

## THE WORST KIND OF ALONE

What is the worst kind of loneliness? It is not the quiet of an empty room or the isolation of a difficult season. The worst kind of alone is when the presence of God departs from our lives. This is not a hypothetical fear. The Bible gives us examples of what happens when sin drives away the One we need most.

### **First, we must understand why God's presence matters so much.**

The Hebrew word translated as “presence” is *panim*, and it literally means “face.” To be in God's presence is to stand face-to-face with Him. It captures the idea of being near. Moses understood the value of being near God. He told God that the land of promise was worth nothing to him without that closeness. He said, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here” (Ex. 33.15). Moses had the land, the people, and the promise, and still said none of it counts without God. What makes heaven so wonderful? It isn't the sea of glass. It isn't the absence of sorrow. It is God's eternal presence.

### **Second, consider what it looks like when God's presence is gone.**

Think about Samson. He was set apart as a Nazirite from birth (Judges 13.5). The Spirit of the Lord had moved upon him with extraordinary power throughout his life (Judges 14.6,19; 15.14). But Samson chose Delilah over his devotion to God. When his head was shaved, the Bible tell us that “*he did not know that the LORD had departed from him*” (Judges 16.20). Of interest, Samson did not feel the departure. He woke up fully expecting the power to be there, as it had always been before. He did not know it was gone until he needed it. Sin does not only break rules. Sin drives away the presence of God (Is. 59.2).

**Third, we must know what to do when we have driven God's presence away.** After his sin with Bathsheba, David understood this terror more than most. His most urgent prayer was not for restored reputation. It was not for a lighter consequence. He cried out, “*Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*” (Ps. 51.11). David knew that without God's presence, nothing else mattered. He also knew the way back. Later he makes reference to “*A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise*” (Ps. 51.17). God promises to draw near to those who draw near to Him (James 4.8). Repentance is the remedy.

We can lose everything in this life and still be okay. We cannot lose the presence of God and be okay. Guard the relationship. Draw near. The worst kind of alone is the kind we choose for ourselves. CLP

## NORTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

2424 McCarran St. † North Las Vegas, NV † 89030  
Phone: (702) 642-3141 Email: [pruittlc@nlvchurchofchrist.com](mailto:pruittlc@nlvchurchofchrist.com)  
Watch us live at [www.nlvchurchofchrist.com](http://www.nlvchurchofchrist.com)  
Youtube: Northside Las Vegas Church of Christ

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”  
-Mark 16.15

June 7, 2026

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### MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM  
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM  
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM  
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

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## Obsessed with Disputes and Arguments

There is a difference between having a passionate love for the truth (2 Thess. 2.10) and having an unhealthy obsession with arguments. In 1 Timothy 6, the Holy Spirit addresses those who are the latter.

Notice the motivation behind their arguments. The text tells us that they are “*proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words*” (1 Tim. 6.4). Pride is one of the three avenues of temptation (1 John 2.16). Pride was the root cause that brought sin into this world (Gen. 3.5). The one who is obsessed with disputes and arguments is driven by a desire to always be right.

Notice the end result of this obsession. The text goes on to say that these disputes and arguments cause “*strive, envy, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men*” (1 Tim. 6.4,5). It is critical and even commanded that we defend the truth (Jude 3). But we have to ask if a dispute is a beneficial stand for the truth or is it an act of pride that divides. If we are honest with ourselves, much of the arguing is not about standing up for what is right, but arguing “*about words to no profit*” (2 Tim. 2.14). It does not help the congregation. It only plants seeds of division.

How are we to handle those who are obsessed with disputes and arguments over words? The last phrase in the passage gives us the answer: “*From such withdraw yourselves*” (1 Tim. 6.5). CLP

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NORTH LAS VEGAS, NV 89030

(702) 642-3141

WWW.NLVCHURCHOFCHRIST.COM

## JESUS CHRIST: MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S GRACE

### Acts 11:23

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Hearing the message that was preached by the disciples of Jesus gives us insight into their hearts. (cf. Luke 6.45)
2. After the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the scattered disciples preached to the city of Antioch.
3. In Antioch, individuals came to know the grace of God.

#### I. REVIEWING THE TEXT

- A. Two visions. (Acts 10.1-16)
  1. **Acts 10.3:** Cornelius *"saw clearly in a vision an angel."*
  2. **Acts 10.10:** Peter *"fell into a trance."*
- B. Two visitations. (Acts 10.17-29)
  1. **Acts 10.17:** *"men who had been sent from Cornelius."*
  2. **Acts 10.27:** *"he went in and found many"*
- C. Two conversions. (Acts 10.30-48)
  1. Peter preached a Christ-centered sermon. (Acts 10.43)
  2. **Acts 10.24:** *"his relatives and close friends."*
- D. Two explanations. (Acts 11.1-18)
  1. **Acts 11.12:** *"Then the Spirit told me to go with them"*
  2. **Acts 11.17:** *"God gave them the same gift"*

#### II. THE GRACE OF GOD IN JESUS

- A. The conversion in Antioch.
  1. **Acts 11.19:** Those who were scattered after the persecution went to Antioch.
  2. **Acts 11.20-22:** There was great success in Antioch.
  3. **Acts 11.26:** Church, disciples, Christians.
- B. What did Barnabas see?
  1. **Acts 11.23:** *"seen the grace of God, he was glad"*
  2. What does the grace of God look like? It is manifest in Jesus. (John 1.14,17,18; Acts 11.23)
  3. The grace of God is how God felt for us that moved Him to send Jesus. (Eph. 2.4-8)
  4. When Barnabas saw the grace of God, he saw the result of God's grace, salvation through Jesus. (Acts 11.20)

**CONCLUSION:** The gift of salvation through Jesus is still available to you today if you believe and turn to Jesus.

## What is Paradise?

What image comes to mind when you hear the word "paradise?" Most of us immediately picture heaven, a place of eternal rest and beauty beyond anything you can imagine. But did you know that the Bible uses the word "paradise" in two very different ways? Understanding the distinction is both fascinating and eternally important.

The word translated "paradise" comes from the Greek *paradeisos*, borrowed from a Persian word meaning "a walled garden" It is defined as a place of beauty, delight, and protection. With that picture in mind, consider what the Bible teaches about each paradise.

**First, there is a paradise that is not heaven.** As Jesus hung on the cross, a thief beside Him made a humble request. He said, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom"* (Luke 23.42). Jesus responded with one of the most comforting promises in all of scripture. He promised this thief, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise"* (Luke 23.43). But was this paradise heaven? Jesus promised that they would be in Paradise that very day. But when Jesus was resurrected three days later, He told Mary Magdalene, *"I have not yet ascended to My Father"* (John 20.17). If Jesus had not yet gone to heaven, then the paradise He entered that day was not heaven.

Where was He? He was in what the scriptures call *"Abraham's Bosom"* (Luke 16.22). This is a place of comfort where those who had died await the day of judgment. If you study Acts 2, Peter refers to the resurrection of Christ. It is in verse 31 that Peter quotes David who prophesied that Jesus would not be left in Hades. (Acts 2.31). We can take great comfort to know that our loved ones who have died in Christ are not lost. They are at rest in a place prepared by God.

**Second, there is a paradise that is heaven.** There are occasions where the word "paradise" is used as a reference to heaven. In Revelation 2, Jesus promises that those who overcome will be given the right *"to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God"* (Rev. 2.7). That same tree of life reappears in the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of the redeemed (Rev. 22.2). This is the ultimate paradise. This is where we will dwell with God forever.

So there are two places called "paradise." One is a temporary place of rest and comfort for those who die in Christ. The other is the eternal home that awaits all who are faithful. In both, God's people are safe in His care. Paradise can be yours. It belongs to all who believe in Jesus and obey Him (John 3.16; Acts 2.38; Rev. 2.10). For all who trust and follow Him, paradise awaits.

CLP