

The Blessing of Silence

What happens when you cannot speak? One of the extra credit assignments in my high school speech class was to be silent for an entire day. We still had to attend class, go to work, etc.; we just couldn't talk. In fact, we had to get someone at each venue to sign a paper saying that we hadn't uttered a word.

Though I am an extreme introvert, this was still a challenging task. I wanted to say "hey" when I passed a classmate or check in with some of my regular customers at the restaurant where I worked. I found myself relying completely on my eye contact and body language to communicate these things, instead, and hoped it would suffice until I could speak again.

There were two specific things I noticed during this time of silence. One, people often overlook you when you cannot speak. It's like you're not even there - which can be either freeing or frustrating, depending on the day. Two, in the silence, you become both more observant and more present. Funny, you would think that since your interaction with others was limited, you might slip off into your own little world. But no, you start to watch people, you start to see things you never noticed before, you hear what people don't say to you, and you become more aware of what is going on in your own heart.

Zechariah was blessed with almost a year of silence. A year to think about God and the way He was working in Zechariah's life and in Israel's. A chance to step back from ministry and be fully present with his pregnant wife. And when he speaks again, he breaks out in a song of blessing. This week, may we step back from the hectic pace of the holidays. Let's follow Zechariah's example and be quiet and observe what God is doing in our lives. And let's sing blessings to God and to those around us.

Monday

And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. (Luke 1:62)

It appears that Zechariah was not only mute, but also deaf. A year of silence, indeed. Silence is an essential discipline for us as Christ-followers. As we break away from the world for a time, we can then quiet our hearts and hear God more clearly. Spend some time in silence today. What does God have to say to you?

Tuesday

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people... (Luke 1:68)

After 400 years, God finally breaks His own silence and visits His people. Not only visits, but redeems. His redemption includes our salvation, yes, but it goes beyond that to redeem the ugly things in our lives and make them beautiful again. How has God visited you? In what ways has He redeemed you and the things in your life?

Wednesday

...as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.... (Luke 1:70)

Zechariah had studied the Scriptures. He knew that a Savior had been promised to the Israelites. They had been waiting for this day, and now it was here. What have you been waiting for? Talk to God about it today. Bring it before Him, and see if He wants you to keep waiting or if the time is soon coming when your desires will be fulfilled.

Thursday

...that we... might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. (Luke 1:74-75)

Zechariah served as a priest. Right before he was blessed with silence, he was chosen as the high priest who entered into the Holy of Holies and stood in God's presence. We, too, can serve God without fear. He has deemed us holy and righteous. Rest in that thought today and ask how you can best serve Him.

Friday

...to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:79)

Last week, we were reminded that Christ is the light in our darkness, our Prince of Peace. Are there still shadows that are haunting you? Do you need wisdom and peace in a specific area of your life? Sit before Him and allow the warmth of His light and peace to flood your soul.

Reflection Notes:
