

Being Lonely in a Group

"...many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

You do not want to leave too, do you?

Jesus asked the Twelve."

John 6:66-67 (NIV)

Some time ago I visited a lovely widow who, with her late husband, served their church faithfully for many years. Her husband had been a friend of mine and I grieved with her his departure. Her children are a credit to her and her husband and the grandchildren are learning to love Jesus as well.

I innocently asked a question that I ask all such people who mourn the loss of a loved one. I inquired about who in the church was visiting her in her time of bereavement. I wished to be sure that she was being cared for by the Lord's people. Very quietly, reluctantly, she said that no one from her church was visiting her to share from the Bible and pray with her. When I left I wept for her because she was not receiving what she and her faithful husband had given to others for many years. It did not seem right.

I confess that her story was not exceptional. I meet people regularly who have given much but get lost in

the shuffle when it is their time to receive. How can this be? Why do such dedicated people get lost in the crowd?

People often find it awkward to be in the presence of those who suffer. They do not know what to say. They have not lost their spouse. They are embarrassed at their lack of ability to say or do something to help the person.

This is unfamiliar territory for them and they have a great desire to be away from the place of pain. So the best thing is to avoid the one in pain and that solves their problem.

Those who suffer need to understand this mindset of people around them and allow them to fumble over the matter. Many of us who have suffered were clumsy with people in pain prior to our own afflictions.

What is so precious to people who suffer is that Jesus was also lonely in a crowd.

Our verse is full of pathos as Jesus that day watched many leave Him. As He turned quietly to the twelve His

question is heartbreaking. Jesus is never joyful or happy when people turn away from Him. Peter's answer to Jesus' question about their leaving Him was powerful. Peter said (John 6:68)

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

This most wonderful confession of Peter makes it clear that he has seen Who Jesus is and now no one else can satisfy. No one else measures up to the amazing standard of the Lord. He confesses that not only is Jesus essential, but that Jesus is adequate. They need no one else.

May my readers come to the conclusion today that everything they need is found in the Lord Jesus alone. If you lose all and have Jesus, you have infinitely more than the person who has everything except Jesus.

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