

Alone

It Is Not Good

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

August 24, 2025

There's this show on the Disney app that my family and I enjoy watching. It's called Primal Survivor. And it's about this man named Hazen Audell who, after graduating high school, spent the next 10 summers in the rainforest of South America just exploring and getting to know the tribes down there. And now, National Geographic follows him around on these crazy adventures across intense terrain in search of some usually kind of amazing natural event.

Each season shows a different trek. And the first trek that we saw as a family was his adventure across the Serengeti to watch the great migration of the wildebeest. I am certain that some of the show is scripted based on what happens, but he still does some pretty crazy real stuff. He gets beat up a lot while he's on these journeys. And these shows are great for our family because they're entertaining, but you also can learn a lot about nature and creation.

During one of these episodes, Hazen explains that the wildebeest have their strength in numbers. That when they are around the other wildebeest, that's when they are their strongest. That when they stick together, they are far less likely to be eaten by a lion. As soon as one of the wildebeests is separated from the herd, he or she is in trouble.

I wouldn't say necessarily that I'm an animal lover, but I definitely didn't enjoy watching the next scene that they showed. The lion, of course, is hunting down the wildebeest, and you know it's just a matter of time before the hunt is over and the lion has his meal. In this particular chase that they decided to show, it was a mother and child that got separated from the herd. At the end of the chase, the mother would end up sacrificing herself for her child.

Of course, as I'm watching this with the family, the scriptural truths begin running through my mind as soon as I saw that. You can't ignore the love of a mother who would give up her own life to save her child. And thinking about that, that's exactly what Jesus did for us. And so I'm seeing these analogies. Neither could you ignore the fact that it isn't good for us to be alone.

Sometimes our greatest line of defense as followers of Jesus against the enemy is staying together. All too often, if the enemy can get us alone, he can hunt us down. Genesis chapter 2:18 says, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'" From the very beginning of time, the first book in the Bible, Genesis chapter 2, the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." And it's important to note that this is even before sin entered the world.

Even before sin entered the world, God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. Even in a perfect world, you and I were created for companionship." Scripture is clear that you and I were created in the image of God, and God lives according to Scripture in this perfect relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now, I'm not going to try and fully explain this mystery, the mystery of the Trinity, because I can't.

But it does help me, and it should help us understand why we need other people. It also certainly helps me understand why the enemy tries so hard to separate us from others and to get us alone. Over the years, I've witnessed that the enemy uses many tactics to try to accomplish that goal to separate us.

And so I want to spend some time today and next week helping you see what the enemy does, but also more importantly, understand how crucial it is for you and me that we stick together with the other followers of Jesus. We're going to be on this topic for two weeks in a series that we're calling alone. And for some people, these next two weeks are going to be filled with excitement because you are an extrovert.

And so you're going to say, "Pastor, preach it because your tank is filled by being around other people." For the rest of you, these next two weeks might get a little bit uncomfortable because you're an introvert, which means your tank is filled by being alone. And there's nothing wrong with being alone at times. Of course, you read in Scripture that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. He also had time where he was alone.

But as a fellow introvert, let me assure you that even though we enjoy being alone, we were created to live in fellowship with others. It is still not good for us to be alone. We need to recognize the danger that exists when we make the decision to isolate ourselves from others. There is beauty that comes, safety, fulfillment when we go through life with other people.

I want to give you a funny example before we jump into the scriptures of how being with others can make you a better person. I know that being married to my wife makes me a better person. I am better because of her. I know this in many different ways, but one way that is very obvious that she holds me accountable is that whenever she leaves and takes the kids with her, maybe to go visit family while I have to work or whatever else, I inevitably find that on that night, I go and get fast food.

That's just my tradition, all right? When she's not there, I'm going to Culver's or Taco Bell or whatever else. And after I'm done eating that fast food, I have a craving for sugar. And so, of course, I go back out and I get ice cream. If my wife was not married to me, I probably would weigh 500 pounds. All right? She holds me accountable to what I eat. She holds me accountable in other ways as well. I know that I am better because of her, because we go through life together. And Scripture is very clear that we are better together.

And so we're going to look at that. Let me pray, and then we'll jump in. Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, I pray that as we read Your Word, that we would see how important it is that we stay in fellowship with others, that we don't allow the enemy to separate us so that he can more easily attack us. And instead, Father, that we would stay connected to the body of Christ, that we would be able to do great things because of that.

Thank you for others. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. The first scripture that I want to look at is one that you've probably heard before. You're probably familiar with. Even if you didn't grow up going into the church, you probably heard it at a wedding. It's Ecclesiastes chapter 4, verses 9 through 12, and we read this, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up, but pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves, a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. The author of Ecclesiastes is saying, "Look, this is common sense. Of course, as human beings, we were created to go through life with others. We accomplish more together than we ever could apart.

It's why we have words like synergy." This idea that two people working together can actually accomplish more, be more productive than if those two people just did their own thing. It is common sense. We support each other. We help each other. Studies have been done over the years about solitary confinement. Solitary confinement is often a source of punishment or a source of psychological warfare. And many studies have proven that we need human contact.

And without it, the results are severe, not just mentally, but also physically. We need to be around other people. Again, there will be times we need to be alone. That's not what I'm saying today. That's not what Scripture is teaching. It is good for us to be alone at times. But if we are always alone and isolating ourselves, that's when trouble can come. There are certainly times that we need to be connected with our friends, and that proves to be a blessing.

Let's jump to the New Testament, Galatians chapter 6, verses 1 and 2. The apostle Paul says this, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens. And in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. Paul says that when you and I carry each other's burdens, we are actually fulfilling the law of Christ.

It is what we were created for. You and I were never created to carry our burdens alone. We were created to go through life together. Can I make a bold statement this morning that I have zero hard evidence for, but I very much believe. I do believe that part of the problem that we have in our world today with depression and anxiety is because we don't do this well. We do not carry each other's burdens.

There are too many people that are going through life alone. And why do we do this? We do this because we don't want others to think we're weak. We don't want to say that we need other people. Instead, we make the decision to slowly die inside alone. And so Scripture says, "Share your burdens with others. Lighten the load. Don't carry it all by yourself." As I think about this, men, we are especially bad at this.

We could be carrying a heavy load and we just say, "No, it's fine. I've got it all by myself." I can't tell you how many times I'm at Menard's just up the road, and I'm buying a bunch of supplies for a project I have at home, and I'll be loading heavy things into my truck, and someone will walk by and say, "Hey, do you need help?" And I instantly say, "Nope, I got it." When in reality, it would have been great to have some help. Or when I go out to the car to help my spouse bring in her groceries. And of course, as men, we want to take as few trips as possible, right?

And so you load up on your arms and your body as many as you can hold, and you start walking into the house, and your wife might say, "Hey, can I help you with some of those?" And you say, "No, I've got it," although they're about to spill and break, right? As men, we're just not good at doing that. And yet, Scripture says that we are supposed to allow others to carry our burdens. We don't have to do it alone. We are supposed to function as a body.

So much so that Paul says to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, that if one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of the body. Paul says, "We need all of the parts of the body to be healthy.

If one part is holding out or not doing their job, we are functioning less efficiently than we could. We need each other because no one is great at everything. You may have a friend or a family member that it just seems like they're good at everything, right? But nobody is great at everything. You might be gifted in one area. I'm uniquely gifted in another area, and we complement each other. We make each other a better version of ourselves.

At the beginning of the church, these early believers knew the importance of being together in Acts chapter 2. As Luke is writing this and he's talking about the early church, he says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs that were performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

The early church did life together. It didn't matter if you were an extrovert or an introvert. You were part of the community. And this is actually still very common around the world today, but in the Western world, in our society, we have become much more individualized. And many times we take pride in that, that we do

everything ourselves. And to be honest, as you look at what it means to be individualized, it really just means we're a lot more selfish.

Because when you're alone, you can just do whatever you want. You don't have to ask somebody else. You don't have to get their permission. You don't have to make some kind of deal or agreement of, "Okay, now we'll do this and then we'll do that." Everything you have is your own. One of the things that my wife and I usually have a conversation about or she jokes with me about is when I get my food at a restaurant, I want it to be my food. She always wants to share everything, and I hate doing that because I'm selfish, because I'm individualized, right?

This is how we live, and we think we even have pride in it. But Scripture says, "No, we are to live together to have everything in common." There's give and take that exists there. Paul says in Romans 12:10, "Be devoted to one another. Honor one another above yourselves." That is hard, isn't it? Honor one another above yourselves. Don't be selfish. Be selfless.

It's what we are called to do as followers of Jesus. And part of living together in community is that we get to practice that, to be selfless, to put others above yourselves. And there are blessings that come from being with other people and being selfless. There's something that God blesses us with when we do that. It is God's design that we would do life together.

And it's because that is God's design that the enemy hates it so much. The enemy hates when we are doing life together, and so he will try to separate us. Did you even know that the enemy hates the institution of the family? Of course he does because it's about community. Actually, our family, if you've done study before, the relationship between a husband and a wife and the children beautifully represents the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, this beautiful unity that God creates.

And so the enemy hates that. And so he will do whatever he can to separate you from others. Because again, he knows if he can get you alone, he can catch you. He can hunt you down just like the lion hunts that wildebeest. Now, over the last 20-plus years of doing ministry, I have actually become surprised at the ways, the different ways that the enemy tries to separate us one from another. There are some that seem common.

And then there are others that have shown themselves that are actually quite shocking. And so I want to share some of these ways that the enemy over the last 20 years has caused some people in our church to be separated and to try going it alone. The first one is through the death of a loved one. Sometimes, the enemy will get you alone in a season of huge change. And of course, when you lose a loved one, it's a change. It's a season of grief. It's a season of pain.

There have been many times over the last 20 years that someone has stopped attending church because of the loss of a loved one. And you might say, well, that's kind of weird, pastor. Why would somebody stop attending church after they lose a loved one? Let me give you some of the reasons. The first reason is sometimes people will tell me, "Pastor, it brings up too many memories, and I don't know how to deal with it." When I walked through the doors of the church, I always came with that loved one.

Or maybe it was a friend, somebody that you connected with at the church, and that person is not there with me anymore. And so I just feel disconnected. Well, why do you feel disconnected because of the enemy? And so they say, "I can't come back to church. It just feels too weird." Reason number two that maybe people stop coming to church after the loss of a loved one is that we have the opportunity, the privilege as a church to walk through that loss with somebody. And oftentimes, they will want the funeral here.

And so we'll have the funeral service here in the sanctuary. And I've had multiple people tell me throughout the years, "Pastor, I just can't come back to church because every time I walk back in the sanctuary, I'm reminded of that funeral service." Isn't it amazing that God would use something or not God, the enemy, would use

something that could be a blessing and a gift and turn it into something that causes somebody to isolate themselves. They say, "I just can't do it."

I can't go back into that sanctuary because I think about the loss of my loved one and their funeral." Of course, that's just a transition in life when you lose a loved one. And the enemy will often use transitions in life to make us get rid of good habits and start bad habits. It's just a time of newness. And so all of those things that were maybe normal in life begin to change. And so maybe you used to attend church and you lost a loved one, and it's just a transition. And so something else comes in your life.

And so you stop attending. Now, I want to make sure that I say here, some of those individuals that no longer are part of Fairview of our family here do attend another church. And for that, I am grateful. That's not the person I'm talking about. For those that are attending another body of believers, they're just not comfortable here because of the service or whatever, there is no net kingdom loss in my mind. We're all still part of the greater family of Christ. I love it. But there are many that don't go anywhere.

They just say, "I can't do it. That's what I struggle with. That's what hurts." The second way over the years that the enemy has caused division and people to be alone and to separate themselves from the body of Christ is through a hurt from the church. This happens in so many different ways. I can't possibly list them all. There are so many different ways of church hurt, and some of you have experienced some church hurt over the years, and yet you are still here.

Some of the most common that maybe I've heard over the years is some kind of miscommunication in a relationship, whether it's between staff and the congregation members or amongst the congregation members. There are some that have said, "You know what? I can't go back to such-and-such a church because I don't feel loved or I don't feel valued enough." Maybe it was during that season of loss. You lost somebody, and you wanted a phone call, or you wanted an email, or you wanted something, and that never showed up for whatever reason.

Maybe it was a miscommunication, and you felt like you were left alone. Maybe it's because someone else in the church, not a staff person or a pastor, said something rude to you. And so you thought, "I can never go back to that church." Maybe there's relational issues with other people in the church. Certainly in a small community like this, you guys are doing business with each other outside of the church. And maybe you've had an interaction with somebody that attends Fairview.

Maybe they sit on the opposite side of the sanctuary than you, and you had that interaction outside of church, and it was not a good interaction. And then you see them at church and you go, "Ooh, I'm not going back there." you know I just need you to know, okay, I need to confess, okay? Some people leave Fairview because of me, all right? I take that. All right? I know. Some people leave because of me, but I just need you to know some people leave because of you too. All right? It's not just me.

I can't take all the blame, all right? Sometimes people do. You might say something to somebody that it's just interpreted wrong or whatever else, and people just say, "You know what? That was rude. I can't go back." Some type of relational issue, some feeling of hypocrisy. I know some people that have left church because they were confronted on some sin by somebody that loved them and they thought, "Well, don't judge me." This could be a whole 'nother message, but I just want to take a break to talk about that.

Scripture is very clear that you and I are not to judge those outside the church. I'm never to look at my neighbor that's not a believer and say, "How dare you live that way? That's not my job." But if somebody is claiming to be a follower of Jesus, you know that one of the gifts, one of the blessings of being in a community is that you and I get to hold each other accountable. I would never if somebody walked in the church and they're just from the community and I know stuff about their life, I'm not going to call them out on that. That's not my job. But if I have somebody that is part of my family, it's one of you guys.

You're a member of the church, and I know that you're struggling with something, I want you to know that as a staff, we want to come to you in a loving way, okay? It never feels loving when somebody calls you out, right? But in the most loving way we can say, "Hey, we noticed this or you're struggling with that. How can we help?" And I expect you to do the same for me. I expect you to come to me if you see something in my life or I say something from the stage. I expect you to give me a phone call or an email and say, "Hey, pastor, what is this all about? I'm struggling with that." That's what we do.

But sometimes, there are people that leave the church because somebody, a loving brother or sister, confronted them on a sin, and they thought, "Well, don't judge me. I'm going somewhere else." No, that's what the church is for. I know judging is a bad word, but maybe it's just confronting or loving. And so some people just decide to leave and isolate themselves, and they say, "I don't need the church." Let me share with you one last way that sometimes the enemy can separate us. It can be through any painful experience.

I'm amazed at how many people come into my office and they'll say something like, "Pastor, no one understands." Someone's going through a hard time for whatever reason. It could be a health issue, a divorce, a relational issue, a wayward child, a financial struggle. Somebody is dealing with something. And because their situation is unique to them, they feel alone. And the enemy tries to make them believe that they are the only person that has ever gone through this. I can't tell you how healing it is.

And I'm surprised by the fact that it's healing, but I've needed it in my own life for somebody to look at you and to truly say, "You're not the first person to go through this. You won't be the last person to go through this." You are not alone in this. But sometimes the enemy, because we look at our unique circumstances or situation, which, of course, it is unique. Nobody's as perfectly like yours. There's variables, but everybody has experienced the pains of this world that we live in.

And even though our situation is unique, we're not alone, but the enemy makes you feel like nobody understands, so I'm just going to leave. The church is a hurtful place. Nobody is going to get this. One of the other things that I find people need to hear and that I need to hear is for somebody to look at them and say, "You know what? You're not crazy." Right? Don't you ever feel crazy sometimes? You go through life's situations, and you just have these weird thoughts and emotions, and you just feel like you're losing your mind, and you just need somebody to look at you and say, "You know what?"

What you're feeling, what you're experiencing is normal, you're not crazy. Let us walk through this together because that's what God has called us to do." And so my encouragement to all of you this morning is don't believe the lie. Don't believe the lie, the traps of the enemy that wants to convince you that you are better alone. You were not created to be alone and you are not alone. If you're here today and you feel alone, would you cry out for help?

Would you talk to somebody? We'll have people up here that would love to pray with you. Maybe you're just going through some kind of struggle. Maybe you don't feel alone, but you just want somebody to walk with you. We'd love to pray with you. There are others who have been where you are at, and they would love to walk through that with you. You know There's many people that I run into in the community and even those that work their way through the church, and they'll say something like, "Pastor, you don't need to go to church to be a Christian." And I'll say, in theory, you're correct.

Scripture is very clear that you are saved by grace through faith, not by works, so that no one can boast. We're not saved by our acts or by what we do. But I say to them, even though, in theory, you are correct, it'd be similar to me saying to you, "You know, I don't need to get along with my spouse to stay married." That's true, right? I don't need to get along with my spouse to stay married, but why? Why would I want to do that? It doesn't make any sense.

God created the church. It was his invention. He came up with this whole thing. It was his idea to be a place of belonging. And please hear me. I'm not saying it has to be Fairview Missionary Church, but you should go somewhere where you feel you can grow, you can worship, and you can have true fellowship with other believers. I can tell you one of the best feelings in the world is feeling like you belong.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we had our annual outdoor baptism at the rails, and there was just a beautiful feeling there two Sundays ago. I have some pictures I just want to share with you for those of you that maybe missed it. Just to be able to gather together, it felt like a big family that was just getting together and enjoying life together, having fun together, laughing together, talking together. There were kids on the beach that were playing in the sand, kids in the water. Of course, there was ice cream, which makes everything better.

So that was good. And then, of course, the best part of the whole thing was knowing that God was drawing people to him and people were making this public proclamation of faith as we would baptize them. And they were saying to their family, to you and I, I just want you to know I love Jesus and I've given my life to him. He's my Lord and Savior. And so we were able to baptize them as they made that public proclamation, this idea of a family coming together, celebrating spiritual growth, eating food, hanging out.

That is what God wants for you. That you would feel that sense of belonging and love and fellowship and family. Don't let the enemy lie to you. I want to close today by sharing a couple more of those testimony videos of some that we did baptize a couple of weeks ago. I think we're going to watch three of them today. Each are just about 30, 45 seconds, as we celebrate with those who are celebrating because that's what the family of Christ does.

We celebrate with them as they talk about their relationship with Jesus Christ. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you for the idea of church and for the idea that we can gather together. We can worship together. We can fellowship together. And I do pray for your protection. I know the enemy is going to attack us. I know that he doesn't enjoy seeing us together. And so I know that there are always possibilities for little divisions to take place.

So I pray that you would protect us and you would allow us as a family to grow and to continue growing in our relationship with you. Thank you for allowing us to see changed lives. We celebrate with those who celebrate. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.