

From the message on January 28

Hope Echoes into Loneliness

Text Psalm 25:16-17 with Isaiah 41:13

From the Message

Loneliness is a real experience for many, if not most, living today. The Bible frequently nods to this experience as a real, painful experience while directing attention to the promise of God's presence and grace.

The good news about Jesus speaks into our loneliness. Jesus is proof we are loved. And, through God's love, we are capable of loving others. Being loved and being able to love provide a footing for relationships that resolve experiences of loneliness. So it is that hope echoes into loneliness, not to break it up, but to teach us a divine way with ourselves and every other person we find in our vicinity.

Opening Interaction

With a deck of cards, select one card for each person in your group.

Make most of the cards be part of a pair, trio, or quartet (use numbers or faces).

But have 1 or 2 cards be unique and solitary.

Instruct the group to find their same-kind company without explicitly saying either the value (number or face) of the card, or the suit.

After the game, ask a few questions, like:

- For those who wound up alone, what did they feel while trying to match up?
- For those who wound up in company, what did they feel during the different stages of investigation and pairing?

Read the passage and Discuss

How have you experienced loneliness in your life? Are you feeling lonely today?

Read Romans 5:1-5 together. How is it that God's love enters our lives?

(Suggested activity. Encourage your group with these words, *You are loved by God.*)

Read Romans 12:9-21 together. How does this passage describe practical ways to love others, from friends to enemies and everyone in between?

(Suggested activity. Encourage your group with these words, *You can love others because you are loved by God.*)

Finally, remind each other that the purpose of hope is not to dispel loneliness immediately but to point us to God's love for us in Jesus. Ask, *how can this group help you when you feel lonely?*

Encourage Each Other Through Prayer

1. Calvary is offering several paths for guests to connect more intentionally with Calvary this year. Pray for the next Explore Calvary meeting on February 4 and upcoming Core Class meeting on March 3. More specifically, pray for Calvary's frequent guests.
2. Pray for On Track (singles) and Young Professionals (early adulthood) groups at Calvary. Both strive for healthy community among peers and gather weekly on Sundays.
3. Pray our 3 active employment searches (Lead Pastor, Student Ministry Director, Special Needs Ministry Coordinator), that God will fill each in His time!

Information, if you need it:

Lead Pastor Search Updates can be found at calvary.church/leadpastorsearch

A financial overview is available at calvary.church/givenow

Current employment searches, calvary.church/employment