

A WORD FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

ALONE IN THE CROWD

By: Rod Jackson

When I was 18 years old I left home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and moved to Gainesville to go to college at UF. I remember when my parents dropped me off. We unloaded the car, got things set up in my dorm, and then they left. As they drove away I thought to myself, "I know no one on this campus. I know no one in this city. Heck, I don't know anyone in this entire state." I was surrounded by lots and lots of people – but I felt very much alone and realized that being alone is not the same thing as being by yourself. I've been thinking about how alone I felt when I arrived at college in the context of our theme for the new school year at Grace. The theme is "You Are Not Alone" based on John 16:32b-33: "Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Jesus' ministry was in many ways about seeking out those who were

lost, alone, or marginalized by society and making them a part of His kingdom. Whether it was a leper, a blind person, a paralytic, or a prostitute, Jesus sought to shower compassion and healing on those individuals who were in their own way very much alone. Often these individuals were surrounded by many people in the communities of Jesus' day but they were really alone. In the words of Matthew 9:36, "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." For many Jesus became their shepherd and their protector and friend. And that is now our responsibility and opportunity as well. Are there people in your midst who are alone and in need? Do you see people who seem lost or afraid or are searching for some kind of human connection? Seek them out and share with them the wonderful news about who Jesus is and that He is always with them and can provide what they need.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long."

Psalms 25:5



MEET OUR PRINCIPAL

Mr. Rodney Jackson

I have been blessed to serve as the Principal here at Grace for over a decade. Both of my children attend our school and it's been wonderful to watch them grow in so many ways during their years here. My wife Karen is a professor at Jacksonville University and tremendous supporter of the Grace ministry. Grace Lutheran School has strengthened me spiritually, deepened my knowledge of the world around me, and allowed me to develop lifelong friendships that I will always treasure.