

## Unveiled—Week Six: Unveiled Silence

(Sound booth: Only the opening title slide is needed during Dan's talking part. Don't advance until he is finished the rest of the program runs automatically)

We are exposed to so much noise. Think about the noises that fill our day...

- TV noise.
- Music playing. (How often do you turn on something just to have some background noise?)
- Social media.
- Our phones...buzzing, dinging, playing ring tones.
- The radio in the car.
- Podcasts.
- People talking.
- Our voice.

All this noise is actually harmful to our health.

We live in a chaotic world buzzing with a constant cacophony of noise. The World Health Organization says that the noise of contemporary life has become "modern plague". Our bodies physically respond to all this noise, triggering a release of stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol. Studies have shown that the continual flow of these chemicals can lead to serious health issues.

Noise raises our blood pressures, it disrupts our concentration, and it suppresses our immune systems. A steady exposure puts us at risk of hypertension, high stress levels, heart problems, and psychological damage.

Silence, on the other hand, releases tension, lowers blood pressure, improves sleep and has even been found to reduce chronic pain.

In a 2006 study on the physiological effects of music by Luciano Bernardi, he noted that two minute pauses of silence were found more relaxing than filling those pauses with 'relaxing' music.

Silence can quite literally grow the brain.

A 2013 study on mice, published in the journal *Brain, Structure, and Function*, involved comparing the effects of ambient noise, white noise, pup calls and silence on the rodents' brains. Although the researchers intended to use silence as a control in the study, they found that two hours of silence daily led to the development of new cells in the hippocampus, a key brain region associated with learning, memory and emotion.

But silence isn't just important for our physical health. Silence is essential to our spiritual health.

The Children of Israel were one noisy group of people.

- They whined.
- They grumbled.
- They complained.
- And, they cried out.

Check this out...

**Exodus 14:10-14**

*10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." 13 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. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."*

Let me point out what Moses doesn't say. Moses doesn't say...

- "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be ready to fight back."
- "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to work even harder."
- "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to pray harder."
- "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to try harder."

No, Moses says, "*The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.*"

This is God's way of saying, "Shut up, and listen, already." We can't shut up sometimes! Especially when we're going through a difficult time. My wife tells me I get real grumpy when I'm not feeling well. I don't know what she's talking about. But she says I'm not real fun to be around.

God wants Israel to quit obsessing about every problem that comes their way.

*"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."*

Quit talking and start trusting. Constantly complaining about our problems has a way of magnifying them.

**Noise makes us forget what God has done.**

Did you hear what they were saying in all their complaining. Look at vs. 12, "*Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.*" It would have been better if we'd just stayed in Egypt. They're saying they'd be better off as slaves. They were better off building bricks for someone else. They were better off having their children killed by the Egyptians.

How quickly they forget. They forget their suffering. They forget how they cried out for deliverance. They forget everything that God had done for them to get them this far. They saw all the miracles. They saw everything God did deliver them. Impossible things. Unexplainable things. But now they can't see any of it, because all they see is what's going on right in front of them.

Constant complaining clouds our memories. It blinds us to God's past faithfulness so that we don't trust him in the present. Not only does the noise of our complaints keep us from remembering what God has done, It also keeps us from seeing what is doing right now.

**Noise can keep us from seeing what God is doing.**

All they can see is what they can see Pharaoh and his army closing in on them. All they can see is the Red Sea blocking their path. By only seeing what they can see with their physical eyes, is keeping them from envisioning what God doing. They can't see beyond the Red Sea! At this point they've forgotten all about the Promised Land. They've forgotten all about everything that God has promised them.

They are only looking at what's in front of them, instead of the God who is with them. Sometimes we get so focused on what's closing in on us. We get so focused on whatever's in our way— getting the test results back from the doctor, finals coming up, our annual review, the rumored downsizing and the layoffs right around the corner, the relationship careening over the edge. We get so focused on what is right in front of us that we forget about the God who is with us.

The whole point of Christmas is that God is with us. Remember, *Emmanuel* means "God with us." God is with you. God is with you whatever you face. God is with you in whatever your circumstances. There is nothing you face alone.

All of Israel's noise was doing something even more dangerous. It was keeping them from hearing what God is saying.

### **Noise can keep us from hearing what God is saying.**

When we're busy talking, we're not usually listening. It has been pointed out that God gave us two ears, but only one mouth for a reason. The Children of Israel are so busy bellyaching, they have no idea what God is trying to tell them. What was God saying? Let's read a bit further.

Exodus 14:15,16

*The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.*

God wants them to stop crying and start moving, but they couldn't hear Him so he tells them to be quiet. There is nothing they can say to fix it. There is no point in making any more noise! In fact, if they are not silent they will not hear from God the only thing that will solve every problem they are crying about.

We fill our lives with so much noise that it's hard for us to hear from the Lord.

A few weeks ago we defined worship as a response of all that we are to all that God is. Sometimes our best response to God is to be quiet and start listening. Why?

So we can remember what He's done. So we can see what he's doing. So we can hear from the Lord, which will...

Worshipping God in silence can be just as important as lifting our voices in resounding song. Yet I don't think we know how to do this very well. We haven't seen it. We haven't been taught it.

Listen to these scriptures:

- "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10)
- "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him." (Ps. 62:5)
- "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." (Lam 3:26)
- "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." (Hab. 2:20)
- "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. (Rev. 8:1)

- “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17)
- “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” (Ja. 1:19)

So for the rest of this worship service we are going to worship God in silence.

From here on, until we’re dismissed, everything you need to know will be on one of the screens.

Would you please silence your cell phone at this time?

(Dan will pray.)

Let’s be silent in

3

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**(Sound booth: Once you advance past the “Unveiled” title slide, the slide show advances automatically until the end.)**

Slides/Video:

Please pray this prayer in your heart, “Lord, I am listening, please tell me what you want me to know.”

Why is silence so hard to deal with?

In the silence of the next 25 minutes (don’t freak out :) ) you will hear babies cry, people sneeze, your stomach growl, people getting up to go to the bathroom, chairs creak, and other ambient noises. Try to keep your focus and allow yourself to become comfortable in the silence.

183 million people are regularly exposed to noise levels labeled as excessive by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Some of us wear headphones a lot during the day.

SUV’s and minivans now come with separate CD and DVD systems for the kids in the back seats so they don’t have to listen to their parents. :)

We take noise with us, even when we are trying to “get away from it all.”

Interesting.

Reflect on the noises that most dominate your life...

- Your own voice
- The TV
- Social Media
- The Radio
- Streaming Music
- The Sound of an Oil Rig
- A Crying Baby

- Whining Kids.
- Barking Dogs.

In the quiet of this moment, listen to yourself breathe as you inhale...and exhale.

(Inhale)

(Exhale)

Reflect on these scriptures as you listen to yourself breathe...

Genesis 2:7

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Job 33:4

The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Acts 17:25

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

Psalms 150:6

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Thank God right now for giving you breath.

Let's take a moment and praise the Lord through silent prayer. With your eyes open...so you will see the when this prayer is to be over...pray this prayer in your heart for the next few moments, "Lord, I praise you for..."

As you look at the following images of the beauty of God's creation, offer God a silent praise...

(Show pictures of the beauty of creation)

Sometimes we are uncomfortable with silence because, when it's silent...and we are not distracted...we have space to think about stuff we sometimes don't like to think about...

- Pain
- Heartache
- Loss
- Abuse we've experienced.
- Insecurities
- Depressing thoughts
- Anxious feelings
- Stress at work
- Drama at home
- Failing relationships
- Sins we've committed.
- Guilt
- Shame

Do you ever feel like God is silent?

Do you wish God's voice would be louder in your life?

Does your schedule, your time, and your life look like that of a person who wants to hear God's voice?

What would you rather hear?

Gods voice?

All the other noise in your life?

Is there something that is keeping you from hearing God's voice?

Deuteronomy 27:9

Then Moses and the priests, who are Levites, said to all Israel, "Be silent, Oh Israel, and listen!"

Psalm 4:4

Search your hearts and be silent.

Habakkuk 2:20

But the Lord is in His holy temple: Let all the earth be silent before Him.

Have you spent the same amount of time worrying and talking about your difficult, confusing situations as you have spent in silence, listening to what God might have to say?

If so, reflect on the truth in these scriptures:

Psalm 9:9-10

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord have never forsaken those who seek you.

Isaiah 40:31

...but those who hope 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 be faint.

Psalm 91:1-2

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust."

Psalm 107:6

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

Psalm 118:5

In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free.

With your eyes open, reflect on a trial you are facing and pray this prayer in your heart, "Lord, please help me with..."

One of the biggest problems we all have is sin.

Because of our sin we are lost and doomed to live a future apart from Jesus.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death...

Romans 6:23 continued...

...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are going to pause and take communion and remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Reflect on this prophecy about Jesus and how He died for our sins.

Isaiah 53:1-7

Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant,

and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men,

a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces

he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,

smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned—every one—to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on him

the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,

yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,

and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,

so he opened not his mouth.

As we share some of the names of Jesus, quietly make your way to one of the communion stations and remember all that Jesus did to show His love for you and the role silence played in his death.

Advocate

Alpha and Omega

Amen

Anointed One  
Author and Perfecter of Faith  
Author of Salvation  
Beginning and the End  
Beginning of the Creation of God  
Beloved  
Branch  
Bread of God  
Bread of Life  
Bridegroom  
Bright Morning Star  
Chief Shepherd  
Choice Stone  
Chosen One  
Christ  
Corner Stone  
Deliverer  
Door  
Eternal Father  
Faithful and True Witness  
First and the Last  
Firstborn  
Firstfruits  
Forerunner  
God  
Good Shepherd  
Great High Priest  
Great Shepherd  
Head of the Body  
Heir of All Things  
Holy One of God  
Holy Servant  
Hope  
Image of God  
Immanuel  
Judge  
King  
King of Israel  
King of Kings  
King of the Jews  
Lamb of God  
Last Adam



Life  
Light of the World  
Lion of the Tribe of Judah  
Living Bread  
Living One  
Living Stone  
Lord  
Lord of Glory  
Lord of Lords  
Lord of the Sabbath  
Man of Sorrows  
Master  
Mediator  
Messiah  
Mighty God  
Nazarene  
Overseer of Your Souls  
Precious Corner Stone  
Prince  
Prince of Life  
Prince of Peace  
Prophet  
Rabbi  
Radiance of Gods Glory  
Ransom  
Resurrection  
Righteous Judge  
Righteous One  
Rock  
Root and Offspring of David  
Ruler  
Ruler of the Kings of the Earth  
Savior  
Second Man  
Seed  
Servant  
Shepherd  
Son of David  
Son of God  
Son of Man  
Son of the Blessed One  
Son of the Father

Son of the Living God  
Son of the Most High  
Source of Eternal Salvation  
Stone  
Stone of Stumbling  
Teacher  
True Bread  
True Light  
True Vine  
Truth  
Way  
Wisdom of God  
Wonderful Counselor  
Word of God  
Word of Life

Let's worship silently to this song. How does that work? Just read and watch! :)

If you would like to pray with someone, Stephen Ministers will be in the back; one of our elders will be at the cross, and Pastor Dan will be at the double doors leading to Fellowship Hall.

We hope that, because of this time of silence, it is a little more well with your soul.

We also hope you have heard from the Lord today.

btw...What did the Lord say to you? Write it down.

Don't forget it.

Believe it.

Live it.

We encourage you to seek out times of silence this week.

- Take off the headphones.
- Turn off the TV and the car radio.
- Get off social media.
- Talk less.
- Listen more.

In a moment, as you leave this room, please remain silent until you exit.

Remember, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Grace and Peace.