

HAVE YOU HEARD: YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Scripture used: [John 1:14 \(NLT\)](#); [Luke 1:26-28 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon delivered a powerful sermon focusing on a subject that we rarely discuss during the Christmas season: loneliness. About 58% of Americans fit the definition of “lonely” according to recent research. This is a deepening epidemic, with physical, social, and spiritual consequences. So what should we do about it? As the song goes, what do the lonely do at Christmas? They lean into the original story and meaning! We find a young, unwed woman in Nazareth named Mary. She is visited by an angel to learn that she will be the mother of Jesus, the “Son of the Most High.” We look back at this moment as a miracle. This was God coming to Earth to redeem us from sin and death, but for Mary it was an incredibly lonely time. She faced isolation from others, and the possibility that Joseph would break off their engagement because she was pregnant. Yet what did Mary do? She boldly declared “I am the Lord’s servant.” She then traveled to help her cousin Elizabeth in the third trimester of her pregnancy. Mary helped solve her own loneliness by becoming aware of God’s presence and helping someone else in need.

KEY POINTS

- 1. God is looking to connect with us.** The Bible is a story about God’s creation and the redemption of creation from sin and brokenness. He desires nothing more than to be in relationship with us. This desire drove Him to send His Son, Jesus, to become flesh and dwell with us, and moved Jesus to accept the punishment of all humanity. And this same desire draws Him to each of us at this very moment!
- 2. God wants us to believe three key things.** We may be tempted to feel like we’re all alone, or that no one cares about us. This is not God’s message. Instead He wants us to see ourselves the way He sees us: beloved creations made in His image and likeness.
 - a. “I’ve noticed you.”** God sees all of us, from the highest to the lowest. No one is worthless to Him.
 - b. “I’m with you.”** God stays with us every moment of every day. We are never apart from Him.
 - c. “I desire a deeper connection with you.”** We are worthy of His love and attention. We can never be too close to Him.
- 3. God wants us to take three actions based on those beliefs.** We will behave differently when we truly accept that God notices us, is with us, and desires to connect more deeply with us.
 - a. Be present in God’s presence.** This means time free from distraction. Set aside 20 minutes every day for devotional time. The goal is to slow down and pay attention to God’s nearness.
 - b. Be in God’s presence with others.** Sometimes the best thing to do is to gather together. We don’t need an agenda, and we don’t need to try to be perfect. Our church is a great example of broken people getting together to love each other through life’s triumphs and trials. That is what God asks of us as His servants.
 - c. Be God’s presence to others.** Mary traveled to be with Elizabeth during the last three months of her pregnancy. Her presence was a blessing, and a tangible reminder of God’s love at a difficult time.

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - The holidays can be a wonderful time, but they can also be tough. This is especially true when it comes to feelings of loneliness. What tends to make you struggle with loneliness? Are you aware of others around you who are lonely?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Christmas is not just a season of gift-giving and singing carols. It is a time to be reminded of how much God wants a relationship with us. If we take the time to connect with God, the Holy Spirit will “overshadow” us the same way it did with Mary in [Luke 1:35 \(NLT\)](#). What’s stopping you from inviting God into your holiday season? If you were chosen by God in a similar way that God chose Mary for a significant task, how would you respond? Would you dialogue with God in prayer and seek His presence?
- 3) DO** - We’re less than two weeks away from [our in-person Christmas Celebrations](#). It’s a wonderful opportunity to invite others to spend time in a loving community, especially people feeling lonely during the holidays.