

No One Is an Island

Genesis 2:18-23 (New American Standard Bible)

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, **“It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”** ¹⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

“At last this is bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called ‘woman,’
Because she was taken out of man.”

John 8:29 (New American Standard Bible)

²⁹ And **He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone**, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Introduction

Starting today, for the next seven Sundays, I am going to preach a sermon series entitled, “No one...”. Today is the first of the seven, *No One Is an Island*. I got the title idea from the famous quote of English writer John Donne.

For your curiosity, here’s the actual quote from his sermon: *No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee* (Donne, John. *The Works of John Donne*. vol III. Henry Alford, ed. London: John W. Parker, 1839. 574-5).

Content

Covid didn’t help us at all. It isolated so many people all over the world who are already isolated and lonely. For instance, in America, the social isolation spiked the number

of loneliness, depression, suicide, opioid overdose, even traffic related deaths. Well, we may not blame Covid for every societal malady. However, those numbers could've been lower had we been well connected with each other. Connectedness is God's design for people.

God's Word sheds the light on the significance of connectedness with each other. Genesis 1 shows how God created the universe and everything in it: heavens, the earth, lights, planets, animals, plants, worms, birds, fish, and all. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was *very good* (Genesis 1:31). He was satisfied with His works.

Now, the last thing He needed to do was to create mankind. So, He said, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness;" (Genesis 1:26) and He formed the first man out of dust from the ground (Genesis 2:7) and named him Adam. As God was reflecting on Adam, He said, "***It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him***" (Genesis 2:18). This is the first time in the Scripture God mentioned it is *not good* on His creation. *What was not good?* For Adam to be *alone*. Something needed to be done. Adam needed a partner, helper, and companionship. The end results? Eve.

By the way, when God says it is not good for the man to be alone, it also applies to Adam's descendants. It is not good for us to be alone, in fact, for *anyone* to be alone. Even the pets don't like to be alone. The other day, I saw a dog depressed after he had lost his fellow dog for about 10 years. Medication and shots followed to cure his depression to no avail. Do you know what cured this dog? You got it right! A young puppy of same kind!

Have you been to a nursing home? As you walk through the isle, you always see some eyes fixed on you longing for someone to talk to. Did you also hear about the solitary confinement in prison, considered by the inmates as the worst punishment of all? What about people who dread dying alone? Remember Mother Teresa—who provided dignity to the dying on the streets? The presence, being there for each other, means the most.

Even Jesus was never alone. He said: "²⁹ ***And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone,...***" (John 8:29). God was with Him all the time.

We are created to be with each other. No one is self-sufficient. No one is an island. We need each other. We support each other. It is especially true for the believers in Christ. We the believers belong to the Body of Christ where Christ is the head, and we are the members.

In this Body of Christ, we are interconnected. We interact with each other. We interdepend on each other. We rejoice and suffer together as one body. When we have a stomachache, the rest of the body suffers together. Same with the Body of Christ. When one church member suffers, so does the rest of the Church. When one member rejoices, so does the rest of the Church.

It is not an accident that God calls the Church the Body of Christ. The Church is not a building but the people of God. It is not an organization but a living organism where we constantly interact with one another.

Speaking of interconnectedness, consider a human body. Hundreds of organs and members interact with each other in harmony. Night and day. 24/7. E.g. In our human body, numerous cells constantly communicate with each other through 86 billion neurons in our brain.

In this living Body of Christ, God commands us to do the following four things for each other.

- **Share:** bear each other's burden with compassion (Galatians 6:2). We share joys/concerns/worries/sadness/pain/sufferings/laughter and tears. We pray for each other. We are there for one another. Not just in worship but also in our daily life. In fact, the Church of Christ has been doing this for two thousand years. And we still do it today. Every Sunday. Every day. E.g. How often we reach out to someone who is sick! We send out cards, phone calls, and texts. We even deliver flowers and bring meals to the door. That means a lot to those who are sick. We share.
- **Encourage:** encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). E.g. Church is like a fireplace. When each piece of firewood stays together, the flame goes strong. When the logs are separated from each other, the flame will eventually die out. Likewise, in the Church, we encourage each other to keep up the good faith in Christ. God's Word says, *"Let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds,²⁵ not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near"* (Hebrews 10:24-25). Let us encourage each other every day (Hebrews 3:13). Be creative in love and good deeds for each other.
- **Confess:** confess sins to each other and pray for each other for healing (James 5:16). Today, we rarely do the mutual confession in our congregation, but John Wesley and his Holy Club would do that whenever they gathered in Jesus' name. When the mutual confession and forgiveness practiced, healing takes place among us.
- **Admonish:** hold accountable each other for mutual edification (Matthew 18:15-17). We admonish each other not according to our feelings but according to God's Law, the Bible. We do so not only for our own benefits, but also for the eternal well-being of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let's listen to Jesus: ¹⁵“Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be confirmed. ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, he is to be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” Once again, this is something that our congregation can do better. Let me tell you now. You have my permission to admonish me if I sin against you and against God. Come to me and show my fault according to God's Law, and I will repent. In the same token, may I have your permission to admonish you if you sin against me and against God?

Conclusion

We as a congregation want to be alive in the eyes of the Lord. I pray and hope that everyone in our congregation is alive and vibrant. That will happen only when we share, encourage, confess, and admonish each other in Christ, all to the glory of God.

Amen.