

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Message Series: The Dark
Message Title: Isolation
Speaker: Lance Burch
Date: September 17, 2017

UP NEXT

- **LIFE GROUP TAILGATE & CHILI COOK OFF** - Go ahead and mark your calendars! Join us as a Life Group on **October 8th** in the parking lot for a Life Group Tailgating Day. Bring your chairs, fire pits, hot dogs, big screens, etc. and cheer on your favorite team! We will also be hosting a Chili Cook Off for you aspiring chefs out there. Stay tuned for more information.
- **50 & OVER BBQ AT THE LAKE** - If you're over 50, you are invited to a BBQ hosted by Mike & Cindy Zimmerman. Meat and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share. If the weather is nice, there will be boating and a bonfire. If the Husker game conflicts, it will be shown. Time: 5:00pm - 10:00pm. Location: 7911 Kona Circle, Papillion. RSVP by October 6th to zimmerwoman@cox.net or by calling (402) 578-1642.

MAIN IDEA

God doesn't watch you in the dark, He is with you in the dark.

INTRODUCTION

- Last week sermon #1 of The Dark introduced the concept of Lament. Maybe for the first time ever you heard that Lamenting in life was not a preparation for worship. It was not something that is done in place of worship. We learned that Lament was itself, worship.
- Jesus knew what it meant to feel isolated and alone. Lance covered five different episodes in Jesus' life where he felt immense isolation. 1) In Mark 3, Jesus family thought he was "out of his mind crazy" 2) In John 6, after Jesus told people to eat his flesh and drink his blood, many people deserted him. 3) In John 7, those closest to him thought he was just after fame and notoriety. 4) In Matthew 26, Jesus spent his last night abandoned by those closest to him. And 5) perhaps the most isolated Jesus ever felt was while on the cross after everyone (seemingly even God) had deserted him and left him for dead. Jesus knew the feeling of isolation.

DISCUSSION

- I have some family members who just don't understand why I choose to work at a church in Nebraska. They don't understand why I don't work at a church in Texas so I can be close to family. They say things like, "People in Texas need Jesus too." They say it in jest but truthfully it stings a little. It makes me feel isolated. I guess it hurts because I know they wouldn't say similar things for other hypothetical occupations. If I were a famous country singer in Nashville, they'd happily tell their friends, and be glad I was following my heart. If I were a professional football player up North, they'd root for my team and eagerly come visit for a game. If I served our country in Washington, they wouldn't say things like "people need government in Texas too." But because I work at a church for whatever reason they feel the need to remind me how far away I am. They doubt that a loving God would call me to somewhere so far away. Maybe that's because they've placed a higher value on those other occupations than on working at a church. But you see I have not. I view working at a church as the most important thing God could have me do.

- Does your family totally understand you and your decisions? Why you are compelled to “be the way you are?” Do they understand why you raise your kids the way you do? Do they understand why you live the lifestyle you do? Do they understand why you call yourself a Christian?
- Jesus’ family and friends didn’t always believe that He knew what He was doing. But don’t be too hard on Jesus’ family. After all, I simply claim to work at a church. Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God! Jesus’ family thought he was crazy, my family would have me committed.
- Which song do you resonate with more? Ethel Merman’s *"Everything's Coming Up Roses"* or Poison’s *"Every Rose Has It's Thorn?"* or John Conlee’s *"Rose Colored Glasses"*
 - In other words, are you typically an Optimist, Pessimist, or Realist?
 - Optimism = is expecting a good outcome and dwelling on hopeful aspects of a situation.
 - Pessimism = is a tendency to see or expect the worst.
 - Realism = is an inclination to view or explain situations as they really are.
- Spiritually speaking, what is the danger with being a Christian optimist, pessimist, or realist?
- Share a time in your life when you felt alone and/or isolated?
 - Did anyone do anything to help you during this time? If so, what?
- Have someone read [\(John 15:4-5\)](#)
 - What is this verse saying to the original hearers? For those of us who don’t run their own vineyard, what is the message for us?
 - If we were going to modernize this passage for 2017 we might say something like this. Jesus is similar to the Wi-Fi connection in your house — nothing can be accomplished online until you are connected to it.
- Have someone read [\(Psalm 13\)](#)
 - Have you ever felt similarly to David who wrote this Psalm?
 - Can you see the turning point in this Psalm?
 - Why do you think David was able to make that turn towards faith in Verse 5? What was his faith based on?

APPLY IT

- When you feel isolated try these steps:
 - **Pause** (take a look at the bigger picture. Are you stuck in the near-sightedness of life or are you looking at things clearly from a heavenly perspective)?
 - **Remember** (look at your life and remember how God has supplied for your needs in the past. In other words, count your blessings from God. This will help you remember what He has done in your life instead of focusing on what He has not done).
 - **Hang on** (God does not watch us in the dark, he is with us in the dark. You will come through this. However, you can rest assured that if you don’t it was in God’s good and perfect will for you).

RESOURCES

- We have compiled a list of reliable, trustworthy counselors who are here to listen and help, as well as many other services for specific needs. Visit reality.church/thedark