

“WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT”

TEXT: Exodus 14:10-12

THESIS: To show “WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT” and seemingly oblivious to your problems.

INTRO: A. Lazarus, Jesus friend is sick and his sisters send word to Jesus to come quickly. Instead the Bible declares Jesus didn't answer their request and stayed where He was 2 more days. By the time He arrived the funeral and burial were over. He received their pleas for help - why didn't He rush to their side? For 450 years the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt and cried, prayed and pled with God to deliver them. Generations lived and died, but God was silent. He heard their prayers, why didn't He do something? While WWII raged on, Jews were herded together all over Europe into ghettos and then into concentration camps by the Nazis. They cried out to God while the gas chambers and ovens of Dachau, Auswitz, Bergen-Belzen, etc. consumed lives by the thousands each day. God, Who is omniscient and omnipresent both saw and heard them - why didn't He rescue them?

B. In our text the Israelites are surrounded by geographical obstacles and Pharaoh's armies. Their situation seems hopeless and they cry out to God (just as they had done for 450 yrs in slavery). Moses told them God wanted to take them to a special place called the Promised Land and He had confirmed Moses leadership with mighty miracles, but now they were again in trouble and were pleading with God for help. But God seemed to ignore their pleas. What could they do? What should we do? “WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT?” is our subject. The answers we will give are simple, but not easy...

I. STAND STILL: v.13 “Fear ye not, stand still...”

A. The Frustration Of Circumstances:

1. When there seems to be no way out, look up!

ILLUS: Above the clouds the sun is always shining! Go up in an airplane on a dreary, rainy, dark day and once you get above the clouds you suddenly see the sun. Your spirits are immediately lifted. Your circumstances too will pass and you will see the sunshine again. Remember that the sun has outlasted all the clouds of the centuries! God is still in heaven and He will outlast your trials.

2. When circumstances get you down, look up!

ILLUS: Moses' instructions were simple, but profound. They were not to fear and simply stand still. Ever ask someone how they are doing and they reply "I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances." "Under the circumstances" is defeat. Through the circumstances is exhaustion. We need to be on top of the circumstances! We all have problems. How we respond makes the difference. Someone said: "Misery loves company and makes us all partners." Just remember someone is in the circumstances with you. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace he didn't just see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Someone was in the furnace with them!

B. The Victory Of Standing Still:

1. The Red Sea will part. v.13-16 (Moses had to have more faith than the Israelites!)
2. The enemies will drown. v.12,13
3. The deliverance will come. v.29-31

ILLUS: God had already delivered them by mighty miracles before they even left Egypt and He had already given them a token of His providence in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. (13:21,22) He wasn't completely "silent." So with us. He has given us His Word. We need to remember what He has done for us in the past and "Stand still" and see what He will do for us again!

II. WAIT: Gen. 15:1-6; 16:1,2

A. The Mistake Of Moving:

1. Their sin was not just adultery - it was primarily the sin of doubt! 17:15-17 and 18:10-12

ILLUS: In 15:6 the text declares that "(Abraham) believed in the Lord..." In 16:2 it says "And Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarai. How often do we trust the circumstances instead of the Lord, or get contrary counsel to God's Word and act accordingly? We take things into our own hands instead of waiting on the Lord and trusting in His perfect will.

2. Their sin started the longest war in history!

ILLUS: You have heard of the "Hundred Years War"? Well Abraham and Sarah started the "3800 Year War" and it's still going on! The Holy Land is still a hot spot because of this one bad move on the part of two obscure people, thousands of years ago. The Arabs of Ishmael and the Israelites of Isaac are still the bitterest of enemies.

3. Their sin caused animosity between Sarah and Hagar and between Sarah and Abraham. 16:4-5

B. The Miracle Of Waiting: 21:1-2

1. How much sweeter the miracle of Isaac would have been with out Hagar and Ishmael.
2. How much more peaceful the world would have been if Abraham and Sarah had simply waited upon the Lord.

III. TRUST: Mt. 8:23-25

A. The Dangers Of Doubting:

ILLUS: No one has perfect faith. There may be little faith with much doubt or great faith with little doubt and all shades and degrees of faith in between. The father of the demon possessed boy prayed, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief." He did not say: "Lord, I doubt, help Thou my faith." Take your stand with your faith and not your doubt, and God will help your doubts. -Havner

1. The devil wants us to doubt God and he will use circumstances, including the weather, to doubt the Lord.

ILLUS: With the Lord's permission, the devil may control the wind that destroyed Job's sons home, whip up the storm called Euroclydon on Paul's voyage to Rome and could have been in back of this storm with the disciples to get them to doubt the Savior.

2. The words "but He was asleep..." are the words that brought doubt to the disciples. v.24b
3. What woke Jesus up was not the fury of the storm but the frenzy of His doubting disciples.
4. They got their eyes on the storm instead of keeping them on the Savior! "We perish!"

ILLUS: Doubt caused the nation of Israel to wander in the wilderness for 40 long years. All they needed to do was to cling to His promise of a "land flowing with milk and honey." Instead of seeing the possibilities, they saw the problems: giants and walled cities.

Our churches are full of those who hear the Word with joy and crumble under the load of testing. Note the 2 rebukes in v.26: first He rebuked the disciples for their doubts, then He rebuked the winds and the sea.

B. The Blessings Of Trusting:

1. Instead of looking at the problems, we need to get our eyes on the Problem Solver!

ILLUS: In 2 Kings 6 the king of Syria sent troops and horses and chariots to capture Elisha. The prophet's servant looked out and saw the troops to the right, left and front. In desperation he cried: "How shall we do?" But Elisha looked not down but up and saw angels to the right, left and front ("here and angel, there an angel, everywhere an angel..."). He had not underestimated his enemies, but he knew "...they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

QUOTE: Havner: "If the Valley is full of your foes, raise your sights to the hills and see the angels!"

2. Instead of evaluating things from the perspective of earth, we need to see things from heaven's viewpoint.
3. Instead of looking at the short view - we need to take the long view: