

**Allen Alcock, Are You Alone?**  
**Reading: 2 Timothy 4:9-18**

**February 14, 2016**

Once again thank you for the privilege of being able to prepare a lesson and try to express from the heart and especially from the word of God, something that can bring us together in spirit and in fellowship. January 22, 1970. I was fulfilling one of my jobs that I had to do that was involving recovering crews of downed aircraft that morning. Many things took place there that morning that were not normal. The pilot I usually flew with on such missions as this had gone to dental call. As most of you know, I served as a CE crew chief on helicopters in Vietnam and also I had been promoted to a position because I would also be involved in test flying and other types of missions. One of them was rescue and recovery because of certain trainings that I had received, so I flew also as a pilot. As I said I had to fly with a qualified aviator. That particular morning, I needed to get this aircraft test flown, so I could be released for duty within my unit. I grabbed this guy that was standing there lonely in the hangar. He was new, brand new, kind of looking around, and I said "Are you a qualified aviator?" He said yes. "Would you come with me and we'll go test fly this aircraft?" Sure. Some rules were broken there.

Anyway while we was on that flight, test flying, everything seemed to be working good on the aircraft. I got the call over the radio, heard the call about one of our scout helicopters going down. I knew what that meant, so I'm with this new guy. I'm sitting in the AC seat. He's sitting over there. We don't take anybody else with us a lot of times because that's weight when you're sling loading a load out you need that. I'm being too long with this. We went out there and basically the story is this--in the rescue of the men and the hurt men that was there at the crash site and everything else, they flew off and left me by myself with just a few tools in my hand and no weapons, nothing. I felt all alone. And I got to thinking, there are times there in those next few hours by myself and I could hear things going on around about me that boy, I was alone. I couldn't have even understood somebody that come up to me and started jabbering at me to surrender or whatever. I was alone. I was scared! I was wondering what they was going to tell my family if I had gone AWOL or something--I didn't know--and when I came up missing. I was alone. I think we all can tell some sort of a story sometime in our lives that we are alone. We feel alone. Alone means--well, the dictionary says "separated from. . . separated from something that makes you feel a part of ; that you're without company, that you're solitary" and this is one I really like--"you're unique." I never thought of it being that way, but something can be by itself all alone and be unique. When we stand for what is right-- into the lesson here--and what God designs, we are not alone really.

Did you notice what he read here in II Timothy that some had forsook him, some he sent other places, but God was with him-- in verse 17-- "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might proceed be preached fully through me." Paul as he went about his mission as being someone that was alone a lot of times, you might say, because what he stood for, yet he was with company because God was with him. Many times we all make decisions--children in school. Teenagers make decisions to do some things; they make moral decisions. Parents, have you helped them approach that decision? They make modesty decisions. What shall I wear? How tight

should my jeans be? How short should my skirt be? How should I look? Do I look this way or that way? Should I study hard? Should I excel? Should I be mediocre? Should I get involved with the drinking and doping, be part of the crowd, or let a lot of things cross our minds. Should I cheat? Should I not do whatever? Young people they meet to go to college( I didn't mean to make her cry). Many young people today are faced with a dilemma about what to do with their lives. They don't want to be alone, so they want to partner up with someone but yet they don't want to marry them. They think about self and think about well I can go ahead and live with this person, so I won't feel alone and I don't face the bills by myself. Just a lot of things that go on.

Young parents, adult parents--well, you know a lot of times, these young people think well is it wrong for me to do this, but they don't focus. Maybe they're all alone in fact they're not focused on taking responsibility of serving undefiled a God, a God who would be with them, who is there for them to be with. They do not want to worship him. Last Sunday-- I was reading and thinking about this last Sunday Super Bowl night, right? I thought of all the millions of drinks that were drank to salute the players and to salute friends and everything else, and how many drank of the cup of the communion. People, a lot of times we stand alone because we're different from the rest of the world. In our workplace are we productive? Do we work hard for a payday reward from our employer? Do we deserve it? Do we profess in our lives godliness and good values? Are we alone that way? There's a lot of times that we can be alone.

Look at Noah, for example. I even thought about going back to Adam and Eve. I wonder after the companionship that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden before they sinned, I wonder as they were driven from the Garden, if they felt a little bit alone. But anyway, we know that Noah will stand out there as someone that was different. Talk about a minority! God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously. Then we're going down three more verses--Genesis 6 verse eight: " but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." "Noah," verse nine," was a just man perfect in his generation. Noah walked with God." As far as the world was concerned, Noah was kind of a left out idiot. He was alone, but he was not alone because he walked with God. That means that he had faith in God. That means that he obeyed God, and we see that he did that when he built the ark, but in the process of building that ark, we see that Noah could've been someone that was not acceptable to the rest of mankind. He would've felt alone. He probably felt scorned. What you doing, Noah? Well, I'm building an ark. What's that for? I don't know how much he told about what was coming someday as he beat on that thing for those years and years and years and they put pitch and tar, brought the lumber and all this stuff. Look at that fool! He had been ridiculed, had lonely feelings. You just can't be doing this, but all that time he was preaching righteousness and that made him probably lonely. Look what Paul writes in Corinthians: For as our suffering of Christ abound in us, the sufferings abound in them with the rest of the world there. So our consolation also abounds in us through Christ. Noah probably didn't feel alone because he had, in some ways, because he had God with him. He was walking with God. He had faith in God. He was obeying God. Another thing that makes us alone sometimes is people laughing at us. You know that they are ridiculing you-- she's miss goody two

shoes--she goes to church or he goes to church. He can't be cool because he's not frisky enough. Or people talk behind your back. But even though Noah's family was alone in the world, they were not absent from the companionship of God because they walked with God and thus "Noah did," verse 6:22, "according to all that God commanded him" and as a result of that he was with God, in the company of God, and God was in his company.

Abraham left his family all alone, left his friends all alone, left his country, isolated and I'm going to say perhaps lonely, missing home, missing those things that were comfortable to him, familiar to him. Going to a place where there were others and I imagine he may have heard such rumors that most people out there were barbarians. He acted like that whenever this one particular person came to him and he said now he told his wife, Just say you're my sister. I don't want them to kill me just to take you. He wandered around, he listened to God's promises of him becoming a great father and perhaps, even in the years that he was married and never had a child, I imagine he submitted to the wishes of his wife because he felt alone and the promises weren't going to come, but Abraham then submitted to God and not to strong human urges that comes from feeling alone and in due time he got the reward of his son. In Genesis chapter 22 we read about Abraham taking his offer of this promised son that he now had to offer him as a sacrifice. I know that he had the idea that somehow that he and Isaac would be coming back but because of what was mentioned in that story, but can you imagine how alone he must've felt as he traveled there to the place that God directed him to to offer that sacrifice? How alone he must have felt whatever his son said, "my father, look the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" It had to be an empty feeling when Abraham would say "my son, God will provide." Now, doesn't that feel a little bit of blank. He might've been alone in what he was going to do physically, but he had confidence in God, knowing that God would provide and give him these things. God was with him. The angel of the Lord stopped the thrusting knife. He listened to God, Abraham did. He obeyed God and did what God required. And God was with him and he was not alone. In Genesis 24:1 it says "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in his age and the Lord blessed Abraham in all things." In fact, as we read a little bit further, we see that Isaac received the blessings that he did because Abraham had been so obedient in the time that he lived with God.

We could talk about others, other of God's servants who could have felt all alone. Look at Joseph. He was ridiculed by his brothers. This spoiled brat! He was rejected by his brothers. He was sold out by his brothers. He was orphaned by his brothers to Egypt. He was a Hebrew, an outsider, an outcast, you might say among the Egyptians, but God was with him because he kept God in his heart. He had faith in God. He obeyed God. He was taken from the old family and taken to a new family. He was put in prison. He was taken out of prison. Then he rose back up to power because of all the things that happened. Yet in all circumstances, God was with him because he included faith and obedience in God as his way of life. Therefore he was able to be a great hand for God and also have confidence. When he died, he says don't leave my bones here; take them with you. He knew what was coming, didn't he? Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Daniel, but lastly, we see in all of these cases that God was with them

because they walked with God, and they obeyed God, not perfectly. They still had sin in their lives, but they made God the prominent thing that they needed to have in their lives so they would not be alone. They rested in God on the promises that he had given them.

David, for example, his brothers would say Why did you come down here to this war? You should be home watching dad's sheep herd, you little brat. David experienced aloneness even watching that sheep herd, probably, as he fought off the animals that could inflict pain. David felt alone because he was younger sometimes and he admired his older brothers, but they didn't want to have anything to do with him. The Lord. I cry out to you, make haste to me. David said, but my eyes are upon you, O God the Lord. In you I take refuge. I'm satisfied even though he was boastfully bold as he approached the giant there. How lonely do you think he felt? I mean there's a herd of soldiers on the other side up there and his friends up there. Everybody is afraid of everybody. David took that sling and that rock for the very first time. Don't you know he never slung one before in his life? Ha! You know he had practiced, practiced, practiced a lot, don't you? And David felt alone as he approached that giant. But all in all he was not alone because he had faith in and he had obeyed God. He had been anointed. He knew that there were things of greatness that could come by being with God. So he says this about God. We find it in a very familiar passage in Psalms 23 verse 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. You are with me [talking of God]. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

The last thing I will say is about Jesus. Jesus was all alone many times. He wanted to be alone I think sometimes, but as Jesus was there, he faced an aloneness that no other human on this earth had ever faced. In Matthew chapter 26-- and these are written on the bulletin here in verse 31--Jesus makes a prediction of his disciples that they will all be made to stumble, that the shepherd would be struck, and the sheep will be scattered. Later on, Peter says, even if all are made to stumble because of you, Peter says, not me. I'll never stumble. In Matthew 26:56 we read further down after they captured Jesus the things that were going on that all of the disciples forsook him and fled. Isn't that just great. One friend, one ally, where are they? They all forsook him, not one was left back there for him. We look at the denials that would follow, Peter who was the one who said he would never stumble. He denied it. You were with them the girl said; he denied it. This man was with Jesus another said. I don't even know that man. You were with him. Your speech betrays you. He began to even curse and swear to show that he did not know Jesus, to make Jesus alone from friends. Jesus was alone from friends when they took counsel against him to put him to death. By himself, Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin. By himself, Jesus was scourged. By himself, Jesus watches the crowd gathered around him and shouted things about him that were not true. And by himself, he was sent to Pilate again. By himself, he was sent before Herod. By himself, he was again sent to Pilate. By himself, he heard the bloodthirsty people shout out, Crucify him! By himself, Jesus hung as soldiers removed his clothing, gambled for them, placed a crown of thorns on his head and scoffed when they called him King of Kings. By himself all alone on the cross, dying, and he shouted out *Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani?* that is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He didn't

even have God with him at that time. Why? Because he was carrying all of our burdens and our sins upon his body to the cross, to the bloodshedded cross, and he could not have God in the presence of sin. All alone, Jesus died. Even God had turned his back, leaving him to bear your and my sins ALL BY HIMSELF.

In Matthew chapters 27:46, we see that God cannot accept sin, even look upon it. He will not allow it to be in his presence. If we are in sin, we are alone from even God. In Romans chapter 3 and verse 23 says, "It is true that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We see that the penalty for sin is death, separation from God, never anymore to be able to enjoy the comforts of what God can give us, the hope that God can give. But in Romans chapter 5 and verse 10, we also read that we are enemies of God when we are in sin. But if we turn back a couple of verses there it says, "but God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." There is a way that we can go back and we can have God in our lives. We can turn back to it. In Romans chapter 6 verses one through four, we can see that we can be cleansed from our sins, sanctified through the blood of Jesus Christ by baptism, and arise to walk in newness of life. No longer alone in our sin, we now have help through that. We have aid and comfort. This morning, I asked you the question: Are you alone? Are you alone, separated from God? Are you alone, separated from others who would be of Christ? Are you alone even out there in the world, never fulfilling the wants that you think you must have to be satisfied to the rest of the people, and then something changes? We're always alone when we are without God. The invitation song says reach out to Jesus. Will you think about that as we stand and sing?