

Articles and Sermons :: The Power of Stillness by Dr. A. B. Simpson

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It was â€œa still small voiceâ€ or the sound of a gentle stillness. Is there any note of music in all the chorus as mighty as the emphatic pause? Is there any word in all the Psalter more eloquent than the one word, Selah (Pause)? Is there anything more thrilling and awful than the hush that comes before the bursting of the tempest and the strange quiet that seems to fall upon all nature before some preternatural phenomenon or convulsion? Is there anything that can so touch our hearts as the power of stillness?

Sweet Stillness

The sweetest blessing that Christ brings us is the Sabbath rest of soul, of which the Sabbath of creation was the type. There is, for the heart that will cease for itself, â€œthe peace of God that passeth all understandingâ€; a quietness and confidence, which is the source of all strength; a sweet peace, â€œwhich nothing can offend.â€ There is, in the deepest center of the believerâ€™s soul a chamber of peace where God dwells, and where, if we will only enter in and hush every other sound, we can hear His â€œstill voice.â€

A score of years ago a friend placed in my hands a little book, which became one of the turning points of my life. It was called â€œTrue Peace,â€ and was an old medieval message. It had but one thought, and it was thisâ€”that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if I would only get still enough to hear His voice

Stillness Challenged

I thought this would be a very easy matter and so I began to get still. But I had no sooner commenced than a pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own questions, some of them my own cares, and some were my very prayers. Others were the suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the worldâ€™s turmoil. Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought. In every direction I was pushed and pulled and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer; but God said, â€œBe still, and know that I am God.â€

The God of Stillness

Then came the conflict of thoughts for the morrow, with its duties and cares. But God said: â€œBe still.â€ And as I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while, that when the other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear and heed them, there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power, and comfort. As I listened it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard, but that â€œstill, small voiceâ€ of the Holy Spirit in my heart was Godâ€™s prayer in my secret soul; was Godâ€™s answer to all my questions; was Godâ€™s life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge, and all prayer, and all blessing; for it was the living GOD Himself as my life and my all.

We cannot go through life strong and fresh on constant express trains, with ten minutes for lunch; but we must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength, and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.

The Way of Stillness

The best thing about this stillness is that it gives God a chance to work. â€œHe that entered into His rest hath ceased from his own works, even as God did from His.â€ When we cease from our works, God works in us; when we cease from our thoughts, Godâ€™s thoughts come into us; when we get still from our restless activities, â€œGod worketh in us both to will and to do his good pleasure,â€ and we have but to work it out.

Beloved! Let us take His stillness; let us dwell in â€œthe secret place of the Most Highâ€; let us enter into God and His eternal rest; let us silence the other sounds, and then we can hear â€œthe still, small voice.â€

Then there is another kind of stillness: the stillness that lets God work for us, and we hold our peace; the stillness that ceases from controversy, and self-indication, and expedients of wisdom and forethought and let God provide and answer the unkind word, and the cruel blow, in His own unfailing, faithful love. How often we lose God's interposition by taking up our own cause and striking for our own defense.

There is no spectacle in all the Bible so sublime as the silent Savior answering not a word to the men that were maligning Him, and whom He could have laid prostrate at His feet by one look of Divine power, or one word of fiery rebuke. But he let them do their worst and He stood in the power of stillness - God's Holy Lamb.

God give to us this silent power, this mighty self-surrender, this conquered spirit, which will make us more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Let our voice and our life speak like the still, small voice of Horeb, and as the sound of gentle stillness. Then after the heat and strife of earth are over, men will remember the morning dew, the mellow light and sunshine, the evening breeze, the Lamb of Calvary, and the gentle, Holy, Heavenly Dove.