

4-9-2025 "I BELONG"

Impacts of Loneliness

"Loneliness is a growing health **EPIDEMIC**. We live in the most technologically connected age in the history of civilization, yet rates of loneliness have doubled since the 1980s...The mortality effect of loneliness is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It's actually greater than the mortality impact of obesity." U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy

"The evidence is growing that loneliness can kill—it increases risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression, and anxiety." — Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Professor of Psychology

"Loneliness acts as a fertilizer for other diseases. The biology of loneliness can accelerate the buildup of plaque in arteries, help cancer cells grow and spread, and promote inflammation in the brain leading to Alzheimer's disease." — Dr. Steven Cole, UCLA Professor of Medicine

As Easter week marches forward regulars, and Chreasters" (people who only attend church services on Christmas and Easter) will be at worship services in droves around the world this Weekend.

We continue looking at our identity from 1 Peter 2:8-10. *⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now YOU ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD;

once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Reflect

1. How did Jesus call you out of darkness into light?
2. How would you describe your pre-Jesus darkness?
3. Why did God call you into light (verse 9)?
4. What does it feel like to belong as part of God's people?

5. What does God's mercy mean for you today?

Harvest Prayer...

Pray for all the visitors attending worship services this weekend:

- ⇒ That they would sense the presence and goodness of God
- ⇒ That Holy Spirit would draw them, creating awareness and desire to repent and follow Jesus
- ⇒ That they would connect with people to experience authentic, Jesus focused community.
- ⇒ That they would hear God's voice calling them out of darkness and into light and belonging, and to become worshippers declaring God's praise.

Pray for church people and leaders:

- ⇒ For winsome hospitality
- ⇒ For God to manifest his presence in their churches and worship
- ⇒ For clear and authentic presentation of the Gospel and a call to a life of apprenticeship to Jesus.

Pray for your 3 VIP's to come into relationship with Jesus (those 3 you feel called to uniquely bless, serve, and share Jesus with).