

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? “When God is Silent”

INTRODUCTION

We’ve been talking over these last three weeks about how the Bible reveals a God Who speaks; One Who speaks clearly and often in order that we might know Him personally and make Him known to others.

He speaks to us through the Scriptures, by His Spirit and through the lives of other believers. Last week we found that He speaks most clearly to those who have hearts that are humbled, cleansed, obedient, quieted.

This morning we will be considering those times we face when it seems that God is not talking, that He is silent. (Not silent due to sin)

Would this speaking God really choose to be silent? And if so, why?

Does He practice the silent treatment for some of the same reasons that we do or is His silence meant to bring about needed life change?

These times can be very confusing, frustrating and challenging to our faith; what we believe about God, the way He works in our life. (What’s wrong with me, what’s wrong with God, is my faith real?)

Let’s begin by looking at just a few of the Scriptures that reveal that ...

1. **God’s silence is (sometimes) REAL.**

(Job 30:20; Ps. 10:1, 13:1, 22:1, 42:9-10, 88:13-14, 102:1-2; Hab. 1:2; Mark 14:36, 15:34)

(Prove that) God can be silent. It’s not out of character for Him to be silent. But His silence is often misinterpreted and misunderstood.

(Job 30:20) *“I cry out to you, O God, but You do not answer; I stand up, but You merely look at me”.*

(Psalm 10:1) *Why, O Lord, do You stand far off? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?*

(Psalm 13:1) *How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?*

(Psalm 88:14) *Why, O Lord, do You reject me and hide Your face from me?*

(Habakkuk 1:2) *How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but You do not listen? Or cry out to You, “Violence!” but You do not save?*

“Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.” (Mark 14:36)

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”*—which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mark 15:34)

Conclusion ... God, You aren’t here, You don’t care, I’m alone.

What kind of response would you have or have you had to God’s silence?

When you’re persistent, long term prayer gets no response; when circumstances never change; when healing doesn’t come, when direction is not given, when you are spiritually dried up and God seems nowhere to be found. I’ve been there, have you?

We might respond similar to Job, David and Habakkuk. Why?

Because in the midst of the emotions that often accompany times of silence we can lose perspective and forget Who God really is and what He is really like.

I am sure that God’s silence is meant to increase our faith, to draw us close, to grow us up, to reveal more of Who He is and what He’s like to people like you and me.

How can I say this with such confidence? Because ...

2. **God’s silence will ALWAYS be CONSISTENT with His unchanging purpose and character.**

If you’re in this place now what I’m about to say could bring you new perspective in the midst of the silence around you.

His Purpose (John 17:3, John 10):

(Notes page)

- God's **purpose** for every person is to know Him personally.
- God **speaks** so we might know Him personally.
- God's **silence** is so we might know Him personally.

His Character (Psalm 139, Hebrews 13:5, Philippians 1:6, 2:13):

- God's silence does not indicate His **ABSENCE** (Never leave, forsake, be with you always)
- God's silence does not indicate His **INACTIVITY** (God is working, Spirit is working, won't stop until we are like Jesus)
- God's silence does not indicate His **APATHY** (He cares)

3. So, why might God respond in silence?

If God is committed to His purposes; if He always acts consistent with His character then wouldn't that mean that even God's silence is meant to bring about something beautiful in our lives?

Remember: God is totally committed to your spiritual development.

So why would He respond in silence? What might He be saying to us through His silence?

God's silence might be telling us that ...

"There is no quick fix, be patient (wait)."

(Psalm 102:1-2) *Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, **answer me quickly.***

Microwave vs. Crock-pot (instant coffee, messaging, fast food)

What is an emergency, 911, to us is not necessarily one to Him.

He isn't caught off guard, doesn't get uptight, anxious, worried.

He sees the big picture and not just the immediate need.

God's silence might be telling us that ...

"Right now you can't handle the truth."

We aren't always ready to receive; answer comes later, hindsight often 20/20

God's silence might be telling us that ...

"I've spoken, but you expected something else, so you missed it."

*Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. **But He said to me,** "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)*

With our children ... tell me why dad, that's not it.

God's silence might be telling us to ...

"Make the decision, apply what you already know."

I've told you this over and over again ... 72, 77, 87, 99 ...

You have everything you need, be responsible, be mature, live by faith not by sight or sound, don't procrastinate

God's silence might be telling us that ...

"Suffering, struggle, and pain are a part of life and at times inevitable."

Take it away, make it less, remove me from it

I wanted something so deeply for a loved one that I could not hear God speak unless it was answering my request; anger; what's wrong, can't you handle this request; I've been faithful to You do this for me!

God's silence might be telling us to ...

"Pursue Me, not the answer." (He is not our answer man)