

## Faith Series: Faith when God is Silent

*(Hebrews 1:1-3 NKJV) "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, {2} has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; {3} who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"*

The Bible tells us that "in these last days God the Father has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ." Previously, from Adam to Noah to Moses to Elijah, and to all His prophets, the Lord's voice was heard with fear and trembling. At times He would thunder in judgment. At other times He would rebuke in holy anger. Then, there were times He would speak with compassion to reassure His servants that He was with them and would be their shelter and high tower. There were even times when He spoke without speaking. In one such instance, He spoke by writing a word of judgment with His hand on a palace wall. The Scriptures also speak of times and circumstances when God watched and held back His mighty hand until He was ready to act.

Today, we often find ourselves hungering to hear the voice of God. We seek His guidance, or His judgment, or His approval... and, when He is silent, we are uneasy at best or panicked at the worst. We dread having to make decisions or go through situations without His voice to show the way and stay our fears.

### Stepping Out in Faith

Stepping out in faith, by definition, is stepping out past obstacles that appear challenging, intimidating and beyond our abilities to overcome them. Otherwise, stepping out would not require faith. Without God, we can easily feel inadequate and alone - not up to the task. With faith, we can do all things. In Hebrews, Chapter 11, we read of the historically great men and women of faith. We can study their lives in the Old Testament Scriptures. We may wonder in amazement at the great things they did for God - at the courage they displayed as they walked confidently into the unknown. If we are presented with opportunities to do the same, we find it anything but easy.

- It would be easier to step out in faith if we heard from God as Abram did.

*(Genesis 12:1-4 NKJV) “Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. {2} I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. {3} I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” {4} So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him...”*

- It would be easier to step out in faith if we could climb a mountain and speak with God face-to-face as Moses did.

*(Exodus 3:3-5 NKJV) “Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.” {4} So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” {5} Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.””*

- It would be easier to step out faith if we could hear God say, “Stand still and the Salvation of the Lord,” as Jehoshaphat did.

*(2 Chronicles 20:17 NKJV) “You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.”*

Today, we seldom, if ever, have the audible voice of God to rely on. Instead, we are asked to listen carefully for His voice to come in some other way. It is often more of a whisper than a roar and easily can be missed. God's ways are beyond our explanations. He alone is God.

## When God is Silent

**What if there is no word from God?**



**What if we have no verbal sign that God has seen our situation, has heard our voice or is about to move on our behalf?**

**What if He is completely silent, and seemingly unavailable?**

Consider the challenges to the faith of those who followed Jesus during His three and a half years on this earth.

**How many times had they heard Him declare who He was?**



**How often had they sat at His feet and heard Him teach about His Himself and His kingdom?**

**How many times had they seen His miracle working power?**

They were often confused and doubtful about the Lord's ability and willingness to move, as only divinity could. Jesus often spoke of them having **little or no faith!**

Consider the challenges to the faith of his followers as they stood and watched the Lord's crucifixion.



**What effect did this have on His followers?**

**How difficult it was for them to believe His claims and remember His miracles in the face of His arrest, beating, scourging and ultimate crucifixion?**

**How could faith stand and watch Jesus' life slip away on the agony on the cross and still believe?**

Jesus knew their faith would be tested. It even seemed that, in His darkest hour on the cross, when Jesus had His greatest need to hear from God the Father, that there was nothing but silence. His followers had to find a way to reconcile their faith to Jesus' own words, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"*

## **Faith is Two Things**

*(Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is two things: (1) substance, and (2) evidence. In that terrible moment on Calvary, there was no visible or physical substance or evidence to support the Lord's followers in their faith. They stood by the cross watching Jesus cry out to the Father. In that moment, He seemed to be anything but Lord. He seemed incapable of saving anyone, let alone Himself! However, there was something unseen going on.

- There would be evidence presented in heaven and later discovered on earth.
- There would be a manifestation of Christ's glory and power. It would forever settle the question of faith.

It was only the first day. There would be a time of God's silence, beginning at the Calvary (the first day) and extending to the third day. It would have been natural for those who watched Him die to lose their faith. In that hour, every promise Jesus made seemed false and any future Jesus promised seemed empty. All His followers had was silence. It would have emptied their faith.

*(Matthew 27:57-61 NKJV) "Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. {58} This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. {59} When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, {60} and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. {61} And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb."*

So there they sat. The two Mary's - sitting and looking at the large stone that signaled an apparent end to their dreams. The tomb was sealed. Jesus was certainly dead. There was no tangible substance or visible evidence that would lead to any other conclusion. Imagine the pain and the disappointment they felt.

### **God the Father had been silent throughout the ordeal.**

The two Mary's had nothing to reassure them, or even suggest there might be a way out of this nightmare. Whatever pleading, whatever heartfelt crying out to God they had given - had apparently gone on deaf ears. There in front of the tomb as they sat watching, God was still silent... He remained so until He was ready to speak. When He spoke, His authority and presence were made known beyond any doubt! He spoke in a way that all generations to come could trust in His ability to save.

*(Matthew 28:1-9 NKJV) "Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. {2} And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and*

*came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. {3} His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. {4} And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. {5} But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. {6}" He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. {7} And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." {8} So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. {9} And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him."*

## **FAITH PRINCIPLES FOUND IN GOD'S SILENCE**

### **1. God's silence is not a sign of defeat!**

It may seem to be so in natural terms, but God's silence always has divine purpose and can become the supernatural door to our victories. God is in control - absolutely. Even in His silence, His silence is speaking! His plan is never to see us defeated. We should remember that victory in our lives will be achieved by finding and following His ways. We know that all things we go through or experience together for good in our lives.

*(Romans 8:28 NKJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*

### **Even in His silence, His silence is speaking!**

#### **How should we respond?**

We should never give up. We must continue in what God has already spoken. We should continue to seek Him, His voice, and His guidance. We should earnestly walk the path He has previously shown us and listen for the next step.

*(Isaiah 30:18-21 NKJV) "Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. {19} For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you. {20} And though the Lord gives you The bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Yet your teachers will not be moved*

*into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers. {21} Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left."*

## **2. God's silence often signals delay, but not necessarily denial.**

God is never obligated to explain Himself. He is the Potter. We are clay in His hands. (Jeremiah 18:1-6) He is at work in and around us, and expects us to accept and take comfort in that fact. We must resist the temptation to challenge God's judgment concerning our lives. This was Job's only sin in the midst of his trials.

*(Job 38:1-4 NKJV) "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: {2} "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? {3} Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. {4} "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding."*

*(Job 40:1-2 NKJV) "Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: {2} "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.""*

*(Job 40:8 NKJV) "Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?"*

### **How should we respond?**

We should continue to trust in Him, and keep our faith firm and unwavering. We should trust that He always responds in our best interests. We should resist the temptation to question God about how or why He is forming our paths and creating our destinies. We must let Him manage the outcomes in our lives.

## **3. God's silence may be difficult to understand, but He makes all things clear in His time.**

Everything has a time and a season. Perhaps we are not ready... or others may not be ready. It may be that circumstances around us still need to align themselves with God's will and plan for the situation. God understands exactly what should happen and when.

### **How should we respond?**

We should strive to understand the value of God's timing.  
There is value in waiting upon the Lord.  
Allow patience to have its perfect work.

*(Isaiah 40:31 NKJV) "But those who wait on 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."*

*(James 1:2-4 NKJV) "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. {4} But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."*

This is an appropriate time to keep asking the Lord to give us understanding about the situation we find ourselves in, and wisdom to do the right thing.

*(James 1:5-6 NKJV) "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. {6} But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."*



**Will we ask the Lord to help us learn, to grow and to change during the period we are waiting?**

**Will we use the delay to draw closer to God and to build our faith?**

#### **4. God's Silence never indicates inability on His part.**

Nothing is impossible with God. He is always able. He is all-powerful. He can do whatever He decides to do. Our faith can take strength and comfort in that.

*(Mark 10:27 NKJV) "But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."'" (See also - Matthew 19:26 NKJV)*

#### **How should we respond?**

We should not allow ourselves to think in ways that put limitations on God... or put limitations on who we are and what we can do. We should nurture and maintain positive attitudes that are insulated by faith, from the forces at work around us.

*(Philippians 4:13 NKJV) "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Silent seasons are great times to meditate on hopes, dreams and visions for the future, instead of the “what ifs” our natural circumstances want to dictate to us. Silent seasons are great times to speak to our own faith and declare we are able because there is a greater One in us, who enables and empowers us to reach our destinies!

*(1 John 4:4 NKJV) “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*

## **5. Silence from God may be a clear indication that He wants us to speak - and to speak in faith and power!**

There are times when God will challenge our faith - times when He expects us to speak, while He remains silent. Why? As we speak, our words testify to the world that we believe God. As we speak, we release the power of our faith and demonstrate our reliance on His absolute faithfulness. In the midst of His silence, our own voices strengthen our faith. When God does move, our faith grows even stronger. His actions validate our confessions. He proves our words by His deeds. We can then say, “*Look what the Lord has done.*” The classic Biblical example of this is the faith that David expressed to his giant adversary Goliath, just before God struck him down with David’s sling and a stone.

*(1 Samuel 17:45-47 NKJV) “Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. {46} This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. {47} Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.””*

### **How should we respond?**

Let these be our prayers.

- Lord, help us to command faith to pour forth from our hearts.
- Lord, help us to refuse to be moved by emotions.

- Lord, help us to continue what You have already assigned to us.
- Lord, help us to stand secure in the fortresses of our faith, because it is built on Your faithfulness.
- Lord, help us to let our lives speak about the God we serve.
- Lord, help us to become vocal with our faith, as we allow our words bring life into the situation.
- Lord, help us to give thanksgiving and praise to You in the midst of Your silence. (We often wait until after He acts to praise and thank Him.)
- Lord, help us to anticipate the power in our words and use them as weapons to gain our victories!

## **6. When we speak in faith, our faith speaks to God, and God will not be silent!**

When God chooses to speak, He will speak on our behalf and it will be with the voice of many waters. His voice will carry and project His omnipotence. It will bring His glory. Every knee will bow and all will obey it!

*(Ezekiel 43:2 NKJV) “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.”*

Our greatest exercise of faith is displayed when we press on in the face of silence from God, knowing He has our destinies in His hands and will perform His Word over us!

*(Jeremiah 1:12 NKJV) “Then the LORD said to me, “You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.””*

*(Job 23:10-14 New Living Translation) “But he knows where I am going. And when he has tested me like gold in a fire, he will pronounce me innocent. {11} For I have stayed in God’s paths; I have followed his ways and not turned aside. {12} I have not departed from his commands but have treasured his word in my heart. {13} Nevertheless, his mind concerning me remains unchanged, and who can turn him from his purposes? Whatever he wants to do, he does. {14} So he will do for me all he has planned. He controls my destiny.”*