

19-46-01.wpd—Be Still and Know
silence, stillness, quiet time, listening
Ps.46:10

Our holy silence can be a sanctuary where God alone is exalted.

INTRODUCTION: (Psalm 46 as the Scripture Reading)

—**Ps.46:10**, “*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*”

—*Today’s a day of noise*: from machinery, from broadcasts, from many voices. Modern noise is sometimes used to fill the emptiness of the heart, not with *substance*, but with *sound*. [Some people grow up being babysat with TV, and can’t even sleep without the sound of a TV being on.]

—Is there a biblical response a noisy world? *Yes*— **Hab 2:20**, “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.”

—Though I’m weak in the *spiritual discipline of silence*, I’m fascinated by its place in church history. We cannot make the world silent before the Lord, but **HOM.idea**.

—[read Ps.46:10] What must we be still from? What must we be still for?

- I. **“Be Still,” from Murmuring, Ps.37:7**, Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil. (Do you ever find yourself *fretting*, while *praying*?)
 - A. **Remember to Whom we pray— Know** that He is an Almighty God (Who knows our situations, but is more interested in us.)
 - B. **Wait patiently for Him— Know** that He is a Sovereign God (Who deals with the problems of evil on His time schedule, not ours.)
 - C. **Stop the spread of evil reports— Know** that He is a Holy God, Who keeps us from evil by silencing our mental vengefulness.)
- II. **“Be Still,” for Meditation— Ps.116:7**, Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, O LORD, have **delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling**, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. (God lets us know Him through life’s journey, not through “book knowledge.”)
 - A. We can **use silence** to refresh our memory about our salvation (deliverance) [desert fathers—When Arsenius, the Roman educator gave up his status and wealth for the solitude of the desert, he prayed, “*Lord, lead me into the way of salvation*,” he heard a voice saying, “*Be silent*.” And Abbot

Macarius once said to the brethren in the Church in Scete, “*Brethren, flee*.” Perplexed, one of the brothers asked, “*How can we flee further than this, seeing we are in the desert?*” Macarius placed his finger to his mouth and said, “*Flee from this.*”] **God has delivered . . .**

1. “my soul from death”— giving us victory in our *spiritual life*
 2. “my eyes from tears”—healing us from *life’s hurts*
 3. “my feet from stumbling”—guiding us along *life’s pathway*
(**Salvation in Christ is a whole life experience.**)
- B. **Silence can refresh our practical walk in the Christian life:**
1. “walk before Him”—**Silence can help refocus our eyes on the Lord**, Whose eyes are on us. (*Quiet meditation* helps us to *see Christ*).
 2. “in land of the living”—**Silence can help us follow the living Savior**— in **Lu 9:60** (Jesus said to a would-be disciple) “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

TRANS: To be still from murmuring allows us stillness for meditating. Growth and victory in holy living thrive on this kind of holy silence. A sanctuary of silence nurtures sanctified living, part of which is to....

- III. **“Be Still,” from Manipulating, Ex.14:14**, “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” [at the Red Sea Moses had to wait on God.]
 - A. **Tongues can be used as tools of control** [**Richard Foster’s Freedom of Simplicity**, “Silence frees us from the need to control others. One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others. A frantic stream of words flows from us in an attempt to straighten others out. We want so desperately for them to agree with us, to see things our way. We evaluate people, judge people, condemn people. We devour people with our words. Silence is one of the deepest Disciplines of the Spirit simply because it puts a stopper on that.”]
 - B. **We can’t speak for God without listening to Him first— Jer.23:21-22a**, I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people. (**Silence lets us hear what God has to say about our place in His plans.**)
 - C. **We can get “too noisy” to hear God** (“*Busyness*” can drown out God’s *quiet guidance*— **1 Ki.19:11-12**, The LORD said [to Elijah], “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” A great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind

there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.] (God's voice was *soft* and *quiet*, in this case.)

TRANS: If we get captured by **the world's noise** (**spectacular** noise, very **entrancing** noise), we can fail to hear God's still, small, guiding voice. "*Flee!*" said the desert father, but he was pointing to his lips. **Our holy silence can be a sanctuary where God alone is exalted.**

IV. "Be Still," for Maturity (we never stop *growing* and *learning*)

- A. **Quiet trust** is the follow-up to our salvation— **Is.30:15**. This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength . . ."
- B. **Stillness** is fertile ground for growth in knowing God:
1. **In quiet listening we can hear God speaking...**
 - a. through parables in nature, all around us, every day
 - b. through words of truth that pop into our minds (*out of the blue*)
 - c. through examples and wise advice in people we meet
 2. **As we listen in prayer, God communicates...**
 - a. about Himself (**William McGill** wrote, "*The value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us . . . but that we will finally hear Him.*")
 - b. about our duties (**M. Teresa** said, "*The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life.*")
- C. **Silence** enables growth in obeying God's voice (as we righteously obey Him, silence will be easier to find— **Isa 32:17-18**, The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.)

CONCLUSION:

—**Our holy silence can be a sanctuary where God alone is exalted.**

Let's try to take time each day *to be silent before the Lord*.