



## God's Encouraging Word ... *when I am lonely*

Shortly after we were married, my wife and I planned a trip to Spain. In order to take advantage of some frequent-flyer miles, I decided to travel there a few days early by myself. Being young and naïve, I figured I could learn enough Spanish on the plane to get by and then find a place to stay when I got there. The flight was pleasant and we landed safely. However, by the time I got my luggage and figured out how to take the Metro into central Madrid, it was already getting late. After several hours of wandering around the city, I began to realize that 1) my Spanish was unintelligible, 2) I was not in the safest part of town, 3) it was very difficult to find anyone who spoke English, and 4) I needed a place to sleep. Finally, at around one o'clock in the morning I found a hotel manager who spoke enough English to get me a room that was about the size of a closet.

Over the course of the next several days, I have never felt more alone. I could not carry on a conversation with anyone and struggled to even do simple things like order food. Because of the language and cultural barrier, I was a stranger in a strange place.

But it doesn't take traveling to a foreign country to feel alone. Sometimes we feel alone because we miss loved ones and just want to share one more conversation or one more memory with them.

Sometimes we feel alone because we just don't feel like there is anyone who understands our pain or our problems. At times we can feel all alone, even when surrounded by people, because it just seems like no one really cares about us.

It goes without saying that no one likes to feel lonely. The only thing worse than feeling lonely, is feeling lonely with the burden of shame or guilt. Thankfully, Jesus came to be with us. The truth is that each one of us deserved to be left alone, because each one of us has separated ourselves from a holy God by our sins. But instead of leaving us alone, God himself drew near to us. So near, that he took all of our sin and guilt and shame upon himself. He gave his life on the cross to take it all away, so that we would never have to be alone.

Yes, there will be times that we feel all alone here on earth. But we don't have to. Our Savior who died and rose from the dead promises, **"Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** He gave his life to make it happen and his Word to guarantee it forever.