

The Dangers of Isolation

God made us with the need to be with others

- Every relationship we have is built upon this God-given need.
- We may choose to marry because we find it not good “to be alone.” **(Gen 2:18)**

God made us with the need to be with others

- **Genesis 2:18** - And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

God made us with the need to be with others

- Companionship *gives us strength* to face the difficulties of life. **(Ecc 4:10-12)**

God made us with the need to be with others

- Ecclesiastes 4:10-12 - For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.
11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? 12
Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

***God made us with the need to be with
others***

- We are made to seek a relationship with God.
(Ecc 3:11; Isa 57:15)

God made us with the need to be with others

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 - He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

God made us with the need to be with others

- Isaiah 57:15 - For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

God made us with the need to be with others

- All of us have had *our relationships disrupted* by current events.
- In 1918 the country endured *similar struggles* with isolation from a pandemic.
- Regardless of the reasons or the wisdom in the path forced upon us, we must *look ahead to rebuilding* the relationships God has ordained!

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- The social pain of isolation is often greater than any physical pain in our lives!

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- We are social animals and need to feel that we "belong" to others and feel connected to one another. Social pain is *as real a sensation* for us as physical pain; researchers have shown that loneliness and rejection activates the same parts of the brain as physical pain. - **The loneliness epidemic, Rebecca Harris**

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- One of the hard punishments in prison is *solitary confinement.*
- Towards the end of Paul's life he experienced *the pain of standing alone.* (2 Tim 4:16)

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- **2 Timothy 4:16** - At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- There are events that can suddenly thrust us from a world surrounded by people to *a hostile world where we are isolated.*
(Job 29:4-12; 30:10-11, 26-29)

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- **Job 30:26-29** - But when I looked for good, evil came to me; And when I waited for light, then came darkness. 27 My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; Days of affliction confront me. 28 I go about mourning, but not in the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help. 29 I am a brother of jackals, And a companion of ostriches.

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- There is a good probability that you will one day walk down this path in your life!

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- One can be lonely *in the midst of people!*
- There is a longing for a certain kind of companionship. A companion to *share your joys and to bear your hurts.*

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- Another myth is that loneliness is typically associated with being alone, but it also effects people *when they are surrounded by others*.... This is because loneliness is about *the quality rather than the quantity of relationships* that we have, so a person may have a lot of friends but still find that their needs for social contact are not met. - **The loneliness epidemic, Rebecca Harris**

Understanding the real pain of being isolated

- It may be the longing for *just one person* to do this.

Consequences of extended isolation

- If burdens cannot be lifted, we become exhausted and *vulnerable to false realities.*
- We all have a load limit that *if exceeded* will break us down.
- In isolation you often *do not feel complete or secure.* (**Ecc 4:9-10**)

Consequences of extended isolation

- **Ecclesiastes 4:10** - For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

Consequences of extended isolation

- In isolation we tend *to look upon the past.*
(Job 29:2-5)

Consequences of extended isolation

- **Job 29:2-5** - Oh, that I were as in months past,
As in the days when God watched over me; 3
When His lamp shone upon my head, And when
by His light I walked through darkness; 4 Just
as I was in the days of my prime, When the
friendly counsel of God was over my tent; 5
When the Almighty was yet with me, When my
children were around me;

Consequences of extended isolation

- Could Job return to the past? Some create a false past and become *hyper-critical of the present!* (“The whole world stinks!!)
- However Job’s past *could be an encouragement* to his present! What has God done for me and others ?(Psa 22:1-5)

Consequences of extended isolation

- **Psalm 22:3-5** - But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

Consequences of extended isolation

- In isolation we *tend to focus upon ourselves.*
- This is natural, as it is like being hungry. *You cannot help but notice!*
- You are made to *feel different and even unwanted.* **(Job 30:9-10)**

Consequences of extended isolation

- Job 30:9-10 - "And now I am their taunting song; Yes, I am their byword. 10 They abhor me, they keep far from me; They do not hesitate to spit in my face.

Consequences of extended isolation

- In isolation our *natural weaknesses and negative thoughts* often are amplified!
- You can second-guess yourself and even second-guess God!
- When left alone our emotions can grow and *eventually create their own reality.*
(1 Kings 19:4, 14)

Consequences of extended isolation

- 1 Kings 19:4 - But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

Consequences of extended isolation

- 1 Kings 19:14 - And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Consequences of extended isolation

- A common problem among churches after the pandemic are those who have been *engulfed by their emotions. complete a break with brethren and fall-away*
- Some will. It does not have to be that way!

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- We cannot change our past but what should we do as a church *in the days ahead?*
- Each of us are in different places as to *what we think is the safe and wise course* regarding this virus. I will not force my opinions on you!
(Rom 14:4-5, 19)

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **Romans 14:4-5** - Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **Romans 14:19** - Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- Because of the forced isolation we simply have *not had the communication and understanding* that we did when regularly being around each other!
- Some may have some *very strong expectations* on how other brethren should respond.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- We must be committed to *returning to regular assemblies and Bible studies.* **(Heb 10:23-25)**

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- In time this is *where each of us want to be.*
How will we get there?
- This will occur in steps and with communication with each other. All of us must overcome our fears *with faith and knowledge!*
(Ex. My learned fear of a bike!)

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- We must be committed *to renewing our individual relationships* with our brethren.
(1 Cor 12:23-26)

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **1 Corinthians 12:23-26** - And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- When a serviceman is away for months from his family there is a challenge when he comes home. Time is needed to rebuild relationships.
- We are in need of being reacquainted!
- We likely will have lost some during this prolonged isolation. Maybe we can reach out and bring them back! (Lk 15:4, 7)

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **Luke 15:4** - "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- **Luke 15:7** - "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- Some were isolated and needing companionship *before these events!* Those that fall away often *follow predicable patterns!*
Who can we reach out to?

Things that we can do right now

- We can find a stronger faith by focusing on God (worship).
- Men of faith were often alone and in pain.
Consider some great examples!
- What were David's thoughts when he was isolated and unfairly attacked? (Psa 142:4-5)

Things that we can do right now

- **Psalm 142:4-5** - Look on my right hand and see, For there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul. 5 I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living.

Things that we can do right now

- Let us *this week* take new steps in getting with others!
- Paul carried burdens that even he allowed to pull him down. *What did he do?*
- He was relieved by *reaching out to brethren* with both direct and indirect contact!
(2 Cor 7:5-7)

Things that we can do right now

- 2 Corinthians 7:5-7 - For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

Things that we can do right now

- 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

Things that we can do right now

- Let us reexamine the life of Christ and *learn to think like He did!*
- Jesus was *forsaken and left alone* by men!
(Psa 69:20-21, Jn 16:31-33)

Things that we can do right now

- Psalm 69:20-21 - Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none. 21 They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Things that we can do right now

- John 16:32-33 - "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Things that we can do right now

- The Father was *always with Him!*
- May this present isolation draw us closer to our God who *will never leave us alone!*
- There are *great opportunities* in evangelism!
- Where is our present relationship with God *right now?*