

# God's Invitation to Isolation

by Francois Carr

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*This sermon emphasizes God's invitation for isolation and solitude, highlighting how God uses external circumstances like tests and trials to shape our character and draw us closer to Him. It explores the concept of being forced into isolation, reflecting on biblical figures like Daniel, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus who experienced times of solitude and testing. The speaker encourages listeners to embrace this period of lockdown as an opportunity to stop, reflect, and reconnect with God, focusing on building intimacy with Him, setting goals, cleaning out clutter, and remembering God's faithfulness.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Isolation", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Hi, this is François Gars speaking from Hard Christ, South Africa, and from the Connected Life Ministries.com in Boiling Springs in South Carolina. It's a joy to be with you today and to share with you what I believe that God has laid upon my heart for today, for our people in America and also for us in South Africa and probably the Christian population worldwide as well. Thank you for taking the time just to tune in and just to be with us today on social media and also on Facebook.

In the material about the Connected Life, he talked about the invitation that Jesus extends to His disciples in Mark chapter 3, where He climbs the mountain and calls the disciples that they can be with Him. But then from Mark chapter 3 until Mark chapter 6, Jesus took His disciples through a whole lot of life experiences about sickness, death, persecution, all kinds of hardships. And in that material, we deal with the issue that God sometimes will take us through a test in our own lives, because God is working within our lives and our character to change us into the image of the Lord Jesus, because Christianity is not what we know, it's what we become.

And so God will expose us to different kinds of things from the outside, which we have no control over, things like an obedience test and a word test and isolation and sickness and promotion and all kinds of things that God will bring into your life and my life. And today we found ourselves in such a time, not just in South Africa, but also worldwide. And so today, briefly, I just want to talk to you about God's invitation for isolation and just kind of stop and reflect and reconnect with Him.

In Daniel chapter 1, Daniel was only 15 years old when he received that temptation to eat from the food of the king, and he resisted that. There was a test that came from the outside into his heart and life that he had no control over whatsoever, but he passed that test. And so a test like that is a test that God sometimes allows within your life and my life, because God is working to see what is the intentions from your heart and from my heart.

He's building our characters, and He's looking at the consistency of your walk and my walk with Him. And so He brings a test from the outside that we have no control, just like today, we have no control over the coronavirus in South Africa or even worldwide. And so we find ourselves in lockdown, we find ourselves in quarantine, we find ourselves in times where businesses are closed because of that.

That's coming from the outside, from the government, it's coming from the World Health Organizations, we have no control over that. So this is a test that's coming to the hearts of many of our people, and we have to pass that, because God is actually testing, allowing this to happen at the same time, but using it in His goodness, His grace, His mercy, His providence even, to test to see what is in your heart, in my heart. But this will bring us to a place what we call a deeper level of intimacy relationship with Him, but also a deeper sense of utter dependence upon the goodness and the faithfulness of Him Himself.

So this is integrity coming from the outside, but at the same time, it's also a test of isolation, because many of us find ourselves in house quarantine. I myself am sitting in a house quarantine at the moment. I just came back from the States.

In the first four or five days, I was in a small little room with a bathroom. They drop off my food at the door, I pick up the food I eat, I wash my hands, and I was waiting to see if there's any symptoms. And after four or five days, I was allowed to enter into one more room, and eventually I was able to walk through all the rooms in the house.

But then there was the government shutdown in South Africa, so now I'm going to be in quarantine for the next four and a half weeks in total, from the beginning till the very end. And as I was reflecting upon this, and I thought about the connected life material, and how God is using different things like integrity, and word, and obedience, and isolation even sometimes. It made me think about Joseph.

Joseph found himself twice in a place like this, when he was sold into slavery by his brothers, and then eventually when he resisted the temptation of Potiphar's wife, he found himself in another time like this, imprisoned for two years. Reminds us about Moses that had to flee for his life, and end up in the desert for 40 years. We think about Elijah for instance, we think about Paul finding himself in so many years in Saudi Arabia, and also back in his hometown, the Lord Jesus himself being tested and tempted for 40 days in the wilderness, in isolation in other words.

So this is not strange, it's biblical, it's coming from the Old Testament, the New Testament. Many Christian people worldwide have found themselves many a time like this, that we can go hide ourselves before we can actually go show ourselves like Elijah. But as I was reflecting upon this, and realizing that this

becomes God's invitation for you and for I, just to spend some time with him, we realize there's different types of solitude, and there's what we call the voluntary times, where we choose some time for a Sabbath, for a day, for a week, for a month even, or just to separate ourselves from the busyness of life of 40 days, and going to the mountains, or the desert, or the wilderness, or just even fasting from multimedia could be a very good thing for many of our people.

But it's voluntary, we choose because the objective is to get closer to God, and to separate ourselves from the busyness of life. But then there's also the cause of education, because sometimes we can choose to take two months or three months to study, do a different course to enhance ourselves, and to make ourselves better, or there's the social stuff, that sometimes a husband or wife become very sick, and one has to resign from the job, because they have to look after the other one. But then when you think about these involuntary ones, it's the ones like war, and like now, a natural disease, or a pandemic like the corona worldwide at this moment, is the cause for many people to find themselves in the borders of their own nations, they find themselves enclosed in their own homes in quarantine, or just in a lockdown like us, that we can't leave our homes, except when you go to the doctor, the pharmacy, or maybe if you have to go to the grocery store to buy some groceries, and you have to sign a document, and they will check on you to see if you get back for the next day as well.

For many people this is a shock on their systems, but this might be a very good thing for many of us, because this is a time for us to reflect, and somehow that God is allowing to happen in our own lives in a lockdown, because God is actually stripping us of ourselves, because many people cannot do the things that they used to do, wake up in the morning, the plans that you've made have to be canceled, we've got ideas and objectives, but somehow this is not, we have to cancel that, and that means we find ourselves in a place that we have never been before, and that means we start to wrestle with ourselves, we wrestle with God about this, and out of it comes a greater level of intimacy with Him, and even with our family members around us as well, as we spend some time talking and fellowshiping, and just having a good time together, a good time to build relationships, for fellowship with one another, and then lastly we get the perspective that God wants us to have. So as I was reflecting upon this, I just want to share maybe with you a few things that you can apply into your own heart, and maybe in your own life in this moment, this is a good time, and the logo for Connected is to stop, to reflect, and to reconnect, and maybe this is a good time for us to stop, because we are slowed down intentionally from the government, from the outside, we have no control over this, it's coming from the outside, integrity, but now we find ourselves in a lockdown, isolation, because of that, this is a good time to stop, and to reflect, and just kind of reconnect, it's a good time to be in, in this moment, as God's invitation for this, not just for us, but for other Christians, and even for unbelievers also, worldwide. So maybe what we can do is, we can start off by just simply saying, this is a time not to resist, but to embrace, where we find ourselves, and be patient, this will not last, this will not go on forever, it might be a few weeks, it might be a few months, but be patient, be calm, give God time to work, so instead of resisting, rather be embracing, and be patient, and maybe it's a time to set some goals for yourself, and for your family members, and re-evaluate your finances, and your business, and just your own walk with God, and maybe set some goals to clean house, and it's a good time to kind of clean out all the things in our life that really clutter, because all of us have things on apps, for instance, on our mobile phones, and apps on our laptops, and computers, and we've got all kinds of programs on our television, and we have enlisted in magazines, and newspapers that we receive, whether religious, or even business-like, whatever the case might be in our home, and do we really need those stuff, because sometimes you find a magazine lying in the coffee table for weeks and months, without touching it, because you haven't time to read this, do you really need this, maybe a time to clean out house, pack all

the stuff inside boxes, and put the dates on there, and if you haven't opened that box for the next six months, you don't really need that, maybe a box to throw away, a box to give away, maybe to sell, it's a good time to clear out all things that clutter, but what about to clean out all things that corrupt us, there are so many video clips on social media at the moment that takes this virus and bring it, you know, in comparison to the end times, and if it's true or not, let me just tell you something, if it does mean that the Lord Jesus, His return will be sooner than anticipated, because of what's happening worldwide, as a preparation for that, and as I reflect upon this, there's no real difference between death, the rapture, if you believe in the rapture, some churches do, and some don't, and the second coming of Jesus, because if you die today, your second coming has taken place, this is a good time to take stock in your walk with God, to find yourself in contact with God or not, are you 100 right with God if you would die today, and are you right with the people around you, all relationships, or is there things which is kind of, is there a broken relationship, is there things that is really bothering, maybe there's something that you can do about this, this is a good time to clean out what clutters, but also to clear out all things that corrupt us, and to make sure that we are right with God and with one another, irrespective what happens next, it's a good time to become honest with ourselves, and not just with watching television, whether we find ourselves in our walk with God, and if we can find ourselves drawing a line in our business, our retirement, have we grown as much as we wanted to, have we saved enough finances as we need to, do we find ourselves in debt, how do we feel about things like that, it's just a good time to kind of just becoming honest, and you know, with all the things that we have, all the stuff that we have, it doesn't really matter, then start to remember when we become honest about the good things, and even for those of us we might be struggling, just kind of reflect upon things like our God has provided in the past, that simply means that it becomes a spiritual marker for something that we can hold on to by faith and trusting that God would do so again, if God has provided in the past, why would he not provide for us today, this is a good time to remember the goodness and the provision and all the wonderful things, in fact Jesus said that in John chapter 15, I said that I would leave a few behind my joy, so we can think today about the goodness and the joy that we have as we reflect upon all the goodness that God has given to us, the friends that we have, the family members, the memories that we were able to build, it's a good time to go on a memory trip and start to remember, then at the same time as we remember those things is to have hope, it's a good time to spend more time, I would say listening at the morning, sleep late in the morning without setting the alarm clock if you can and sleep until you're awake, then get up and have breakfast and have a longer quiet time, sit and read until you're finished and learn how to listen to the voice of God and to pray to get his perspective, so that we can have hope not just for today but for the week also and for the future.

I want to close by just something that I read in my quiet time just the other day in my in my devotion, which is just an amazing that this just kind of popped up especially in such a time as this and I want to leave you with this. Robinson Crusoe was the chief character in a novel by Daniel Defoe, he was shipwrecked and stranded on an uninhabited island, life was hard but he found hope and comfort when he turned to the word of God. Crusoe said the following, one morning being very sad I opened the bible upon these words, I will never never leave thee nor forsake thee, it's coming from the book of Hebrews chapter 13 verse 5. It occurred to me that these words were to me, why else should they directed be directed in such a manner just at the moment when I was mourning over my condition as one forsaken of God and of men.

Well then said I, if God does not forsake me what matters it, but the world should all forsake me. From this moment I began to conclude in my mind that it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken condition than it was probable that I should ever have been in any other state in the world and with this thought I was going to give thanks to God for bringing me to this place. God's invitation in solitude and

silence in isolation, this is a good time to be in.

We have no control over the closing of the borders, the reopening of the planes and the flights and businesses as usual and the leaving of the house because of quarantine of the lockdown, so we are forced into isolation. This is a good time to build relationships with with him and with one another because this is becoming God's invitation for us in a time of isolation. May God bless you as you ponder on Hebrews chapter 13 verse 5 that I will never leave you nor forsake you.

At the same time to take time to stop and to reflect and just to reconnect with yourself and and with him and with your loved ones around you and even as you ponder and pray that network of relationship that God has uniquely brought into your life and entrusted to you. So may God use this time to draw you closer and closer unto himself and may it please him and to use this to change and to transform us more and more into the image of his son. May you find it so in your own life as a blessing from our God, the invitation for isolation.

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