attention to the Genesis 1 account, we notice that animals were created in groups: "birds" (Genesis 1:19), "fish" (Genesis 1:21), and "animals" (Genesis 1:25). But the human, was created alone (Genesis 1:26). However, it wasn't God's plan for us to live that way forever. God knew that loneliness was not good for us, so He decided to create a suitable companion. Thus, in Genesis 2:22, the Bible tells us that God created woman from man's rib. Then, God blessed them and gave them a command:

*“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the Earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:27-28 NIV).*

As you can see, loneliness was not part of God’s original plan for humanity. We are social beings. We were made to commune with God and others. We were born with the innate ability to create social bonds... these social bonds with our Creator and fellow humans are essential to our survival. But sin disrupted that plan, and now we feel lonely and disconnected from God and others.

So, when we talk about loneliness, we need to understand that it affects us on two significant levels. First, spiritually. The initial level of loneliness people experience is spiritual loneliness. As mentioned earlier, God created us for a relationship with Him. But unfortunately, many people live estranged from God and feel spiritually lonely. That’s why, despite being surrounded by people and having everything they want, they feel lonely. They don’t realize that neither money nor possessions can fill that void in their lives. Spiritual loneliness can only be filled through a personal connection with God.

When you have a relationship with God, you can be physically alone but not feel lonely. Consider the case of Joseph: he was sold as a slave, separated from his family and friends, taken to an unfamiliar place where he didn’t speak the language or understand the customs.

In short, he was alone in the human sense. But the Bible says, *“The Lord was with Joseph, and he prospered”* (Genesis 39:2 NIV). Even though he was alone, he wasn’t lonely.

Likewise, Jesus, in the final days of His earthly life, was abandoned by His friends. Like Joseph, He was sold for a price. Almost everyone who had followed Him left. At one point, Jesus said,

*“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me”* (John 16:32 NIV).

What a harsh reality, isn’t it? But He also said,

*“But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.”*

Then there’s the apostle Paul, who, in a time of need, also found himself alone. He said, *“At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me”* (2 Timothy 4:16 NIV). Imagine how this champion of truth felt! The one who had founded many churches, preached to many people, and taught many things. In his darkest hour, he felt alone. But he could write, *“But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength”* (2 Timothy 4:17 NIV). Paul, although physically alone, he was never lonely. Like Joseph, Jesus, and Paul, you too, can have

a special relationship with God. You can live and walk every day in His presence. If you have that relationship with God, you will enjoy His company in such a way that, even if you find yourself alone in a situation, you will never feel lonely.

Secondly, *loneliness is related to human relationships*. We call it “relational loneliness.” Despite Adam initially having a perfect relationship with God he still felt the need for companionship from other human beings. God didn’t ignore or minimize that need. Instead, He made someone to fulfill it. God knows that as human beings, we need companionship. Loneliness is like a warning signal: just as hunger tells you that you need food, loneliness tells you that you need companionship.

“Relational loneliness” is only cured when we build solid relationships with others. And you know what? There’s a place where you can do that! Of course, you can do it within your family, at work, at school, or in support groups. But one of the best ways is within the church.

Let me explain something before we continue. When the Bible talks about the church, it doesn’t refer to a building but to a group of believers who have been saved by the grace of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9). So, when we examine what the Bible says about the church in the New Testament, we notice that it’s about a community of Christians who care for each other, love each other, host each other, welcome each other, serve each other, teach each other,

forgive each other, support each other, and help each other in many ways. In short, they are a team that’s always there for one another.

### Conclusion

In summary, ***God doesn’t want you to feel lonely***. You can connect with Him and others, and thus, never feel alone. During one of our gatherings, a young woman who had been struggling with depression and anxiety for years walked in. She had very few friends and spent most of her time alone in her apartment. She hardly went out, only for work and to the nearest store to buy essentials. She said life was a senseless maze, and loneliness was her constant companion.

But one day, through a co-worker, she received an invitation to attend one of our church services. At first, she made excuses repeatedly, but her friend insisted so much that she finally said, “Well, I’ll go just once to give it a try.” So, she came to church one Saturday and spent almost the entire day with us. She shared a delicious lunch, and in the afternoon, she went out with a group of church members to provide food to those in need. According to her, that day was something special. It had been years since she had felt so welcomed anywhere.

The next week, she decided to come back. The young people invited her to a social gathering at one of their homes, and she accepted. What she witnessed surprised her: people were enjoying life in a healthy way, without the need

for alcohol or drugs. She couldn't believe it. She felt accepted and valued. Furthermore, she began receiving weekly text messages with inspirational Bible verses. A group of girls included her in their special prayers. Literally, she had no time to feel lonely.

Six months after her first visit, she decided to be baptized. Before her baptism, she shared her testimony and said that the love she had received from the church's children, young people, and adults had helped her overcome loneliness. Today, she is completely free, has left behind her smoking and drinking habits entirely, but most importantly, she enjoys a special relationship with God and with others.

So, young people, I share this story to tell you that there are many people in the city

who feel just as lonely as this young lady did before she encountered our church. They may be struggling with things like depression and anxiety, but genuine friendship can make a significant difference in their lives.

The invitation is to seek out those who feel lonely, lend a helping hand, and show them the love and joy you have found in Jesus. You don't know how much impact you can have on someone's life.

Are you willing to take up this challenge?

Let's make our city a less lonely place for everyone. Together, we can make a difference!

