

"Be Still, and Know That I Am God"

Psalm 46:10

Sunday, March 15, 2020

- In music they are called rests....."intervals of silence"
- In a play or concert it is called an intermission
- In sports it is called halftime
- In a storm it is called the calm
- On a highway it is called a rest stop
- In the book of Psalms it is called SELAHa moment of pause

There was a time when "stillness" was much easier to find than it is now. Many of us live life at a very hectic pace. Every day we "hit the ground running." We have places to go.....people to see.....fish to fry.....things to do.....a list to check off.....phone calls to make. And it seems as though we are constantly meeting ourselves coming and going. Sound familiar?

Technology was supposed to have made our lives much simpler, instead our lives have become much more complex.

In his book, ***TIMELOCK: How Life Got So Hectic and What You Can Do About It***, Author Ralph Keyes gives us an insightful look at how modern technology has complicated our lives.

"One way we try to ease time pressure is with modern conveniences. Last year alone 13,000 new products hit the market. Too often, however, such labor-savers consume more time than they save. By simplifying chores, appliances encourage us to do more of them. Power mowers give us less excuses for not cutting the grass. Blow dryers let us wash our hair daily. Dustbusters make it possible to suck dirt regularly from spaces vacuum cleaners can't reach. Washer-dryers allow us to do laundry constantly rather than weekly. Nearly every study of time spent doing chores has reached the same conclusion: labor-savers relieve drudgery and speed

tasks, but on balance our lives are just as hectic and complicated , if not more so. We may no longer haul water, split wood, trim wicks, clean lamps, boil clothes, feed horses or bake bread. We do chauffeur kids, fight traffic, stand in supermarket lines, fend off telemarketers and scammers, decipher manuals, and repeatedly try to figure out how to re-set the digital clocks on many conveniences." One way in which modern technology allows us to do more is by eliminating "unnecessary" delays: to boil water, wind a watch, or put paper in a typewriter. Taken together such vanishing pauses deprive us of opportunities to catch our breath. No wonder the pace of life feels breathless.

In the midst of this frenzied, hectic world in which we live, God invites you and me to a place few of us seldom find, a place of **stillness**.

He says to ***"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10***

For the next few minutes, let's explore the riches in this wonderful verse of scripture.

First let's consider those two words: BE STILL

1. We know what "Be still" means when we use it, don't we?
Let's say your kids were acting up in church. You might lean over to them and whisper "If you don't be still I'm going to have to take you downstairs for a little discipline!"

Or let's say you are talking on the telephone and your kids or grandkids are screaming and yelling. You might put your hand over the receiver and holler "Would you kids be still!"

Or suppose you've paid good money to see a movie or concert and a group of people behind you are talking so loudly that you can't even hear the movie. After a while you might turn around and, politely of course, say to them, "Would you please be still!"

I heard a story years ago about a basketball team that was playing in the state tournament. During the first half of that game, the aunt of one of the players on

the team became vocally boisterous and critical of their own players for the way they were playing. A man was sitting about 10 rows in front of this woman and yet she was so loud he could hear everything she said. Nothing their team did could suit this woman. If they missed a shot, she would holler at the player by name. If they made a bad pass or fouled another player, she would holler. If her nephew wasn't in the game she would holler at the coach to put him in. If he was in the game and the coach took him out she would holler at the coach for putting him on the bench. You get the idea. After making one nasty comment after another, the man in the front finally got his fill of it and stood up, turned around and said, *"lady would you please be still, if you can't cheer our team on then just don't say anything."*

2. Well we know what "be still" means to us, but what does God mean when He tells us to "be still" in this 10th verse?

The term "Be Still" comes from the Hebrew word **Raphah** which has several different meanings. Be still – raphah, Psalm 46:10 says "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth"

Here, the Hebrew verb, **raphah**, is often translated "be still", or "stop striving". But as ever with English translations, as good and valuable as they are, they can never quite communicate the depth and subtlety of the original language.

This Hebrew word means to slacken off, to leave alone, to become weak and even to fail. Interestingly, it comes from the same root as the Hebrew for doctor "**rophe**" which is **raphe** to cure, cause to heal, repair or to make whole.

So by understanding Hebrew better, we can see that God is saying "relax, be weak, stop striving" so that you can have some time to recover, rest and repair. But to what end?

So that we can **"know that He is God"**, and this is not knowing in our intellect, but rather – knowing by intimate experience and informed acquaintance.

When we become less, we can get really personal with the Creator of the Universe and witness Him at work.

Give it a try!

Many of us wear ourselves out in life trying to carry the weight of the whole world on our own shoulders.

We try to fix everyone's problems.

We try to change the way people think, the way people act and the way they live their lives.

In other words, many of us are guilty of trying to do God's job for Him.

So when God says, "be still," He is saying to us, "stop trying to do My job for Me."

Relax, let go, give it up, cease striving! "Be Still!"

Now let's shift our attention to the second part of this wonderful command:

"Be still.....and know that I am God"

So what is God inviting us to do here?

First of all, God is inviting us to trust in Him.

"Be still and know that I am God."

Does it ever seem to you that this world is spinning out of control? It seems that everywhere we turn we see nothing but chaos, turmoil and disorder.

There is chaos in our government. There is chaos in our judicial system. There is chaos in our financial system. There is chaos in our educational system.

Our future as a nation, which once seemed certain, now is clouded in doubt and uncertainty. And when you look at everything that is going on in this country as well as the rest of the world, it is very easy to become anxious and fearful.

But then God gently reminds us to: **"Be still, and know that I am God."**

- Trust in Me!
- I am still God!

- I am still on My Throne
- I haven't died (and never will!)
- I have everything under control!
- Everything is going according to My plan!
- Don't be anxious!
- Don't be afraid!
- Don't lose heart!
- Be still, BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!

Secondly, God is inviting us to TAKE TIME with Him.

He says "Be still, and know that I am God."

One of the biggest enemies of our prayer life is that many of us have a hard time disciplining ourselves to BE STILL long enough to spend time in God's presence each day. Our lives are often driven by those things that seem URGENT rather than those things that are truly important.

....."I've got to do this" and "I've got to do that." "I've got to get this done" and "I've got to get that done." "I've got to go here" and "I've got to go there." "I've got this and that phone call to make." "I've got that appointment to keep."

Is it possible that in our pursuit to do all those things that seem urgent, we neglect the things that are truly important?

The only way we can truly ever come to know God in a close, intimate way is to learn the secret of being still in His presence. And when you and I learn the secret of being still in the presence of God it has a way of bringing peace and calm to our troubled souls no matter what's going on around us.

As we wind down this morning, I want you to just close your eyes for a few moments. For just a few moments let's be still in the presence of God. For just a few moments forget about what you are going to do this afternoon.

Forget about the things you have to get done this week. Forget about everything that is troubling or bothering you. And think only on the greatness and awesomeness of God!

(pause)

Psalm 46 offers an alternative to the world. It says:

- Be still.
- Be quiet.
- Look up.
- Calm down.
- God reigns!

What troubles you today? What is it about what you think, "If I can just get that sorted out, life will become manageable"? What worries your heart as you lie awake in bed at night? God says: I, not any circumstantial solution, am your refuge amid your adversities. I am a very present help in trouble. I am God. Be still!

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion" says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him." The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Lamentations 3:21-26

I am going to close by reading an old Hymn by Margaret Mae Simpson. We are not going to try and sing it, but let's focus on the words and their meaning.

O Troubled Soul, Beneath the Rod

O troubled soul, beneath the rod. Thy father speaks – be still, be still. Learn to be silent unto God. And let Him mold thee to His will. Be still,

O troubled soul be still; Fear not, thy Father's arms enfold thee. Take up thy cross, lay down thy will; Be silent unto God, and let Him mold thee.

*O anxious soul, lay down thy load. Oh, hear His voice, He speaks to thee.
"Be still, and know that I am God and cast thy every care on me."*

O fearful soul, be still, be still, Be of good cheer; has He not said "I will be with you, fear no ill, 'Tis I, tis I, be not afraid"?

O praying soul, be still, be still. He cannot break His plighted word; Sink down into His blessed will, and wait in patience on the Lord.

*O waiting soul, be still, be strong, And though He tarry, trust and wait;
Doubt not, He will not wait too long, Fear not, He will not come too late.*

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; in every change, He faithfully will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend.

"Be still, and know that I am God"