“Too Much Talk; Not Enough Quiet”

I Thessalonians 4:9-18

July 24, 2016

In 2012 a book went on the market titled “Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking.” It was written by Susan Cain, a Harvard-trained, Wall Street lawyer.

It’s a book on introverts and extroverts. In essence, she says that the western world has moved from a culture of character to a culture of personality. It exalts and promotes talkers. And, although society is made up of huge numbers of quiet people, quietness usually takes a back seat to noise.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Too Much Talk; Not Enough Quiet.” Shall we pray?

Please open your Bible with me to the Book of I Thessalonians.

In the Book of Lamentations we read this. Lamentations 3:26 *“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”*

And from Job we read Job 34:29 *“When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”*

And the Prophet Isaiah puts it this way. Isaiah 32:17 *“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. (18) And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;...”*

If there is one thing worth your time and effort seeking for, it’s quiet. Have you thought lately on this? How much of your life is made up of activity and/or frenzy and how much of it is peace and quiet? Which, from all you know from Scripture, fall more in line with the will of God for you?

Well, here's a word of encouragement for you. Psalm 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”*

Who makes time any more to be still and know that He is God?

In Psalm 4:4 we read. Psalm 4:4 *“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.”*

And the LORD preached this to the Prophet Jeremiah Jeremiah 47:6 *“... rest, and be still.”*

Well, I’ve begun with some OT passages on this subject. Now go with me to a NT passage, I Thessalonians chapter 4. And I’d like to read with your I Thessalonians 4:11.

I Thessalonians 4:11 *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; (12) That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”*

Let’s see what God would have us to do in light of these two verses for today and for this week.

But here’s how I’d like to proceed today. I’d like to begin with the last eight words of verse twelve.

First, we’ll consider the result. That’s verse twelve. Here it is; *“that ye may have lack of nothing.”*

Here’s one of those very large promises of God. And His promise must be His goal for you and me. Can you see that His goal for your life includes being quiet and working with your own hands?

He wants you to live so that you have quote *“lack of nothing.”* This certainly spells out God's desire for us, doesn't it?

But, as you can easily see, there is a human side to this promise of God as well. And that is verse eleven, being quiet and working with your hands.

There is not one person here who doesn’t want to have all that he needs. And, no doubt, you know the words of Philippians 4:19 which says this. Philippians 4:19 *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

Now, as you know, *He* is your Supply. *He’s* the One Who takes on the responsibility to see that you have all you need. But, as is true with many of God’s promises, along with His promise comes your personal responsibility.

First, then, the result; that you may have lack of nothing.

Second, the character trait of honesty.

Verse twelve again. I Thessalonians 4:12 *“That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”*

Folks, whenever you do something honestly, you do it this way - “with honor.” That’s what this term “honestly" means. There's always honor in honesty. And your walk is simply the way you live your life.

That’s what this term “honestly” means here. It’s a matter of your character. Honesty is a character quality. Do you think God intends on supplying all of your needs so that you lack nothing when you choose the road of dishonesty and dishonor? Imagine for just a moment if He did.

You see, *your* honesty and *His* supply go hand in hand. And so, as God supplies all your need while your character is reflecting honesty, He advances His glory through you.

Yes, He's promised to supply every single need. But here's the “how” part. You are called to live an honest life. That's the way it works.

This is how Paul puts it when he wrote to the Roman Christians. Romans 12:17 *“Recompense [pay back] to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”*

Romans 13:13 *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day;...”* implying that what you do must be done in the day light so it can be seen by others.

And here’s Paul’s word to the Hebrew Christians. Hebrews 13:18 *“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.”*

God’s clear goal for you and I is that we need of nothing. Yet, who here looks at his character when it comes to “how” you do your work? Are you aware of your own honesty or dishonesty?

And Who is it that sees it all? It's the LORD Himself.

Folks, everyone here needs to address his own character issues. Without that, you will not grow up in the LORD. So, don’t wait for the law to correct it for you. Don’t wait for the LORD to convict you of your sin of dishonesty. Instead, see yourself as you truly are. And go to Him in confession and find His forgiveness. Then, deal sincerely with your character every day after.

If you don’t, don’t expect God to compensate you for your refusal. He won't. Think about it like this. Would you worship a God Who blesses you and supplies all your needs when you've been dishonest?

Here’s how He works. He shows you where you are wrong and then He directs you in your spirit to go His way. Then, as you go His way, He fulfills His every promise He makes to you. Period.

So, who here wants to live a “lack nothing” life? Who here is praying *“LORD, please supply all my needs”*? Who here is praying *“LORD, enable me to be honest in all my dealings with people*”?

If you’ll pray this prayer, do you really think God won’t answer it? That's the way it works with Him and with you. It’s a matter of your character and it’s a matter of your conscience.

Character and your personal intention are being molded by the Holy Spirit. And, as He molds the character, He is forming the basis for your “having lack of nothing.” It gives the LORD the joy of being able to completely fulfill His promise to you.

First, the result; that you may have lack of nothing.

Second, your responsibility to see that you adjust your character accordingly.

Now third, what is the LORD calling you to?

Paul gives, by the Spirit, three commands. Here they are: Study to be quiet, do your own business, and work with your own hands. Here’s verse eleven. I Thessalonians 4:11 *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;…”*

Now, did you notice that Paul didn’t say what I said in my sermon title? I said “Too Much Talk; Not Enough Quiet.” He puts it this way. “Study to be quiet.”

This term “study” means simply “strive for.” Here’s how this same word is translated in Romans 15:20. Romans 15:20 *“Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:...”* Obviously God knows it takes effort for us to be quiet.

The famous 17th Century mathematician “Blaise Pascal” wrote this *“All of man’s problems could be solved if he could learn to sit alone with himself in a room for an hour.”*

In other words, it's good to learn to be quiet. It’s got far more benefits than being noisy. And the benefits are both emotional and physical as well as spiritual ones. Let me name just a few.

First, being quiet renews your confidence. Isaiah 30:15 *“For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: ...”*

You see, when quietness combined with confidence generates strength. Who wouldn’t want a renewal of strength each day?

Second, it gets you into a listening mode.

Someone has wisely said this about quiet. *“With all the noise in some Churches, it’s a wonder anyone can hear from God.”* (C. S. Lewis).

Do you remember the still, small voice heard by the Prophet Elijah? Please turn with me to the Book of I Kings at chapter nineteen.

Here’s what Elijah, that great prophet of God experienced. I Kings 19:9 *“And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, what doest thou here, Elijah? (10) And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword;*

*and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (11) And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind:*

*and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: (12) And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”*

Elijah must have lived a very noisy, public life. Yet, he now watched the tremendous power of God in the “great and strong wind,” in an earthquake, and in a Heaven sent fire. Yet, it wasn’t in those things that Elijah heard the voice of the LORD. It was when he became quiet that he began to listen for God’s still, small voice that he began to hear it.

Your daily world; your daily life is so hectic, so full, and so oriented to noise that it’s dissatisfying to your soul. Maybe you’re one of those who have truly lost your way when it comes to listening to God. If you have any interest in quiet-ness, let it be that you want to listen for the voice of LORD. His voice is often quite still and quite small. So, strive to be quiet for at least this reason.

First, quietness renews your confidence.

Second, you enter a listening mode.

Third, along with being quiet comes renewed peace. Here’s Isaiah again. Isaiah 32:17 says this *“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”*

Now, how? How can you strive to be quiet? Here it is in a nutshell. When you have the urge to talk, check your spirit and hold your tongue. Say less and listen more. That, folks, takes effort. But if you commit to a quiet heart, you may find that you have less to say.

The second thing Paul advocates is that you *“do your own business.”* I Thessalonians 4:11 *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;...”*

“*Do your own business.”* It means to take care of your own affairs while at the same time, not meddling in the affairs of others. You've got enough to do each day of your life than to think you've got to interfere in someone else's.

When Paul speaks about doing your own business here, he's talking about exercising some ambition and carrying out your work so that you accomplish something each day of your life.

What makes you want to pry into the lives of other people especially when you've got a whole life of your own to live?

Each of you has a place of service in the LORD's kingdom. And you have a gift for service in the Church, in your home, and on your job. The LORD has called you to serve others with those abilities He has given you. So, what-ever your responsibilities are, learn to be competent in them and don't interfere into the lives of others without very good reason.

First, study to be quiet.

Second, do your own business.

Third, work with your own hands. I Thessalonians 4:11 *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;...”*

God has wisely given you the ability to use your hands for a huge variety of jobs. God has also given you the drive to accomplish something each day. So, use your hands to do just that.

Paul's referring here to manual labor. As you know, Jesus was a carpenter. He had the ability to design, to plan a project to cut and carve, to nail, to complete a project -- all with His hands.

Here's what we read from the Gospel of Mark about Jesus and His using His hands. Mark 6:1 *“And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. (2) And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things?*

*and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”*

Apparently those who first heard Jesus teach preferred that He stay in His carpenter shop and stop using His hands to heal others. They would rather He made furniture than to perform miracles.

Now I realize this next passage is a word to all former thieves. But look at the words of Paul to the Ephesians. Ephesians 4:28 *“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”*

Folks, it’s really an honor to be able to work with your hands. Think, for just a moment, what your life would be like if you had just one arm. Wouldn’t you be wishing that you had two? Well, God *has* given you two. So, use your hands to work hard each day because it’s God’s will that you do so.

Ladies, don’t you use your hands every day for every single thing you do around your house; everything from cleaning to cooking? Everything at your job requires you to use your hands.

And men, is there anything you do that eliminates your hands? Is there anyone here who doesn’t use their hands for their own livelihood?

The LORD has given each of us the means by which He can be glorified. Part of that means is the ability to use your hands for manual labor.

So, the message of I Thessalonians 4:11-12 is very practical, isn’t it?

On, strive to be quiet.

Two, do your own business.

Three, work with your hands.

And four, adjust your character to one of honesty.

And the result? You will have lack of nothing.

I Thessalonians 4:11 *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; (12) That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”*

Now, can you see just how practical the LORD is when it comes to living the Christian life?

Now, let me add this. You can apply this passage to your own life if you are not a Christian. But why? Why not let the LORD have charge of your entire life? Why would you take just a few teachings from the Bible and leave out the most important one?

Here’s a very important question. *“If you died today, are you certain that you would enter the Gates of Heaven?”* Either you are relying on the work of Jesus on the Cross of your eternal security or you are relying on your good efforts to get in? Which is it?

What would hinder you from turning to Jesus Christ and receiving His free gift of eternal security?

The Bible is plain about this. Today is the day of Salva-tion. What will you do about the condition of your heart for eternity

Here's what we find in the Scripture about coming to Him for salvation.

* REPENT
* BELIEVE

Here’s a simple salvation prayer for you to pray if you’ve never trusted the LORD for His free gift of eternal life.

*“‬LORD,*

The moment you repent and believe on Jesus Christ, you are declared righteous in God’s sight and you truly enter into a love relationship with God for eternity. And you are saved by that love for eternity. There's no turning back once you've repented and received God's love into your heart.

Then, once you’ve prayed the sinner’s prayer, then your Bible will be just that “your” Bible; “your” manual on how to walk with God.

If you’ve trusted in Jesus Christ today, please speak up and let someone know about it. It’s worth everything to know Him. “‬Nothing is more important than knowing and believing the Truth.”

Shall we pray?