



# UNLONELY

DYING TO BE TOGETHER : RISING TO THE OCCASION

04/19 • Un-Lonely: Part 2

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN, INDEED, HALLELUJAH!

Roughly 60 million people in the United States experience loneliness as a major source of unhappiness in their lives. If only they could all get together! But let's face it, getting together and staying together are very different. How can we stay together? **Read Ephesians 4:1-7.** [This discussion sheet will prove more useful if you've listened to the corresponding message first: <https://subsplash.com/nblc/sermons/ms/+7nrhk9p>].

**Icebreaker:** What are negative labels you've heard people use to describe others?

1. Dr. Murthy, former US Surgeon General, identifies three kinds of loneliness. They might be defined like this:
  - a. *Intimate* loneliness—feeling like you don't have someone who truly knows who you are and accepts you totally.
  - b. *Relational* loneliness—feeling like you don't have friends to share day-to-day life with and common interests.
  - c. *Collective* loneliness—feeling like you don't belong to a larger group with shared identity and mission.

Which type of loneliness is felt by most people, do you think?

2. "*I urge you to walk*" (v. 1)—the Christian life is often defined as, "Someone who walks with God" (cf., Gen. 5:24; Gen. 17:1; Luke 1:6). What makes this definition different than the common expression, "Someone who believes in God"?
3. "*you were called*" (vv. 1&4)—the Bible uses many descriptions of our *calling*.

Here is a partial list:

- a. Children of God the Father
  - b. Saints of God
  - c. Those whom the Savior loves
  - d. Citizens of The Kingdom of Heaven
  - e. Friends of Jesus
  - f. Servants of the Lord
  - g. Heirs of the King
  - h. A royal priesthood
- a. Which of these metaphors do you like the most? Which one seems hardest for you to relate to?
  - b. What are the implications of each "calling" (e.g., a "saint" is to "be holy")? Do the implications of each calling explain why you like one metaphor over the others?
  - c. How might knowing these metaphors that describe how God sees us—despite the contradictions in our lives—give us a better sense of self-worth?
4. Experts say that lonely people often suffer from feeling they are not enough and, therefore, behave in ways that reinforce their loneliness. Two examples from the message were labeling and leaving. Which of these two do you tend

to lean toward more and how does that look?

5. *“walk in a manner worthy ... with all humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love” (vv. 1&2).* These are healthy relational behaviors—as opposed to labeling and leaving. Why would we choose loneliness-responses instead of show eagerness to demonstrate these four qualities?
6. *“maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace” (v. 3).* God graciously gives unity and peace; we just *maintain* or neglect them.
  - a. What is the distinction and why is it important?
  - b. How is this related to ‘*working out*’ or ‘*working for*’ our salvation?
7. *“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (vv. 4-6).* This *belief* (i.e., *credal statement*) forms the basis for the unity and peace that Christians share.
  - a. Why are shared beliefs so critical for true connection with other people?
  - b. What is ironic about our culture’s tendency to minimize shared belief (i.e., relativism) to avoid conflict.
  - c. How can “humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love” help achieve shared beliefs and true connection?
8. *“But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (v. 7).* This verse is more easily understood by comparing it with 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (also Romans 12:3-8):

*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of*

*activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”*

Sometimes we need to exhibit “humility, gentleness, patience, and bear with one another in love” because we are gifted differently. How might these perceived-negative-traits be evidence of another’s gifts (think, antonyms):

- Bossy \_\_\_\_\_
- Indecisive \_\_\_\_\_
- People-pleaser \_\_\_\_\_
- Nitpicky \_\_\_\_\_
- Eccentric \_\_\_\_\_
- Risk-taker \_\_\_\_\_
- Cynical \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:** God and His Church meet our intimate, relational, and collective need for connection.

#### **Please Pray**

Pray for your personal requests among your group/household. Please include prayers for those serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many are part of NBLC!

#### **Praise List**

Julie & Rich Silistria supplied our praise list:



- Fill This Place by Red Rocks Worship  
<https://youtu.be/Bq7gnU1P7M>
- Christ Is Risen by Phil Wickham  
<https://youtu.be/OGtwWqnUNcw>
- King Of Kings by Hillsong  
<https://youtu.be/7OnfQpZr030>