

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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What Does Silence Say?

(Jerry Fite)

At night, the heavens sparkle with innumerable stars. The moon suddenly appears and if we tarry long enough, we will see the sun rise. The stars, moon and sun utter “no speech nor language; their voice is not heard” (Psalm 19:3). Yet, they “declare the glory of God. . .” (Psalm 19:1). The silence of the heavens allows us to focus on what we are observing and leaves us alone with God and our thoughts of awe.

How loud silence can be! Especially loud is its presence in our noisy world. There seems to be background noise occurring every moment of our lives. For example, as I write, I hear in the distance the sound of a jet engine propelling a plane overhead, the steady humming of lights, the gruff bark of a dog and the stop and go traffic on a nearby street. Let these subside, and I suddenly feel the quietness of deafening silence. Let us observe some things silence says.

Respectful Silence

In the company of older men, young men in their silence show respect for age. Elihu kept silence when the older men were giving their views regarding Job’s dilemma in suffering. He says, “I am young, and

ye are very old; whereof I held back, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, ‘Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom’ (Job 32:6-7). Only when he saw their views falling short of true wisdom did he offer his view. Young men should first listen when in the company of older men, instead of schooling them.

Comforting Silence

When our friends are suffering, it is frustrating knowing we can do nothing to alter their immediate circumstance. Sometimes merely being with them is the most comforting thing we can do. Job’s friends, no doubt in shock over not at first recognizing their pitiable friend, “. . . sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great” (Job 2:13). These critical moments with our friends are better spent in silence offering comfort rather than giving our commentary, interpretation or advice.

Humbling Silence

We should always live knowing that God is on His throne and in control of all things. But there are moments when we are forced to acknowledge this fact. Israel of old would forget God in their idolatry and God would pu-

nish them forcing the realization that their false gods could not deliver them. Habakkuk in such times writes, “But Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him” (Habakkuk 2:20). When our riches, health, popularity, or power make us feel invincible; we should take a moment in quietness to reflect upon who is truly our “god”, before circumstances occur driving us to silence before the one true God.

Prudent Silence

A fool can appear wise when silent. “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; When he shutteth his lips, he is esteemed as prudent” (Proverbs 17:28). Sadly, fools usually do not follow this pattern but open their mouth and blow their cover. Jesus, knowing there is a time to speak and a time to be silent, did not speak a word to his defense when standing before his closed minded accusers and politically minded authorities (Matt. 26:63). Yet, He declared the truth with solemn clarity that He is the Son of God. The world needed then and now to hear such breaking of silence (Matt. 26:63-64).

Silence says a lot. Will we be wise and receive her message?