

MEDITATION, SILENCE & SOLITUDE

Sunday, July 27, 2025

Meditation, Silence, and Solitude

Why I chose this topic to preach on....so we could sit here in silence for 20 minutes?

Real reason was because I stink at it and figured I could preach to myself as well.

My nickname was Itchy Richie. We live in a world that rarely stops talking. From the moment we wake up, we're surrounded by sound, alarm clocks, morning news, traffic, conversations, emails, text notifications, background music, and more. Silence for many of us, feels unnatural, even threatening. But as followers of Christ, we are called to be still. To seek solitude. To quiet our souls.

In John Ortberg's book "The Life you Always Wanted, he wrote:

Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. Hurry can destroy our souls. Hurry can keep us from living well....For many of us the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it.....Hurry is not just a disordered schedule. Hurry is a disordered heart".

But Psalm 46:10 calls us to "Be still and know that I am God".

This is not just a gentle suggestion; it is a divine command. It invites us into something counterculture – something we should value; reverence, reflection and transformation thru the Word and presence of God. Many of you are retired, so maybe not so busy. – (ask crowd if they feel hurried)

When I'm at work running around like a chicken with my head cut off, I try to remember what it was like when my dad worked. No email, no cell phones, no faxes.

So how do we practice "Being still"? Meditation, Silence, and Solitude

Meditation:

In contrast to secular forms of meditation that aim to empty the mind, Christian meditation is about Filling the mind with the truth of God's Word. Meditation in the Christian context involves

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prayerfully dwelling on Scripture. It is allowing the Word to penetrate the heart and mind, allowing its truths to be considered, and allowing the Lord to speak to the heart through it. The purpose of meditation is to be shaped by the Word of God and your relationship with God. Meditation deepens your relationship with God as you make time to prayerfully consider his word.

Joshua 1:8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips: meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Psalms 1:1-3 1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruits in season and whose leaf does not wither –whatever they do prospers.

Phil 4:8-9 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Many times, we have situations in our lives that need a scripture verse to rest on that gets us thru difficult times.

Do you ever play that game with God where you need an answer for something and you let the Bible open randomly, thinking God will direct you to the scripture you need to hear that day? When I am at work, all stressed out and the boss is being “unreasonable, I like to meditate on this verse

Colossians 3:23 - Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.

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I'm sure many of you have favorite verses that remind you of how we should act, treat our enemies, or remind us of his grace and love.

Meditation on Scripture renews us. It reorients our priorities. It centers us on Christ. It teaches us to pray in alignment with God's will, not just our own desires.

Meditating on His Word reminds us of real truth and His covenant with us as followers.

How to Meditate:

- Pick a scripture to ponder
- Find a quiet place
- Prayerfully repeat the Scripture
- Slow down and consider the meaning
- What did the Lord say to you?

Benefits of meditation:

- Allows the Word of God to sink into your heart
- Challenges any false beliefs with the truth of God's Word
- Plants the seeds of God's Word in the soul, waters them, and causes you to bear fruit and prosper
- Replaces toxicity with the goodness of God
- Brings peace, causes you to slow down
- Can help you through challenging relationship situations
- And more.....

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Silence:

Hebrew word is Dumiyyah – meaning a quiet state of waiting or repose.

Definition:

Silence is about not talking so that we can instead listen to God's speech to us. The discipline of silence is more than refraining from speaking or making noises – it is the discipline of listening and reflecting on God's voice.

Point: Without listening to God or reflecting on those things He is saying to us, merely not talking is of little value.

Silence is not passive. It is an active surrender. Silence is the space where we stop trying to manage God and start letting God shape us.

“There is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. Crowds or the lack of them have little to do with this inward attentiveness...If we possess inward solitude we will not fear being alone, for we know that we are not alone. Neither do we fear being with others, for they do not control us. In the midst of noise and confusion, we are settled into a deep inner silence”

(Foster, 1978)

Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God.

Habakkuk 2:20.....let all the earth keep silence before him (silence for reverence)

Isaiah 30:15 In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.

In the silence we sometimes have those conversations with God about why something is happening to us or what we should do in a particular situation. Listen for His Word and it may be through his Word.

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Solitude:

In the book “Invitation to Solitude and Silence” Dallas Willard wrote:

“In solitude, we purposefully abstain from interaction with other human beings.....Solitude frees us, actually. This above all explains its primacy and priority among the disciplines. The normal course of day-to-day human interactions locks us into patterns of feeling, thought, and action that are geared to a world set against God. Nothing but solitude can allow the development of a freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God’s order”. (Willard, 1988)

Solitude (freedom from distractions to facilitate a meditative mind) can be both a state of mind and a physical space.

Solitude is about rest – physical, spiritual, emotional

Jesus often went to solitary places to pray –

Matt. 14:23 – “After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself and prayed.”

Mark 1:35 – “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Luke 5:16 – “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”

In Mark 6:31 “And he said to them – come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest for a while.”

Psalms 62:1 “My soul waits in silence for God only. From him is my salvation.”

Solitude can cause feelings of loneliness, but if we seek God, He will be there with us.

Joshua 1:5 “... I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

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Enemies of Meditation, Silence and Solitude:

Always in a Hurry/ No time

Too busy

Sleepy

Racing Mind (unable to tolerate silence or not always doing something)

Unbelief – Don't think it will actually do anything or don't believe you can hear God speak.

CALL TO PRACTICE: – all of these are active, not passive

Today, I invite you to reclaim silence – not just as a break from the world, but as a meeting place with God.

Create moments of silence in your week. Open your Bible. Meditate on a single verse. Don't rush. Sit with it. Let it speak. Let the Spirit move. (highlight and read notes)

We are shaped not only by what we say, but by what we are willing to hear in the stillness.