



APPNOTES

Date: December 10-14, 2018

Series: God With Us

John 1:14 Have you ever felt lonely in a crowd? So many people feel emptiness, especially this time of year. Whether we are truly without family and friends or we fail to feel accepted in a crowd, the hollowness is the same. This verse encourages us to know that we never have to be lonely. Jesus became flesh so He could live among those He loved. Then when the time came, He bore our sins so we may spend eternity in fellowship with Him. This sacrifice exemplified His unconditional love for us. All who call upon His name for forgiveness will be saved. He may not be here in physical form, but He sent His spirit to dwell in our innermost heart. We are never alone - God is with us in our loneliness!

Judges 6:15-16 When Gideon is called to defend his people against the Midianites, he questions the Lord's choice. Gideon knows he is not the most qualified person to head up this strike. "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." In response, God does not explain to Gideon how He will defeat the enemy to save Israel. He simply states, "I will be with you." Those five words pack quite a punch! Imagine the fear welling in Gideon; yet he submits to God's will and follows in faith to victory. Gideon chose to submit to God's plan without knowing the details. We, too, must put our faith and hope in the Lord. Even though God does not always expose His ways to us, we must follow where He sends us. When the Lord is with us, we never have to fight our battles alone. God is with us in our weakness!

1 Samuel 23:16-18 In a hyper-connected world, we have never felt more alone. There are countless social media outlets, 24-hour news cycles, and infinite Internet information. Yet the more we perceive we connect with others, the less time we actually spend with them. Extended periods of seclusion go against God's plan for us as Christians. Fellowship is key in our growth. Even David (a man after God's own heart) needed his friend Jonathan to come help him find his strength in God. The Lord encourages lifting one another in prayer, singing together, and worshiping God together. We need to live with a constant awareness of the presence of Christ and be present to others. These are last words Jesus said to his disciples - "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." God is with us in our isolation!

Hebrews 4:14-15 As we look back on life so far, I am sure the reality of our lives looks little like the vision we had for ourselves. Life has a way of throwing in some unanticipated valleys! While none of us are exempt from pain and suffering, how we react to those challenges differs. Our first instinct is to do anything to avoid it. But God reminds us that He will get us through. Our Savior experienced every type and degree of suffering. When we suffer, we are not alone. Embrace the importance of one-on-one relationship with God. Ask Him for the understanding needed through trials. Walk steady in the Lord's presence and have no doubt His promises are real. He has a glorious plan for us, even in our anguish and disappointment. God is with us in our suffering!

Hebrews 13:5-6 Loneliness often leads to insecurity. In our self-doubt, we turn to material wealth for emotional and physical security. Often times we are so obsessed with the accumulation of physical resources, we forget the real reason we are here. In this passage, Paul encourages us by reminding us God will never leave us. He warns us to keep our lives "free from the love of money". Greed separates us from God and leads to increased loneliness. When we feel alone, we lack confidence. We become weary and are more susceptible to temptation. But, when we live with a sense of God's presence, we have greater courage, perseverance and self-control. We find perfect contentment. We must look to Heaven to find our real worth. God is with us in our insecurity!

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