A couple of weeks ago, a British man by the name of Mark Gaisford posted a video of himself entitled *“****I Have No Friends****”.* That video went viral across the internet, as he became an overnight sensation with more than a million views on *Facebook, Instagram,* and *YouTube* and with more than 30,000 “likes”. The reason why he made this video was because he wanted to share some of his inner-most personal feeling and thoughts about being lonely. Believe it or not, despite all the social media networks out there, loneliness is a real problem in our society today. This is true especially among men who are less likely to share about their true feelings and emotions. They don’t want to come across as weak or vulnerable when it comes to relationship with others.

 Mark is a 52-year old married man whose wife unfortunately usually works at night and over the weekends. They have two adult children who are in their mid-20’s and they’re empty-nesters. As a result, Mark often found himself feeling lonely, with no one to talk to or to hang out with. One time he even bought a pair of rugby tickets and no one wanted to go with him, so he ended up staying home and watched the game on TV. Professionally, Mark is the CEO of a human resource recruiting company. His job ironically is to connect with people, matching their skills with their potential employers. Yet somehow Mark finds himself feeling lonely with this “empty void” deep inside his heart, yearning for a genuine and meaningful relationship with others around him.

 As Mark explained in his video, even though he has many acquaintances in real life or on social media platforms, many of his so-called “friends” are NOT really his “friends”. It’s not someone whom he could share a drink with or have a meal together or share some personal feelings that are buried deep inside. Will these so-called “friends” be there for him, when he has real problems and real needs to deal with? Chance are…probably not!

 At the end, Mark joined this social group that’s comprised of people who are also going through the same struggles dealing with relationship and loneliness. Suddenly they realize that they are not lonely anymore. They’ve found some true friends and companionship. There are people who care and genuine friendship and relationship are possible.

 Come to think of it, some of us who are sitting in this room tonight may also be experiencing similar relational problems like Mark’s, not only in terms of our relationship with one another, but in our relationship with God. There’s this empty void, a vacuum, and a deep irresistible yearning that we simply don’t know how to fulfill…perhaps we can’t. When it comes to our relationship with God, on surface we might appear to have checked-off all the right things to do…we’ve come to church regularly, we’ve participated in bible study and said our prayers. We’ve volunteered to help others in and around the community, yet somehow, we still find ourselves yearning and hungering for this intimate relationship with God. Why is this so difficult?

 Furthermore, during the holiday season especially, many may find ourselves hiding or suppressing our true feeling while pretending to be socially engaged. What’s going to happen when we put away all the trees and decorations, when all the presents have been unwrapped? We’ve left with an empty void once again. This struggle is real as we experience a deep sense of isolation and disconnect with others, and more importantly with God. We feel that our relationship with God has been broken and we do not know where to turn in order to restore such broken relationship. THIS is when Christmas comes in!

 **Christmas is about the fulfillment of God’s promise, in light of this broken relationship between God and humanity.** The true meaning of Christmas cannot be purchased, nor can it be replaced with our earthly temporary pleasures or gifts. God made a promise and God delivered that promise by restoring this intimacy of LOVE that we once held and cherished, but have abandoned over the years, due to our human depravities of sins and rebellions against God. We’ve squandered our privileges of being chosen as the sons and daughters of God. Yet somehow God kept His promise by sending His only begotten Son as a gift to world. The *Word became flesh is dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

 As Charlie sang for us earlier from the familiar Christmas carol “*O Holy Night!”*, the lyrics sum up this whole broken relationship that we find ourselves in with our Creator God.

*O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour’s birth.****Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
‘Til He appear’d and the soul felt its worth.*** *A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.*

*Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.*

 John Calvin, the Reformed theologian once described such human total depravity as that ***“we are unable to do anything spiritually good that will please God and we cannot come to God by our own strength.”* The world is in need of a Savior…now more than ever before.** This is exactly why Christmas needs to happen, not just 2000 years ago, but everyday in our lives, whenever God’s love is being embraced. As Mother Teresa once said, “***it is Christmas every time you let God love others through you.”***

 Somehow, someway through God’s grace and mercy, we have been given new life thanks to this redemptive LOVE that came in the form of a child, whose birth we came to celebrate on this night.

 This is what humanity has been longing for! This Prince of Peace came in the midst of a world filled with social turmoil and political threats, terrors and fears. That night was not silent. The circumstances may not have been the most “ideal”. No one made room for this child because they had rejected him in their hearts. But yet somehow God chose this “perfect” child to be amongst us, in order to restore peace in our hearts and good will towards the human souls.

 On this night, we’ve all come from different journey of faith along the way, because like the shepherds out in the field, we too have seen this great light of Christ, as a beacon of our hope for humanity in this world of darkness. **Our relationship with God is only made possible through the obedience of Christ, from the manger to the cross.** This was all part of God’s orchestrated plan of hope and salvation for humanity. Christ was born so that he may die on our behalf and lay the perfect foundation of our eternal relationship with God. This is a time worth celebrating and rejoicing in welcoming home the prodigals or those who have been spiritually separated or divorced. God has made room for us at the stable, even when we have rejected him and turned away from him. As 1 John 4:12 reminds us that, ***“no one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made perfect in us.”* Christ came on a mission of LOVE so that our broken relationship with God and with one another may be restored.**

 Friends, God is meeting us right where we are, in spite of what we have done or have failed to do in the past. God has looked favor upon us and has summoned us to respond accordingly by recommitting and rekindling our relationship with Him once again. No longer shall we feel lonely in this world again because, we ALL have a friend in Jesus! This is the Good News that we’ve all been waiting for. As the angels proclaimed, ***"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*** Thanks be to God. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *John 1:14* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)