



He Gets Us.

JESUS WAS LONELY TOO

2023-02-05

Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome back to our series, “He Gets Us”! Jesus gets our lives because he was human too. In this series we are exploring how Jesus knows what we’re going through. He cares and he is able to help you as you trust in him. Our topic this week is, Jesus Was Lonely Too. There are several instances where Jesus is described as being alone or seeking solitude, such as when he goes off to pray by himself (Mark 1:35) or when he withdraws to a quiet place to rest (Matthew 14:23). By acknowledging and accepting our feelings of loneliness, we can find comfort in the knowledge that even Jesus experienced these emotions. It’s okay to feel lonely and to seek out solitude when needed. Practicing self-care and reaching out to others for support and connection when we are feeling lonely are important steps. Even when you’re lonely you are not alone. God is with you.

ICEBREAKER: Do You Recharge Alone or With People?

All of us are wired in unique ways when it comes to feeling recharged. Some of us recharge on our own by reading a good book or going for a walk in nature. Others of us recharge by connecting with a friend or going to an event with lots of people. When it comes to feeling recharged, do you prefer being alone or with people? Share your preference with the group!

STUDY:

Jesus gets what it's like to feel lonely. He experienced being isolated and alone, particularly when he was betrayed and abandoned by his followers. In those times, Jesus looked to the Father for love and comfort. For the first part of our study, we'll take a look at how Jesus experienced loneliness. We'll see how he gets this emotion we experience and we'll learn how we, like Jesus, can seek the Father in our loneliness.

1. **READ** Matthew 26:36-46. Jesus' Loneliness in the Garden of Gethsemane

- Go back through this account. Where do you see Jesus expressing his feelings of loneliness?

LEADER NOTE: In this account Jesus asks his disciples to stay with him, to keep watch and to pray while he goes away by himself to pray. But when he returns, he finds them sleeping. This happens not just once, but three times! When he returns to his friends he says, "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" Jesus expresses his feelings of loneliness here. He had counted on his friends be with him in his greatest trial, but they weren't able to do it. Jesus says to them, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

- What other emotions do you think Jesus was experiencing in the garden? As we experience these emotions, how can we know that Jesus gets what we're going through?

LEADER NOTE: While he was there in the garden that night, Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow. He said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." Jesus very likely experienced anxiety that night. Luke tells us that Jesus prayed so earnestly that night that his sweat became like drops of blood. (see Luke 22:44). When he came back and found the disciples sleeping, he likely felt disappointed and hurt, maybe even abandoned by his friends. All of these emotions would have contributed to a deep sense of feeling alone. As we experience these emotions, we can know that Jesus gets us. He has gone down the same road. He knows what it is like to feel abandoned and alone. He gets us and he cares.

2. **READ** John 16:32 The Loneliness of Abandonment

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." NIV

- In this passage, Jesus looks ahead to what will happen when he is betrayed and arrested. He knows he will be abandoned by his disciples. (see Mark 14:50) Why would Jesus share this with his disciples?

LEADER NOTE: John 16:33 we read, “I have told you all this so that in me you may have peace.” NLT. Jesus knew the anxiety and shame the disciples would experience when they abandoned him. He wanted them to know that even though they had left him alone, he would not truly be alone. The Father would be with him.

- In John 14:32 Jesus says that even though his disciples would abandon him, he would not truly be alone. How can these words bring us comfort when we experience loneliness?

LEADER NOTE: Like Jesus, we may experience times of feeling abandoned by people. We struggle with the weight that comes with feeling alone. In those times, we can take comfort in the words of Jesus. Even though we may feel abandoned by people, we are never truly alone. Jesus promises he will always be with us. (see Hebrews 13:5)

3. **READ** Matthew 26:47-50 The Loneliness of Betrayal

- What do you notice about how Jesus experienced loneliness when he was betrayed by Judas?

LEADER NOTE: When we read Jesus’ words to Judas, “Friend, do what you came for.” we see Jesus’ love and compassion, but also the loneliness he must have experienced by being betrayed by someone close. This must have been a difficult and emotional moment for Jesus.

- How can we show Jesus’ love and compassion to people we feel betrayed or abandoned by?

LEADER NOTE: When we feel betrayed or abandoned by people, especially by those we are close to, it can be difficult to love them. In these challenging circumstances, we can look to Jesus as our example. Jesus extended grace and forgiveness to anyone who would receive it. Even when we can’t reconcile, we can pray and do all we can to show God’s love.

4. **READ** Matthew 27:46 Jesus’ Loneliness on the Cross

46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli,[a] lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). NIV. In this moment Jesus is quoting the opening of Psalm 22. This is a way of invoking the entirety of Psalm 22.

- Read through Psalm 22 together and talk about what you think Jesus was feeling as he bore the sins of the world and a lonely painful death on the cross.
- On the cross, Jesus was separated from his disciples, mocked and ridiculed by the crowd, and feeling forsaken by God the Father as He bore the weight of the sins of the world. It was a lonely and painful death. How did Jesus endure this degree of loneliness?

LEADER NOTE: Although Jesus experienced extreme loneliness on the cross, he was able to endure it because he had faith that the Father's plans would prevail. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." NIV

5. **READ** Hebrews 4:15 Resisting Temptation When We're Lonely

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. NIV

- Do you think loneliness might be a weakness that could lead to us being tempted? Why or why not?

LEADER NOTE: In Hebrews 4:15 we read that Jesus, our high priest, is able to empathize with our weaknesses. Loneliness can be a weakness that Satan can leverage in our lives to tempt us. When we are alone, we are more vulnerable to giving in to any temptation we think might alleviate our loneliness.

- Jesus knows what it's like to be tempted when he was alone. But in that time, Jesus resisted giving in to temptation. (see Matthew 4:1-11). How can Jesus' example help us resist temptation when we feel alone?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus resisted temptation by leaning into his faith. When Satan tempted him in the wilderness, Jesus responded with the truth of God's Word. Jesus' example a powerful guide for us. When we are feeling lonely and tempted we can lean into our faith by praying to God, connecting with other believers, and remembering God's truths in the Bible.

6. **READ** Hebrews 10:24-25. How Community Helps Our Loneliness

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. NIV

- What do you notice here about how Christian community can help our loneliness?

LEADER NOTE: Christian community is a gift God has given us to help overcome our loneliness. In this passage we see that Christian community is a place where we can “... spur one another on toward love and good deeds ...” These actions give us a sense of purpose and help us see beyond our personal struggles as we love and care for others. When we feel abandoned or alone, we may struggle to engage with community, but these verses encourage us to “... not give up meeting together ...” - because as we do we can remind each other of God’s plan for our lives and the amazing truth that Jesus is coming back!

- How has your LifeGroup (or other Christian community) helped you overcome feeling alone?

PRAY: Do you know someone who is feeling alone these days? Spend some time together praying for those you know who are struggling with feeling abandoned and alone.

Thank God for his promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

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