

## Doctrine of Silence

1. Those that stand before royalty learn not to speak until spoken to.

- *Judges 3:19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.*

2. When Eliphaz saw an apparition, he was filled with a fearful silence.

- *Job 4:16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, 17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker?*

### ***Special Note.***

“When we are to speak either from God or to him it becomes us to address ourselves to it with a solemn pause, and so to set bounds about the mount on which God is to come down, and not be hasty to utter any thing. It was in a still small voice that the message was delivered [to Eliphaz]” (Matthew Henry).

3. Sometimes individuals, like Job, are held in high esteem. When they speak, others are silent.

- *Job 29:21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.*

### ***Special Note.***

“Job was the oracle of his country. He was consulted as an oracle, and his dictates were acquiesced in as oracles, v. 21. When others could not be heard all men *gave ear* to him, *and kept silence at his counsel*, knowing that, as nothing could be said against it, so nothing needed to be added to it” (Matthew Henry).

4. It is possible to be intimidated into silence by others, including family members.

- *Job 31:34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?*

5. A Christian can and should pray that lying lips be put to silence.

- *Psalms 31:18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

6. Sometimes being silent is not healthy.

- *Psalms 32:3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

7. The soul in distress does not want the Lord to keep silent but to speak in some way to the soul and address a given situation.
- *Psalms 35:22 This thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.*
  - *Psalms 83:1 A Song or Psalm of A'-saph Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.*
8. Inappropriate silence can produce discontent or even depression.
- *Psalms 39:2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*
9. There will come a time when God will break His silence against sin and the evil that men do.
- *Psalms 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*
  - *Psalms 50:21 These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*
10. At times the Lord will give grace and help to speak.
- *Psalms 94:17 Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*
11. The dead are said not to be able to praise the Lord.
- *Psalms 115:17 The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*
12. Wise is the person who knows the proper time to keep silent.
- *Ecclesiastes 3:7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*
13. National disasters produce periods of silence.
- *Isaiah 15:1 The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;*
14. When the Lord is ready to make His case against a nation, the people should engage in reverential silence and listen.

- *Isaiah 41:1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.*

15. The prophets of God are not to keep silent but to warn the people of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.

- *Isaiah 62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,*

16. In holy anger, God will judge that which has been written in plain sight before Him. He will not keep silent.

- *Isaiah 65:6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,*

***Special Note.***

“The sins of sinners, and particularly the vainglorious boasts and scorns of hypocrites, are *laid up in store* with God, Deuteronomy 32:34. And what is written shall be read and proceeded upon: *“I will not keep silence always, though I may keep silence long.”*

They shall not think him altogether such a one as themselves, as sometimes they have done; but *he will recompense, even recompense into their bosom*. Those basely abuse religion, that honourable and sacred thing, who make their profession of it the matter of their pride, and the jealous God will reckon with them for it; the profession they boast of shall but serve to aggravate their condemnation.

[1.] The *iniquity of their fathers* shall come against them; not but that their own sin deserved whatever judgments God brought upon them, and much heavier; and this they owned, Ezra 9:13. But God would not have wrought so great a desolation upon them if he had not therein had an eye to the sins of their fathers.

Therefore in the last destruction of Jerusalem God is said to bring upon them the blood of the Old-Testament martyrs, even that of *Abel*, Matthew 23:35. God will reckon with them, not only for their fathers' idols, but for their *high places*, their *burning incense upon the mountains and the hills*, though perhaps it was to the true God only. This was blaspheming or reproaching God; it was a reflection upon the choice he had made of the place where he would record his name, and the promise he had made that there he would meet them and bless them.

[2.] Their own with that shall bring ruin upon them: *Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers* together, the one aggravating the other, constitute the former work, which, though it may seem to be overlooked and forgotten, shall be *measured into their bosom*. God will render into the bosom, not only of his open enemies (Psalms 79:12), but of his false and treacherous friends, *the reproach wherewith they have reproached him”* (Matthew Henry).

17. As a form of divine discipline the Lord will put His people into a place of silence.

- *Isaiah 8:14 Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord.*

18. Emotional duress and mourning will produce silence.

- *Lamentations 2:10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.*

19. When the Lord afflicts us, it is good to simply keep silent.

- *Lamentations 3:28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.*

“It is a sign of spiritual maturity “when we *sit alone and keep silence*, [and] do not run to and fro into all companies with our complaints, aggravating our calamities, and quarrelling with the disposals of Providence concerning us, but retire into privacy, that we may *in a day of adversity consider, sit alone*, that we may converse with God and *commune with our own hearts*, silencing all discontented distrustful thoughts, and laying our hand upon our mouth, as Aaron, who, under a very severe trial, held his peace. We must keep silence under the yoke as those that have borne it upon us, not willfully pulled it upon our own necks, but patiently submitted to it when God laid it upon us” (Matthew Henry).

20. It is prudent to keep silent.

- *Amos 5:13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*

21. When the Temple or house of worship is desecrated, people will not find it a place of worship but silence.

- *Amos 8:3 And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.*

22. Worship is a time for silence in order to mediate and concentrate on the Lord.

- *Habakkuk 2:20 But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*
- *Zechariah 2:13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.*

23. Those who oppose Christ and the gospel should be put to silence.

- *Matthew 22:34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.*

24. Silence is needed to learn and to listen respectfully to the gospel.

- *Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.*
- *Acts 21:40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*
- *1 Timothy 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

25. Men of great learning earn a respectful listening in silence.

- *Acts 22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)*

26. Spiritual gifts are not to be abused when the church comes together for worship. It is better for there to be silence than for a spiritual gift be exploited for personal pleasure or show.

- *1 Corinthians 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*

27. Women who disturb the worship service are to be singled out and commanded to be silent.

- *1 Corinthians 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

28. A woman is not to usurp authority over a man in the church but to be in humble silence.

- *1 Timothy 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

“According to Paul, women must be learners, and are not allowed to be public teachers in the church; for teaching is an office of authority, and the woman must not usurp authority over the man, but is to be in silence. But, notwithstanding this prohibition, good women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of religion.

Timothy from a child had known the Holy Scriptures; and who should teach him but his mother and grandmother? 2 Timothy 3:15. Aquila and his wife Priscilla expounded unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly; but then they did it privately, for they took him unto them, Acts 18:26” (Matthew Henry).

29. A holy life can silence the criticism of foolish men.

- *1 Peter 2:15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

30. A glimpse of glory and the Majesty on High will silence the soul.

- *Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*

31. The honest testimony of the wicked is silence knowing their judgment is just.

- *1 Samuel 2:9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.*

“When reduced to misery, they [they wicked] will see in their degradation a punishment of their misdeeds, and in silent submission own the justice of the divine dispensation” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary).

32. Those that are in distress cannot keep silent but will call upon the Lord in the daytime and in the night season.

- *Psalms 22:2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

33. If the Lord remains silent then the soul might as well be dead and in the pit or grave.

- *Psalms 28:1 A Psalm of David. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*

34. There is a time to be silent and there is a time not to be silent but to sing praise to the Lord.

- *Psalms 30:12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

35. Let the wicked be silent and be placed in the grave.

- *Psalms 31:17 Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*

- *Isaiah 47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.*