

Silence of Jesus in Suffering

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon explores the profound silence of Jesus during His suffering and its lessons for our own responses to trials and injustices.

Duration: 41:07

Scripture: Isaiah 53:2-5, Isaiah 53:7-8, Isaiah 53:10, Matthew 26:62, Romans 3:19

Topics: "Silence"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Romans chapter 3 verse 19, which states that the law is set for those who are under it, silencing every mouth and making all people guilty before God. The preacher emphasizes the significance of Jesus standing in silence as he takes on the judgment that should be upon us. The preacher encourages listeners to humbly acknowledge their wrongs and consent to God's judgment, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. The sermon also references Isaiah 53:7, highlighting Jesus' reaction to suffering and challenging the world's explanation of his guilt.

Transcript

Isaiah chapter 53. Who hath believed our message, and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth.

As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? And they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death. Although he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him. He hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

Yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. May God bless this, the reading of his own holy word. Dr. Alan Redpath speaks to us.

I'm going to suggest we sing just three verses of Hymn 219. 219, singing the first, three verses only. Master speak, thy servant heareth.

Just a word of prayer before we turn to the word. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak just now some message to meet my need, which thou only dost know.

Speak now through thy holy word, and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Would you open your Bibles this morning, please, at the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and let me read to you the seventh verse.

Isaiah 53 and verse 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a shearer's is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth. We are entering into a very important stage of this convention.

We have only two more days of ministry, and as we do so, the Lord has laid upon my heart a word to speak to you concerning the reaction of the Lord Jesus Christ to suffering, which I trust may be his word to your heart through me today. You notice that in this verse we read, He was hard pressed and humbled himself, yet he openeth not his mouth. Those last few words are repeated again in the verse, suggesting that the preeminent thing in the attitude of Jesus to suffering was silence.

Never man spake like this man, they said of him, but never man was silent like this man. Would you just remind yourself, through the Scripture, of the reaction of our Lord, especially in the last moments of his life, to all the scorn and all the derision of his enemies. Turn with me to just one or two passages that remind us of these things.

Matthew chapter 26, just a verse or two from that chapter. Verse 62, Matthew 26 and verse 62. And the high priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace.

And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you hereafter, Shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Here is stands doth our Saviour before the high priest, accused of blasphemy. And he is silent, except when to remain silent would have been to deny his claim to deity. Again in Matthew 27 and verse 11.

And Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou seest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

Then sent Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. And here is our Saviour standing before the Roman governor, accused of treason. And he answers him nothing.

He remains silent, except to be silent would deny his claim to be king. And later in that chapter, as you remember, before the whole band of soldiers who stripped him and crowned him with thorns, blindfolded him and spat on him, struck him in the face and mocked him, not a word crossed his lips. Remember that one word from him in the garden, one brief flashing glimpse of deity, they'd all fallen to the ground.

But here he restrained his omnipotence. Just a glance to heaven and a volcano would have swallowed them all up. But what a tremendous display of power was the silence which restrained him.

In the face of the scorn of all his foes. Again, just glance at Luke chapter 23 in verse 8. And when Herod saw him, Jesus saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad. For he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing. That's an interview with Christ, which when I read about it, I, in my heart always, I have a sense of awe and trembling. For here was a man who'd had his opportunity, who had been confronted by the greatest preacher born among women, as our Lord called John the Baptist.

And he had dared, had John, to go into Herod's house and tell him that he'd no right to be living with the woman he was living with. And Herod heard John the Baptist and did many things, and heard him gladly. That's how the common people heard Jesus.

And Herod heard John just like that. Oh, he did many things, reformed his life, and cleaned it up a tremendous lot. But there was one thing he refused to do, and that was give up the woman who ruined his life.

And when he met the Lord Jesus for the first and only time, Jesus answered him nothing. Tremendous, tremendous danger to come to Kettick and hear the Word of God and sit under the ministry of the Word, and to fail to repent of our sin. Just to go away from here doing many things.

Determined to read our Bible a bit more, and determined to pray a bit more, and determined to live a keener Christian life. But failing, basically, in the demand, God's demand of repentance, which has been rung out with no certain sound in this last day or two. Jesus was silent before Herod.

How desperate to think that one day we could silence the Lord by our stubbornness. Look once more at Matthew chapter twenty-seven, verse forty-five. Here is our Lord upon the cross.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Darkness and silence, and hell during its worst, and letting loose all its fury upon the Son of God, broken only at the ninth hour by that strange cry, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Yes, I think, unquestionably, the preeminent thing about the sufferings of Christ was His silence in His reaction to

them. Before all His accusers and tormentors He never spoke a word in defense of Himself, or in complaint, except a word of testimony.

Never to plead His innocence, only to claim His authority. He was hard pressed, and He humbled Himself, and He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openedeth not His mouth.

Why was Jesus silent? Of course, the unbelieving world has its answer to that question and gives it in Isaiah 53 and the fourth verse. We esteem Him smitten of God and afflicted. He must be guilty of all that He was charged with, otherwise a loving God would never allow it to happen.

But we don't accept that explanation because Scripture entirely contradicts it. What does it mean? I want to answer that question this morning, not simply to understand His silence, but to recognize its message for our own hearts today. You see, the cross has a twofold implication.

It spells out for us forgiveness, cleansing, victory, deliverance, all of that. But it also spells out identification with the one who suffered on it, in order that I might display in my life the whole principle of Christianity. Christian living to others.

I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the only evidence, or perhaps I should say the greatest evidence, of my identification with Jesus at Calvary is my reaction when I suffer.

In some aspects, of course, the suffering of Christ was unique. But I think I can learn from His silence when silence is golden in my life. Let me say to you just three things very quickly about this, and suggest just basically three great principles why our Lord was silent, and why I should be silent, and you should be silent too.

In the first place, I want to say that the silence of Christ was a silence of decisiveness in commitment to the will of God. You remember what Peter said about Him in Acts chapter 2 and 23? He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus Himself said in John chapter 4 and verse 34, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work.

Don't you think that His silence declares His refusal to utter one word to prevent His slaughter? For He was committed in the will of God to be a sacrifice for us. And so decisively was He surrendered that He would not interfere in His own behalf, even in the slightest degree, but He would rather be bound and slain without struggle and without complaint. There was no reserve.

Body, soul, and spirit were wholly given up to the will of God. Not one faculty which our Lord possessed asked to be excused from Calvary. Every limb of His body, every thought of His mind, every desire of His spirit were in total submission to the will of God.

It was a whole Christ giving up His whole being to God that He might offer Himself without spot for our redemption. Oh, that my commitment to Him and yours were as decisive as that. To resign ourselves completely, to deliver up our whole life in self-conquest to the Lord, to find ourselves absorbed in one desire for the will of God, to see that sacrifice accepted as was Elijah's on Mount Carmel, and to have the answering fire from heaven burn up the dross of base desire and make the mountains low.

Oh, that He would do that for us today, and settle forever our arguments and disputes concerning our rights to ourselves. What right have we in the light of the fact that Jesus refused His own? It was my immense privilege early this year to visit a very remarkable and amazing country, the Somali Republic. There was just a handful of brave missionaries met together for a missionary conference in an atmosphere of tremendous political tension, and among them were a couple, just a young married couple, lovely couple, from Stephen Alford's church in New York.

And I met with them and talked with them one day. They worked in a station miles away from Mogadishu, where I was speaking. No shops, no possibility of a day off, nobody to have friendship with, except with themselves and a few nationals.

No other missionaries around. And I watched them, and there was something about those two people, and I shall never forget the look on their faces of absolute exhilaration in being in the will of God. They had a perfect right, if they wanted to, to stay at home.

A perfect right to take each other out to a nice restaurant and have a good meal once a week. A perfect right to a day off. A perfect right to normal remuneration and normal recreation.

A perfect right to normal family life. But they turned their back on all that because of decisive commitment to the will of God. I pray for those two every day.

There was something about their spirit, about the tenderness of their heart toward the Lord, that got inside my skin and made me feel such a worm alongside them. You know, in Old Testament times, the priest used to use a flesh hook in order that he might keep the sacrifice under the flame, to be sure that it would be burned up to dust and ashes. And the Lord needs to take to you and me over and over again the flesh hook to keep the sacrifice under the flame, that we might be reduced just to a heap of ashes, and Jesus might be all in his will, the sheer delight of my life.

Decisiveness in abandonment to the will of God, I trust you've reached that place in your spiritual experience. Secondly, the silence of Jesus was silence of disdainfulness in contempt for the enemies of God. He didn't accuse them of injustice.

He didn't reply to slander. He didn't answer false witness. To argue with those who were bent on his murder would have been completely futile.

Peter says of him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judges righteously. The best reply to false accusation is always silence. But how quick we are to rise up in self-defense.

How sensitive we are to criticism. How eager to prove ourselves right. How we dislike being found out in the wrong.

How we long to prove that the other man is wrong and we are right. There's nothing the flesh hates more than to be shown up in a bad light before our colleagues and friends in Christian work and Christian service. You recall David's attitude when he was harassed by Saul, his lifelong enemy? On at least two occasions he had a wonderful opportunity to deal with him and get rid of him, but it refused to do so.

Even when his right-hand man, Abishai, offered to do it for him, he refused to permit it, replying in the first book of Samuel in the 26th chapter verse 10, as the Lord liveth the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall

come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish, but the Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against him. David wouldn't defend himself, nor would he allow anyone else to do it for him. I have often told, forgive me for telling again, if some of you heard me tell it, but it gripped my heart, the story that you will find if you care to read sometime, and possibly you have read, Amy Carmichael's book, Gold by Moonlight.

She tells in that book of a minister who, after a year or two in his ministry, was going through a tremendous time of persecution in his church. False accusation among his congregation had broken out, and it seemed it would crush him. Accusations against his character, slander, gossip, talk, all kinds of things going round the church about him.

It would have been easy for him to run and get another ministry, but brave man, he didn't do it. He chose to ride the storm. A year or two later, the storm was still going on.

A Sunday school teacher in whose class was the minister's daughter, said to this teenage daughter of the pastor, tell me, do you mind telling me, what effect all of this criticism and scandal has had upon your father? And that child said, well, it's made it absolutely impossible for my daddy ever to say an unkind word about anybody. That's victory. Silence of disdainfulness and contempt of the enemies of God.

Dear friend, has the Lord taught you that lesson? Has he taught me? It's a costly one, and the flesh is always crying out for vindication and recognition. What a tremendous release it is when we commit ourselves to him that judges righteously and allow the Lord to deal with the situation. That doesn't mean, mind you, that in this life, necessarily, you'll be proved right.

But it does mean the ascent of the flesh to the principle of death. And therefore, as a result, the anointing of the life with the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's all that matters.

How many of us, how many of us, have lost the anointing of the Holy Ghost in our testimony, simply because we tried to defend ourselves from the accusation of someone else? Oh Lord, teach us when silence is golden. The silence of decisiveness and commitment to the will of God. The silence of defenselessness, of disdainfulness, and contempt of the enemies of God.

But there's something else here. The silence of defenselessness in consent to the judgment of God. There is a meaning of our Lord's silence more deep than anything we've thought about so far.

Nothing can be said, you see, to excuse human guilt. And therefore he bore its full weight when he stood speechless before the judge. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

Do you see how completely the Lord is identified with all of us? Look at Isaiah 53 verse 6. You'll remember it. All we like sheep have gone astray. Not only are we compared with a sheep, but so is Jesus.

I can understand that we should be likened to sheep and he to a shepherd, but that he too should be likened to a sheep. There's no one but God dare make a comparison like that. But it's the whole theme of Scripture.

Behold the Lamb of God who buried away the sin of the world. He became what we were, that we might become what he is. He was made sin for us, that we who knew no sin might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Now here's the deepest meaning of our Lord's silence. You see, the law had spoken. Romans chapter 3 verse 19.

Whatsoever things the law said, it said to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be guilty before God. A silent world, condemned, no argument to plead, no excuse to make, silently awaits the sentence of judgment. Oh, but praise God, in place of a silent world stands a silent Jesus.

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. There he stands in my place, defenseless, as he consents to bear the judgment due to me. The silence of Christ.

Oh, that's a lonely road upon which none of us can travel. He trod the winepress alone. But there's something I can do, indeed I must do, if I'm to enter into the significance of this word to my heart today.

Listen. Have you ever stood in the presence of the Lord Jesus with bowed head and heart, silent, with no excuses, no arguments, no complaints, defenseless, and said to him, Lord, I'm wrong. You're right.

I consent to judgment. Only then is the Holy Spirit released in your life. Beloved fellow Christian, he will never anoint the flesh with power, but when I assent to the judgment of God upon sin, then he gives me Jesus, and in him there's all power.

Am I still arguing, still defending myself? Or have I come to him and said to him, Lord, no more arguments, no more discussion, no more plea. I'm without excuse. I look to Jesus.

And Lord, whatever other people may have said about me, I'm wrong to have resented it. After all, if they knew the whole truth about me, that would be a hundred times worse. But they've said something about me, and they've been unkind, and I, with my silly little ugly pride, have resented what they've said.

Oh, what a hypocrisy that is, because the Lord knows my heart. And because I've resented that, I have forfeited the anointing and the authority and the power of the Spirit of God in my witness. How much Jesus has lost in you and me because of that.

I stand ashamed in the presence of the one who bore so much hatred on my behalf and bore it silently. Lord, are you prepared to say to him today, I am sorry for my hesitating, half-hearted commitment to your will? I lay down my sword. When silence is golden, the silence of decisiveness in commitment to the will of God, the silence of disdainfulness in contempt for all the enemies of God, the silence of defenselessness in consent to the judgment of God.

The most wonderful of all the graces of Christian character, I think, is the grace of humility. It can be imitated, but the genuine article can never be mistaken. A false humility is a dreadful thing.

But a genuinely humble man and woman, a Christian who has truly been broken at the cross, is a wonderful testimony to the Lord. And someone has defined humility as the silence of the soul to God. And as the Lord looks down into your heart this morning, has he brought you to that place of silence? No more argument, no more complaint, no more questioning, but silence to all his will.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we praise thee this morning for a silent Jesus, that he was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth. Lord, forgive us for our half-hearted commitment to thy will.

Make us wholehearted today without any question. Bring us to that place this day when we acknowledge thee as Lord and Sovereign, King and Master. And no longer do we question thy way, because is it not lawful for thee to do what thou wilt with thine own? Forgive us, dear Savior, for the many times when we've resented and sought to vindicate ourselves.

Lord, teach us humility. Cleanse us from this sin. Forgive us that when it's happened we've forfeited our anointing and our authority, and somehow we know we've grieved thy Spirit.

Lord, make us absolutely defenseless as we stand before thee, and help us today to look to the Savior afresh as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And may he find in each one of us today a vessel unto honor sanctified and meet for the Master's use. Lord, bring us, Lord, we pray thee, back again to Calvary.

Break our hearts, Lord, we pray. For we thank thee that thou canst do such miracles with a broken heart when we give thee all the pieces. Lord, have thine own way with us.

Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will while I am waiting, yielded and still. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and until the morning shall dawn and the day shall break, and we shall see our lovely Lord face to face, and he will say to us, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord.

Amen.

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