



## Have You Ever Been Alone?

*“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry”* (II Timothy 4:10-11).

Have you ever been alone? I do not necessarily mean have you ever been without physical company in a room, but alone. Feeling empty and incomplete even in a crowd? I do not know the extent to which Paul was lonely without those who had left the faith or those who had left his physical presence to minister elsewhere, but when I read the two verses selected for our text I am made to think that he may have been concerned over their absence physically as well as thinking of other considerations. As I read many of Paul’s writings, I think that he understood what it meant to be lonely.

For example, think of those former friends of his that he had to leave in the interest of the gospel. The simple fact is they were incompatible with his present profession of faith. He could never enjoy the same relationship with them again. They were opposed to the Christ of Calvary and he was fully dedicated thereunto. They despised Him Whom he adored. I have former friends from whom I have been separated due to the gospel they have forsaken. At times I miss them. I wish things could be as before, but they cannot – not unless and until they repent and being their lives into conformity with the Lord of my life.

Think of the family members Paul must have left behind upon his conversion and their continued rejection of the Savior Who made Paul the man he became. Maybe there was an Uncle Hezekiah who taught him to fish. Perhaps an Aunt Mary who baked those cookies Paul (then known as Saul) loved so much. We do not know much about this aspect of his life, but I know that it hurts at times to have Faith separate us from family. Still and all, it is necessary sometimes. Neither Paul nor I am complaining about it, I am just stating facts – sometimes we must leave family members and go with Jesus in order to be saved. It is hard, but only for a few years... the reward is more than enough to make us forget the struggles.

Loneliness is a hard thing – one of the hardest with which men must contend. I wish I had some magic formula to share with you to overcome it, but I have found nothing like that with any lasting effect. When I am lonely I try to meditate on some of the things I am afforded in Christ – Jesus loves me; He has gone to prepare a place for me where I’ll dwell in the midst of the holy ones of the ages, even if many former friends have forsaken me I still have some who stand beside me – they call, drop by for a visit, send notes of encouragement, and etc. – and though many family members have no use for me now those who do are more precious to me than all the gold in the world could ever be.

Basically, when you are lonely only you have the information to see you safely through – you and the Lord, that is. You know the passages of Scripture that will lift your spirits. Sing that hymn that means so much to you. Think of a biblical character that had things much worse than you do. Let your mind formulate a list of the blessings Jesus has in store for you in heaven! Send a card to someone else you think is having a hard time of it – you might well be surprised at how much helping others will ultimately help you. Pick up the phone and call a troubled friend.

Encourage them. Make a list of ten good qualities about you. Make a list of things to which you aspire. And above all – pray! Our heavenly Father understands your pain in ways no man or woman can. He wants to help! Won’t you let him?

The next time you are lonely try to remember that you are loved. Your true friends love you. Those family members who have not ‘bowed the knee to Baal’ love you. I love you. And, more than anything or anyone else, Jesus loves you. With Him you will make it through and be just fine. Give Him a chance – He died to show you how special you are to Him. He loves you more than anything in either world. May God help you and bless you in every good way.

*Tim Smith  
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## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who has having health problems, and Tim Smith.

Wanda Walker was still having problems with her foot earlier last week as a result of stepping on a nail.

The Chumbley’s are grandparents again (making number seven!). Zachary Taylor Moses was born on August 8, 2008 at 5.10 p.m. He weighed in at 6lb 5oz and was 19.5 inches. Zachary, his parents (Ellen and Kyle) are doing well.

Kimberly Wilson leaves for Athens, GA today to continue her studies at Georgia University. Jennifer Wilson leaves on Thursday as she begins her higher education. Our prayers are with then in their studies and that they will remain faithful to the Lord.

### ***Quote from the past ...***

“The number of men who are willing to work on either side of a question that will pay would be surprising to those not in position to know and who have not become accustomed to such things. It is the discouraging feature about the work of churches today. So few men are willing to stand to their convictions — nay are willing to have convictions on any subject that will interfere with their worldly success. But truth can never be maintained, save by those who are willing to honor their own convictions, cherish a keen sense of right, are afraid of the least participation in that which is wrong, and will honor and maintain the truth, let it cost what it may of popularity or private prosperity. Let us, then, drink, deeply of the essence of the spirit of Christ. Without it the Christian religion cannot exist.”

(This quotation is from the commentary on I and II Thessalonians, Titus and Philemon (pages 100-101) by David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd; specifically on II Thessalonians 2:11. Roelf Ruffner, the preacher of the High Plains church in Cheyenne, WY found this quote. (Ed. K.J.C.).

This quotation should cause all to ponder and many in the brotherhood today to repent!