



ADVENT SERMON SERIES

THE _____ THAT STOLE CHRISTMAS

WORKING AT HAVING A BIG HEART

Loneliness

Each year at Christmas season, there are a million reminders that it is supposed to be a season of joy, but what if it isn't? Sometimes, things get in our way and steal the joy of the Christmas season.

- Circle Time: Do you feel lonely around the holidays? Why or why not?
 - What is it about Christmas time that increases the feeling of loneliness for some people?
- As a group summarize the Christmas story from beginning to end. Where do you see the potential for the people of the Christmas story to experience loneliness in each of their roles?
 - Mary
 - Joseph
 - Zechariah
 - Elizabeth
 - Any one else
- Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

C.S. Lewis wrote about the book of 2nd Corinthians, "About prayer for others and suffering for others there's a lot scattered through 2nd Corinthians which is well worth meditation. What C.S. Lewis felt has been echoed down through centuries those that have been comforted and challenged by what Paul wrote.

- How does vs. 3-7 comfort and challenge you?
- Another way to translate the Greek words for "Praise be to God" is "Blessed be God" How does this through change the way you read this passage?
- The Corinthians are granted patience in v. 7 to endure the same sufferings Paul suffers. So, they are partners in suffering. They are fellow participants with Paul in pain. How does this apply to us?
- Does that thought encourage you or discourage you? Why?
- Pastor Dave taught that engaging the church was a major way that Christians fight loneliness. How have you engaged the church in your life? What are some ways you would encourage others to engage the church?