

Episode 58

Then Jesus turned to the host saying, "The next time you put on a dinner..."
- Luke 14:12

Back in 1989 scientists discovered a whale's call that pitched at 52 Hertz, a frequency not audible to other whales, leading it to be dubbed 'the loneliest whale in the world'. Just imagine calling out and never having anyone return your call. I never thought I'd be relating to a whale on an emotional level, but that's 2021 for you, even for us introverts.

We are in the midst of a pandemic of loneliness - a time of history where people are more lonely than ever before. According to a recent Signa survey, nearly half of us feel alone and left out most days. 1 in 5 don't have someone we can talk openly and honestly to. Only half have meaningful social relationships on a daily basis, while Gen Z has been categorised as the loneliest generation in history. And all of this from a survey done back in 2019, before lockdown sealed us behind closed doors and kept us from being filled and restored by community.

Loneliness has been associated with cardiovascular problems, lack of quality sleep, reduction in reasoning and creative activity, and even premature death. When we live with constant loneliness it affects our workplace productivity, gives us less job satisfaction, and tips over into mental health concerns like anxiety and depression. Loneliness causes us to lean on poor coping mechanisms like self-medication, bingeing on tech, and alcohol abuse.

If you are lonely, today is not a charge to host more dinners, but rather a charge to guard your heart, because we don't know when we will be invited to another dinner. What we do know is that simply repeating the cycle of loneliness is not the answer. We need to self-evaluate and begin to invest in moments that renew, restore and refuel us. It may mean breaking the rules and buying twice as much firewood for this ice-cold week, or letting the kids stay up late on a school night, make a Christmas bed in the lounge and watch a movie and finish the chocolates, it may be taking the weekend off for once and going on long walks in beautiful neighbourhoods, but for so many that I speak to of late, we don't even know what it is that refills and refreshes us anymore.

So here's the challenge today: We need to guard our hearts and at least put a stop to the leaks until they put a stop to lockdown.

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