

## **Be Still and Know**

### *Prayer*

Have you ever read the passage in Psalms 46:1-10 ESV where it says: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.  
Selah (Think about it)

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.  
Selah

Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

### **What is David trying to tell us here?**

We read that we are to be commanded to: “Be still, and know that I am God”

Be still here comes from the Hebrew word “Raphah” which in this context means be still or stop striving. Unfortunately there is no direct 1 to 1 correlation of the translation. As a result we need to look a little more closely at what “Be Still” means here...

The 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 word for Doctor (Rophe) which is raphah – to cure, cause to heal, repair or make whole.

So this is telling us that we can know he is God and that the knowing here is not of our intellect but rather knowing by intimate experience and acquaintance with him.

We bring our problems to him, we petition him on a regular basis. He is our God and we go to him for everything.

How often though we fret and worry...

The Word tells us in Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV).

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

The Word tells us in Psalms 55:22 (ESV)

*Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you*

And in 1 Peter 5:6-7 (KJV)

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

### **Be Still Means**

To cure, cause to heal, repair or make whole in situations where we are weak we need to recognize our sovereign Lord and stop trying to be our own saviors, back off and let God be glorified in our weakness. We are told not to be anxious and yet we struggle to let go.

When I came to Salmo, I received a prophecy in which I would be like the eagle. I would bring with me the freedom of God to the people of the area and the beak of the eagle would be like the silver trumpets of the priests that would muster the people together and send them forth and the wheat was white and each time out the harvest would be greater. I was told that silver and gold rain would fall upon this church; which denote the redemptive work of Christ in the Holy Spirit and the abiding presence of God.

I also receive a subsequent prophecy that I was like an eagle but that I was struggling and flapping my wings and that the Lord would say to me to open my wings and soar on the wind of the Holy Spirit.

Totally awesome prophecy and I feel so very honored to be used of God as his servant to this area, but did you notice what else he said to me.

Be still! Stop flapping your own wings, that's not how it will get done. Abide in the presence of the Holy Spirit and Let the glory of God shine forth.

Then the church at Salmo received the prophecy that like the eagles of the Word we would run and not be weary, walk and not faint. Which is a quote from scripture.

Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)

*But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

We need to have a progressive vision, we need to be motivated, we need a sense of urgency around spreading the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but we also need to recognize our real limitations and when to hand our cares over to the Lord.

Is the Word telling us to just give up and do nothing? No... Faith without works is dead...

It is saying that when the going gets beyond tuff... the tuff go to Jesus. They stop the struggle and talk to God. They sit quietly and listen to him and receive direction. There are times for activity, times for petitioning God and times to just sit still and listen. You see to sit still and listen required us to give up doing; to choose faith and really trust God. When we have done all that we can and it is not enough, do we struggle? Do we try harder? Do we work smarter? Or do we acknowledge our limitations and reverently ask God to intercede? Can we let go of our struggling to do the work of the Lord long enough in these brutal situations to walk in faith and do nothing?

### **Why God not ourselves?**

Our God is omnipotent... I remember an illustration about a small boy going to visit his grandma and grandpa on a plane. He was seated next to a seminary professor. The professor looked over and saw he was reading a Sunday school paper and thought that he would have some fun with the boy. The professor said "Young man, If you can tell me something God can do I'll give you a big juicy shiny red apple..." The boy thought this over for a moment and said: "Mister, if you can tell me something God can't do, I'll give you a whole barrel of apples from grandma's farm."

Our God is omnipotent and omniscient. He knows all things and can do all things. He isn't at our beck and call, but he is our creator, our God and our Father in heaven who want to prosper us and help us. He simply wants to be invited to help.

Many people complain about the struggles of this life... We all crave peace and tranquility. Let's turn to science for an illustration:

Researchers at the University of California at Berkley did an experiment on an amoeba. They put it into what would be a stress free environment for it. They maintained the optimal temperature, optimal moisture levels, constant food supply and so on. Everything that an amoeba needed to thrive was provided, but all struggle, stress and difficulty was removed... Do you know what happened to the amoeba?

It Died!

Living creatures require change, we may not like it, but change is the essential process of life. This is a staging ground for all eternity and we have trials and tribulations in our lives. The Holy Spirit works in us on our sanctification and brings about the likeness of Christ in us through his restorative work.

It is odd but there is something about all people that demands challenge. We actually require circumstances where we must adapt, change and grow. Comfort alone will kill us. The bible tells us in Prov. 29:18 that without a progressive vision the people perish? In other "versions cast of restraint" Why?

Progressive means change... the vision requires that we go from where we are to where we should be. Without challenge people are unfocused and wither.

So am I being contradictory? NO!

We must grow, we must be challenged, we need to embrace the challenges this life has set before us without anxiety, like Paul said in whatsoever state we are in we need to be content. He did not say we need to struggle through everything on our own strength.

Have you ever considered that when something is actually too hard for us to accomplish that letting Go and letting God, does him honor and glorifies his name. Our pride prevents us from letting go... Should we just hand over everything – No! we would die... but we should cast all our cares on him because he cares for us. His burden is easy and his yolk is light.

### **God tells us when it is too much for us to call on him.**

How many dads and moms out there with kids love to see your kids work on something like Mechano™ or Lego or a science project etc? Isn't it great to see their eyes light up as they discover something new. It isn't easy for them yet we watch them struggle with it and rejoice in their success – don't we?

How many of us have sat there and watched?

Now when they are truly stuck and they look up and say "help me please" how do we feel? God is our heavenly Father – Get it?

### **Now let's talk about scope and magnitude of God**

When we read from Psalms 46 do you know what was happening at the time? Hezekiah had prayed and God sent one angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrians.

What are we learning today? When we read this Psalm we quickly come to the realization that when it seems that all hope is lost, God can handle it. But... not always our way. He does it in his timing, in his way and according to his sovereign will.

### **Practical application for a minute.**

Last week we talked about discovering what God has for you.

God has a plan for each one of you – Be Still and know that God will reveal his plan at the right time. Your Job is just to seek and discover not to fret over it. When problems come into our lives we struggle and we worry about them. Sometime our plans experience delays, our children take a detour from the path we thought they would take and so on. Sometimes we are anxious about our goals in life. When these things happen do we walk in fear or in faith?

Since God is God and has kinda mastered miracles and so forth, shouldn't we just give it to him, be still and know that he is God?

Do you remember during the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt when Moses came to the Red Sea? Moses had learned this principle... He said to his people in Exodus 14:13-14:

*And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."*

So often we delude ourselves into believing that activity is a sure sign of progress. We really need to get the concept that sometimes taking no action is in fact an action of faith.

You see when we read the words "Be Still" in English we place our cultural context on them. For us this means essentially don't move and be quiet. But as we looked at in the Hebrew Raphah we found that it meant to stop striving, let go and surrender. The challenge to us is to let go and rest in God and have faith in him to help, provide strength in our time of trouble and to keep us safe.

### **Time for another illustration... mighty homiletic today eh?**

Let's look at Mark 4:39. In this passage Jesus uses the words, "Peace be Still!" did you notice that there is an exclamation mark there? Did it pass you by before?

Here is what was going on...

Jesus has had a pretty full day of healing people, casting out demons and speaking. The implication of this passage is that Jesus is tired and needed rest. He is God but remember fully God, fully man. Jesus requested a boat to escape the crowds that were coming to him. Next a huge storm rolls in and the disciples start to panic in the boat. So they come to the messiah who is exhausted and sleeping and woke Jesus up. Can you picture Jesus? Tired exhausted, full day, just woken up in the middle of a storm due to fear and lack of faith. Jesus yells out "Peace, Be Still!" the storm and the waves stopped immediately.

We looked at the Hebrew... how about some Greek context. The words be still in the Greek literally mean "Hush" or in more modern terms... "Shut up!"

The apostles were guilty of lack of faith. How about us?

Ever been in the car with the kids on a road trip? Ever hear "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" Ever say: "Shussssh, Hush or just plain old Shut up!"

Now Lets think about us as God's kids...

Have we ever asked God continually for everything we need and then not stop long enough to hear what he says? This doesn't mean that we shouldn't be diligent with our requests and persistent, it means that we also need to be still and listen for the answer.

In our busy culture we are constantly being driven to do more. A single person is now expected to wear multiple hats on a job, to accomplish more during a day, to multitask and to juggle multiple things at one time. We are constantly being programmed in our culture to push, push; push. The very act of being still and getting quiet becomes more of a challenge. We are constantly expected to be busy, or at least to look busy... God wants us to lay all of that aside and come away a while, to just be with him in relationship, to allow him to sing over us, for us to receive his love, peace, healing and guidance.

Did you ever notice that the busier we get the more fearful and anxious thoughts we process and the more stress we hold on to? Busyness has caused us to question our value, our worth, our effectiveness. We start to feel that we are too fat, too ugly, too old, too young, or too stupid.

We have a desperate need to meditate on the Lord, to come aside a while and be still.

Prayer and meditation on the Lord gives us:

- Relief from the tensions and stresses of everyday life.
- Peace and gives us clarity of perception
- Strength to cope with what's going on in our hectic lives

Some scriptures come to mind...

The first is Romans 12:2

*Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

Joshua 1:8-9

*This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

Isaiah 40:31

*But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint.*

I will leave you with one more scripture and a thought...

An excerpt from Isaiah 43 ESV...

*...“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior”...*

*...also read NLT translation*

Do you believe in him today? Will you have faith and come aside awhile and listen to the Word of the Lord? Will you choose faith or fear?

For you see... drive is Good. Vision is Good. Challenge is Good. Struggle is Good. Overcoming is Good. But when life or trials become too much, when they become more than we can bear and we don't know where to turn within our skills, talents and abilities. It truly is time... to come aside awhile, be still and know that he is God...

*Prayer*