

THE

HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest!" [Luke 10:2]

FEBRUARY 1994

No. 098

THE LONELIEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED

Soon after creating Adam God said, *"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* (Gen. 2:18) God recognized man's need to be with others of his own kind.

The wise man Solomon also recognized man's need to be with others. *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?"* (Ecc. 4:9-11)

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CORRECTION

If asked what loneliness is, most people would probably reply that it is the condition of being alone. While this is often true, loneliness can take many forms. Have you ever thought of Moses being a lonely man? Moses told God, *"I am not able to bear all this people ALONE, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."* (Num. 11:14-15)

Moses was not alone in the sense that he had no others around him. To the contrary, he was surrounded by a nation of well over a million people. It was Moses' position which isolated him. He bore the great weight of responsibility for all these people squarely on his own shoulders.

Everyone came to Moses with their disputes and their problems. But who could Moses turn to with his problems? Yes, he could turn to God, but that is not the same. Human beings need other human beings to talk to sometimes. Someone to tell their problems to. Someone to just listen. But who could truly understand Moses' situation?

Moses faced a great deal of adversity alone. The people he was trying to lead trusted neither him nor God. (Exo. 14:11-12) As soon as Moses had turned his back for a moment, the people forsook God and made a molten calf. (Exo. 32) Even Moses' own brother and sister rebelled against him. (Num. 12:1-2) Who was Moses' true friend? Who stood by him when times were tough? No one! Moses was truly a lonely man. But he was not the loneliest man who ever lived.

For his own safety God commanded Elijah to live by himself in the desert beside the brook

Cherith for nearly three years. (I Ki. 17:1-4) The ravens fed Elijah there, but he had no human company during all of this time. Can you imagine never seeing or speaking to another man for nearly three years?

Even after Elijah came out of hiding he still felt very alone. He said, *"I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."* (I Ki. 19:14)

Elijah felt as if he were the only man left alive who served God, and he knew he had a price on his head. Perhaps we too sometimes feel like Elijah did. That no one else serves God but us. But, just as Elijah learned, there are indeed others who remain faithful to God. (I Ki. 19:18) Yes, Elijah was a very lonely man. But he was not the loneliest man who ever lived.

Who was the loneliest man who ever lived? It was of course Jesus Christ. He gave up His home, His family, His friends, even His life, so that He could serve others. He was a man, but He was also God. We know that at least by the age of twelve He understood that He was not an ordinary boy. (Luk. 2:49) Can you imagine going through life, especially as a child, knowing the awesome responsibility you bore for all mankind? Or even worse, knowing the awful fate which awaited you? As a man, could He have ever truly enjoyed peace of mind with these things weighing on Him? But who could He talk to about these things? No one! His uniqueness isolated Him even more than Moses.

Can you imagine how painful it was for Jesus to sit down with His twelve closest friends and

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tell them that one of them was going to betray Him, and cost Him His life? (Mat. 26:20) Or how hard it was to tell these same friends that soon, in His most desperate hour of need, that they would all turn and flee from Him like cowards? (Joh. 16:32) But who could He turn to? Who would understand His situation? He was forced to bear this awful burden alone.

You can see His struggle and His pain in the Garden of Gethsemane when He said, *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt!"* (Mat. 26:38-39)

Never doubt the fact that Christ did NOT want to be ridiculed, suffer great pain, and eventually die a horrible death. He was desperately hoping there was some other way. But there was not, and He knew it. He did what He had to do, even though He knew it was going to be the most difficult thing any man had ever done. And He had to face it all alone. Everyone He called a friend had abandoned Him.

After His capture, Christ was brought before the leaders of His people. These are the very

ones who should have welcomed Him with open arms as their Lord and King, but they sought only a way to destroy Him. (Mat. 26:57-68)

Then the Roman governor, Pilate, placed Jesus' life in the hands of the Jewish people. The very people whom He had labored among for over three years. He had healed multitudes of their sick, cast out untold numbers of demons from them, and done many other marvelous works before their eyes. But what was the response of Christ's own people to Pilate when asked about the fate of their Savior? *"Let him be crucified;"* they said. (Mat. 27:1-25)

After being mocked and beaten by the Roman soldiers, He was taken and crucified. As He hung there suffering in great pain and anguish many continued to mock and ridicule Him. His enemies and opponents abounded. But where were His friends? Where were those who had promised to stand by His side even if it cost them their lives? I don't think it is possible for us to fully comprehend how completely and utterly alone Christ was at that moment.

But the worst was yet to come. Up to this point, even though all of His earthly friends had forsaken Him, He still had His heavenly Father with Him. But, eventually, God too forsook his own Son. *"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Mat. 27:46)

No man has ever been so alone and so forsaken as Jesus was at that moment. But it was necessary that God turn away and allow his Son to die, if man was to ever have any hope. I still marvel at the awesome love of God which could allow such a great sacrifice for man's sake.

So the next time you feel a little bit lonely, stop and remember Christ. Put yourself in His shoes for just a moment. Then you will probably realize that you don't even really know what loneliness is.

TONY WHIDDON

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What Old Testament king literally behaved in a beastly manner?
2. Where was Jesus when He discussed the signs of the end of the age in Matthew 24?
3. For what things should we give thanks to God?
4. What famous visit is recorded in 1 Kings chapter 10?
5. When Abraham took Isaac up the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice, what did Isaac carry with him?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How many wives did Esau take of the daughters of Canaan? THREE (Gen. 36:2-3)
2. After the resurrection, what did Jesus say to Mary Magdalene that caused her to recognize Him? "MARY" (John 20:16)
3. Who was Peter's brother? ANDREW (Matt. 10:2)
4. Of what precious metal were the posts of Solomon's traveling coach made? SILVER (Song of Sol. 3:10)

5. In which prophetic book does God say a people will be carried away with hooks? AMOS (Amos 4:2)

SEVEN OBJECTIONS TO DENOMINATIONAL "BAPTISM"

1. IT HAS THE WRONG AUTHORITY.

Jesus never commanded men to be baptized into any denomination (Gal. 3:27).

2. IT HAS THE WRONG SUBJECT.

It is the penitent believer who is to be baptized, not the man who thinks he is already saved.

3. IT HAS THE WRONG CONFESSION.

Men must confess Christ, not "feelings," if they would qualify for scriptural baptism (Acts 8:37).

4. IT HAS THE WRONG PURPOSE.

It baptizes to get into a denomination instead of the church of the Lord; it baptizes "because of" remission of sins instead of "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38-47).

5. IT HAS THE WRONG ALLEGIANCE.

Sectarian "baptism" binds men to wear a denominational name; to obey and endorse a denominational creed, organization and program.

6. IT HAS THE WRONG ORDER.

Its order is: Repentance, faith, salvation, baptism. The Bible order is: Faith, repentance, confession, baptism, salvation (Acts 2:36, 38, 41; 8:37; 18:8).

7. IT HAS THE WRONG EMPHASIS.

It attracts people to denominational names, creeds and programs instead of attracting them to the Christ, His will and His kingdom.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
March 4 - 6 (F-Su)	Napolean church Woodland, AL 7:00 evenings	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
March 13 - 19	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

(Editor's Note: If you would like to have your gospel meeting announced in this paper, please send all information to me by the 10th day of the month that precedes your meeting. Example: Your meeting is in July, then the information must be received by June 10. Thank you.)

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TEN RULES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

1. I will mind my own business and not gossip.
2. I will not wear my feelings on my sleeve or be so sensitive that I look for personal offenses or slights.
3. I will wear a smile. When I am gloomy, I will go away and hide rather than inflict myself on others.
4. I will be considerate of others.
5. I will not be headstrong.
6. I will play the game of life on the square.
7. I will hold my temper and each night ask God to forgive me as I have forgiven my neighbors.
8. I will face the world each morning with confidence, determined to be as happy and brave as I can.
9. I will move into battle for a worthy cause.
10. I will not be too egotistical to pray.

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