

**Introduction:**

- Ie. Walking beans. Dad offered me \$50 If I could keep quiet for just 5 minutes. I was always making noise or talking about something. I made it about 30 seconds I believe.
- Most people cannot stand silence. They have to music, TV, talk show, something filling their thoughts. Restaurants, malls, any store...all have some kind of music playing. Why? Because most people cannot stand silence.
- I once read an expert that noted, that people only feel comfortable being silent when they're in the presence of someone they're comfortable with. When they're with those people... it's nothing to just sit and say nothing. Maybe that is why so many cannot be silent with God.
  - A common phrase I have heard since the start of Covid 19 is: "Be Still".
  - Many feel this a prophetic word to the church. But what if the church is not comfortable being with God? Will they be able to be still and know that He is God?
  - How can we make it a practice of stillness while we are somewhat confined to our homes?
- That is what I want to share this morning. Understanding Being Still before God. God Revealed In His Word. Spiritual Transactions With God.

**I. Understanding Being Still** There are three different Hebrew words that translate 'still.'

A. One of the first uses of the word: *""Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!""* (Psalm 46:10, ESV)

1. Hebrew word, *rapa* - it means to let drop, to stop, to sink. Ie. It is what some parents of teenagers say at times, "Drop it." In other words be silent don't talk about it anymore. Sink into my way of thinking.
  - a) To sink like the sun sinks into night.
  - b) To sink out our busyness into His wonderful presence. To let go of all cares and know Him. To cease from activity in order to know Him.
2. That you may know God. The Hebrew for 'to know' is *yada*. It means to discern or to recognize. To know.
  - a) "While ordinarily knowledge is gained by experience, knowledge is also the contemplative perception possessed by the wise man (Prov 1:4; 2:6; 5:2; Eccl 1:18)."
 

Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K. (Eds.). (1999). TWOT.
  - b) *yāda'* is also used for the most intimate acquaintance. God knows Moses by name and face to face (Ex 33:17; Deut 34:10). He knows the Psalmist's sitting and arising (Ps 139:2).
3. During this time of the 'evil thing' God has used it for good. Families are getting reacquainted with one another. Marriages have deepened in relationship because we are spending more time together. IE. When you do not have all the sports, and all the entertainment, and all the extra activities you are forced to get to know each other once again. This is good. People have sunk back into knowing one another in relationship. It feel very good to most families! They did not realize how duped or shallow their relationships had become. So lets ask ourselves some questions:
  - a) How has your relationship with God improved these past few weeks?

- b) If we are going to say, "Yes, that was a word of the Lord, to be still and know God."  
 (1) How still have you been?  
 (2) Have you sunk into His presence?  
 (3) Or have you sunk into Q? or the next conspiracy theory? Some of you know more about 'the conspiracies' then you do the Word of Faith. The Word of healing. Or what your identity in Christ is?
- c) To be still is to sink into His Presence. We used to sing a song here that Joshua Travers wrote after one morning of early prayer. *"I want to be found in your presence and lost in your glory."* Sunk in His presence!
- B. *"Be still, O inhabitants of the coast; the merchants of Sidon, who cross the sea, have filled you."* (Isaiah 23:2, ESV)
1. Is 23:2 Be still - Heb is 'damam' it means to mourn as in a whisper but do not make loud sounds. It also means to be meditative as in Ps 37. Often it is associated with stress.
    - a) Aaron and Ezekiel had to keep quiet in spite of the death of loved ones (Lev 10:3; Ezk 24:17).
    - b) The elders of Judah sit silently with dust on their heads (Lam 2:10).
  2. Several times in the Psalms this verb is used of being still before the Lord in quiet meditation (4:4 [H 5]; 131:2).
    - a) We are to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him (Psa 37:7). *"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently."*
    - b) Yet God's rescue from trouble did lead the Psalmist to end his silence and sing! Praises to the Lord (Ps 30:12 [H 13]). Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K. (Eds.). (1999). TWOT (electronic ed., p. 193). Chicago: Moody Press.
  3. If God is dealing with issues of the heart, it is so important that you become still. It aids with repentance and with hearing God in the midst of self contemplation of the heart.
- C. *"So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved."* (Nehemiah 8:11, ESV)
1. The Hebrew Word is 'has' it means: To interject with imperative/commanding force - meaning "be silent," "hush." Weber, C. P. (1999). [511 חש](#). R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 221). Chicago: Moody Press.
    - a) It is used seven times: to command people to refrain from speaking (Amos 6:10) or weeping (Neh 8:11);
    - b) to demand awesome or respectful silence before the Lord: *"But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."* (Habakkuk 2:20, ESV)
  2. Neh. 8:11 - The ASV tends to translate "hold one's peace" where the RSV renders "keep quiet." The basic meaning of the root is "to keep quiet," i.e. to be inactive, especially with reference to speaking. Coppes, L. J. (1999). [768 חש](#). R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 330). Chicago: Moody Press.
  3. Ps 39 is a picture of this. Note vs. 9. God is actively moving yet to the human soul it does not necessarily feel good. It is only in silence that we actually being to contemplate what is important to God. Here is what is happening in Neh. People are experiencing the

Word being read and something is happening in their heart, so they weep. The priests say, "Quiet!" Rejoice for God is being revealed in His Word. They have been living under threats, working hard and are tired. Standing guard duty. Can't trust anyone outside the walls. And "What does God want from us?" People are asking that now, "What does God want from us?"

## II. God Is Revealed In His Word

- A. When the wall was finished, October 2nd. The people realized that it was God who helped them to do this in 52 days. Neh 6:16.
1. Tobiah, kept sending threatening letters to Nehemiah. Tobiah was an Ammonite and they had no love for Israel at all. Ammonites were of the incestuous between Lot and his younger daughter. The Ammonites refused to help Israel when they came out of Egypt.
  2. The purpose of the letters from Tobiah was to intimidate or stir up fear in the leaders and people. It is exactly what fake news is doing and has been doing from the start of this 'evil thing' crisis.
- B. The people gather in a unified purpose to hear the Book of the Law being read. **On Oct 8th**, Ezra the priest began to read the Book of the Law (The Word) to the people.
1. 8:3 the people listened closely from early morning until noon.
  2. When he opened the Book the people stood to their feet in honor of the Word.
  3. When Ezra finished, the Levites then instructed the people while they remained in place. They read the book of the law and clearly explained the meaning so that everyone could understand each passage.
    - a) The people wept as they heard the reading of the Word.
    - b) Nehemiah said do not weep but feast! For the joy of the Lord is your strength.
    - c) 8:12 *"Celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's Words and understood them."*
    - d) This is huge! The people who came out of exile, who came from surrounding villages. We're understanding what happened and why and now God was rebuilding them.
  4. Thanks be to God when we get understanding from the Word and our lives begin to be rebuilt according to His plan!
- C. **On October 9th!** The next day the family leaders with all the priest and Levites meet with Ezra to go over the law in greater detail. 8:13. As they studied they discovered the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles/Sukkot.
1. Sukkot is an appointed time to come boldly into His presence, knowing that every hinderance is removed. It is a time to experience God.
  2. The people went out cut branches and began to celebrate the feast! Vs 17 everyone who had returned from captivity lived in the shelters for 7 days ALL FILLED WITH JOY! Ezra read from the book of the law for each of the 7 days and on the 8th day held a solemn assembly.
  3. The Feast of Tabernacles is a celebration of God's glory! God with us!
    - a) It is a time to remember past experiences of God's glory.
    - b) It is a time to seek His face and experience His glory now.

- c) It is a time to call out for a fresh outpouring of His glory now!
4. This feast is a time to celebrate that God TABERNACLES with His people. Here is how to do that:
  - a) Set aside time to be with God.
  - b) Spend quality time in the Word.
  - c) Get together with your family, friends and with God.
  - d) Share testimonies!
  - e) Prepare for the outpouring of His presence.
5. *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' "* (John 7:38, ESV) One of the customs during the sukkoth was that the priest would pour out a pitcher of water from the Poo of Silom on the altar. This is what prompted Jesus to say in Jn 7:37 *If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*
6. God is looking for spiritual transitions to take place.

### **III. Spiritual Transactions With God**

- A. One October 31, the 8th day, the people assembled in humility to fast. 9:1
- B. In repentance they confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.
- C. They stood for three hours while the Book of the law of the Lord their God was read to them, aloud.
- D. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord their God.
- E. Then they praised and remembered God 9:5-37
- F. Renewed commitment: 9:38 they make a promise and put it in writing.
- G. Recognized covenant 9:28-ff, and seek to keep it.

### **Conclusion:**

- Sink into His Presence
- Renew your commitment to Him.