

The Power of Silence

I was in the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. One morning as I stood outside the ger where I was staying I listened. I didn't hear a thing. No traffic noise, no people talking, no music playing, no birds chirping, no dogs barking, no insects buzzing, no running water. It was a unique experience.

Silence is unfamiliar to us. We live in such a noisy world. Some people get uncomfortable with silence and turn on the TV or music as soon as they get in the house. Silence in a conversation can feel awkward and lead people to say something to break the silence, even if they have nothing to say.

The terrible trials Job suffered led three of his friends to come to comfort him. "... they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was" (Job 2:11). Sometimes comfort is shared in silence. At times it is better to share tears rather than words.

Job's friends comforted in silence for seven days, but then they could no longer contain themselves. They told Job he must have done something evil that made God angry and that was the cause of all his suffering. Their words brought deep hurt instead of comfort.

It's tempting to think every incorrect statement requires a rebuttal and every problem needs an explanation. When hard things happen often we don't have a good answer to the question "why?", and we cause trouble when we try to give one. Sometimes the best response is silence. "A

man of knowledge uses words with restraint ... Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue" (Proverbs 17:27-28).

Social media makes it easy to use words in abundance. That ease can be harmful and dangerous. Words are powerful. We need to pray for God to give us wisdom, restraint and discernment in using them.

In some matters we are to speak and not be silent. We are not to be silent about our sin. "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ... Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' – and you forgave the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:3, 5).

We are not to be silent about the great things God has done. "... we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done" (Psalm 78:4).

Sometimes it feels like God is silent. We pray and we cry out for help, but no response seems to come, at least not as quick and clear as we would like. We plead like David, "To you I call, O Lord my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit" (Psalm 28:1).

We rejoice that God has spoken, in His Word, the Scriptures. He may seem silent about some things, but He is not silent at all about His love and grace and way of salvation. Jesus is the Word (John 1:1) who communicates clearly that forgiveness, hope and life eternal is offered by faith in Christ.

—Pastor Craig

Worship With Us

Our 11:00 a.m. in building Worship Services continue. To comply with the state regulations regarding COVID-19, everybody is asked to wear a facial covering and observe social distancing by sitting six feet apart from other families while in the pews. Free masks are available on the entryway table.

We are also continuing to live stream our 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services on Facebook Live. Devotional videos are also posted on our congregation's YouTube channel. Links to both of those sites can be found on our website: bethanyfree.com.

Men's Breakfast Saturday, Oct. 3 at 8:00 a.m.

If you'd like to help prepare breakfast, please talk with Pastor Craig.

**Pastor Craig Will Be Gone**

Pastor Craig will be attending the AFLC All Boards Meeting and Pastors Conference from Oct. 5-9. He will be on vacation from Oct. 14-21.

Women's Missionary Federation (WMF)

Meeting Thursday Oct. 8 at 11:00 a.m. downstairs. Everyone is asked to bring a sack lunch. All ladies are invited.

**Youth Group Oct. 11 6:00 p.m.**

Our youth group will meet at Pastor Craig's house to play some games, have some snacks and talk about the good news that we don't need to fear when we're trusting the Lord. All youth 6th grade and above are invited.

Sunday School starts Oct. 11 9:30 a.m.

Because of directives regarding the virus, this year will be different. We'll have three classes: one for adults, one for older kids and one for younger children. We want to also include students via the internet who need to stay at home. Please contact us for details by calling the church office at 505-325-2925 or emailing us at bethanyfree.com.

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS)

MOPS is an opportunity for moms to get together to pray and support one another. It will meet downstairs in our church building on Monday Oct. 12 at 6:30 p.m. and on Monday Oct. 26 at 6:30 p.m. All mothers of preschoolers are welcome.

**Congregation Quarterly Meeting**

Sunday Oct. 25 following the worship service.

Prayer Time

On Wed. Oct. 28 at 7:00 p.m. we'll have a prayer time at the church. We'll pray for the start of a new school year and for other needs in our community, country and world. Everyone is invited to join in and pray.

Confirmation Begins Soon

Confirmation is two years of instruction in the basics of the Bible. All those who are in 6th grade and above are welcome to be part of the class. The class meets once a week for an hour during the school year. Please let Pastor Craig know if you're interested.

Coming This Month...

October 3 Men's Breakfast

October 8 WMF

October 11 Youth Group

October 12 & 26 Mothers of Preschoolers

October 13 Deacons & Trustees Meeting

October 25 Congregation Quarterly Meeting

October 28 Prayer Time



Bethany Free Lutheran Church
451 34th St.
Astoria, OR 97103