Devotion #301

**Nearness of God**

**Philippians 4:5 (NASB) “***The Lord is near*.”

One of the main tools of Satan in his arsenal of weapons is the ability to hide himself while he runs circles around people, deceiving and causing confusion. A very close second, if not interchangeable at times with the first weapon, is Satan’s ability to make us feel alone. Before I give too much credit to Satan, however, it is important to know that our sense of aloneness is also a manifestation of our sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, they hid themselves due to the shame that disobedience often brings. (Genesis 3) For the first time Adam and Eve felt alone. That’s what sin does, and Satan plays upon it. To be in rebellion against God is to separate ourselves from Him.

I’m reading between the lines of the Genesis account just a little but I think the text displays all those feelings from Adam and Eve. Listen to what happened. **Genesis 3:7-8 (NASB)** *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden*.” Why would anyone hide from the presence of the Lord if they had not done something evil or wicked before Him.

From that time on, mankind has lived life in rebellion to God and felt the isolation and abandonment that sin creates. (Romans 3:23) If you talk with people about the subject of aloneness, they will tell you that they have certainly felt that. That’s why people don’t want to live on a deserted island. That’s why COVID was such a powerful tool for Satan. He was able to intensify the feelings of isolation and aloneness, and people hated it. Why? Because God built us for togetherness. He built us to need each other and to be with one another.

The Apostle Paul reminds the church in Philippi that God is always near to us. Now in the context of Paul’s letter, he is encouraging two women to get along. Evidently, there was something that was causing friction between them. So Paul says they need to live in harmony with each other. (Philippians 4:2) He follows up his reason with our verse for today. Meaning, even when we are with others and they irritate us, we need to remember that God is always present with us. He never really leaves us. It is our sin that makes us feel that way.

Even though Paul is talking about personal relationships, his point is that when we act in ungodly ways toward one another, God is still there. He knows it all. There is nothing we are hiding from Him. So not only is He with us in our darkest moments when we think we are alone, but He is also with us when we are not living right.

Both truths need to be heeded because Satan wants to use these times against us. We need to recognize that it is the loneliness that isolation brings, that we mustn’t forget that God is aware and with us even when we sin. God so loves us that He will never let us been truly alone, and He will never let us off the hook when we sin. So it is wise to remember that in our worst of times, the Lord is near to us, and in our times when we think He is not watching, He is. God wants us to live holy lives because He is always near to us.

Isn’t it wonderful to know that we can enjoy His presence all the time? So no matter what we do or don’t do, God is near to us. That’s a lot to be thankful for. You are never alone.