

JUNE 2018

CELEBRATING
30 Years

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted
among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*

Psalm 46:10

HEARING GOD IN THE SILENCE

A devotional from



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES

TODAY WITH GREG THORNTON

Interim President of Moody Global Ministries

Listening for God in a Noisy World



If you've ever vacationed at a remote location far from city lights and traffic sounds, you may have been struck by the silence.

Staring up at the vast sky, seeing the brilliance of the stars and moon shining above, you sense the beauty of God's creation. In the silence, you hear the wind whistling through the trees or the waves lapping at the shore. And sometimes, if it is very still, you can even hear the sound of your own heart.

In our modern age, silence is rare. Even now, in my Chicago office, I can hear the traffic below with cabs honking and the occasional scream of sirens. But when I do have the opportunity to get away and experience quiet, it is easy to feel close to my Creator. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

Did you know that the word *noise* is derived from the Latin word *nausea*? Apparently, it related to the moaning sounds seasick passengers would make while traveling long distances on ancient vessels. But even though modern life forces us to accommodate noise, we need a place in our Christian walk to be silent. Sometimes we

concentrate on the words we will say to God in prayer, and we can also come before God in silence. As the psalmist describes, "My soul, wait in silence for God only. For my hope is from Him (Ps. 62:5, NASB).

By being silent, we can more clearly listen for God's voice. I think of young Samuel, startled in the night when he heard God's voice call his name. Unnerved, the young boy sought advice from the priest Eli. What should he do when he heard God call again?

"Eli told Samuel, 'Go lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' So Samuel went and lay down in his place" (1 Sam. 3:9). As Samuel lay there in the silence, he did hear God speak again. This time Samuel was ready: "Speak, for your servant is listening" (v. 10).

We can be tempted to fill our Christian journey with words and noise, and there's a time when we should speak and praise and make a joyful noise. But we must also carve out time to be still and listen for God's voice. As we spend time in the Word this month, we can devote some moments to silence. Allow God to speak to your heart and be prepared to hear the message He has for you! ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

God's Silent Witness

One of the first things we learn about God in the book of Genesis is that He is not silent.

According to Genesis 1, God spoke and creation came into existence.

God also speaks through what He has created. The heavens “declare” God’s glory and the skies “proclaim” the work of His hands (Ps. 19:1). The beauty of the heavens recounts God’s glory by putting His handiwork on display.

This witness has two important features. First, it is conspicuous. The Hebrew word translated as *proclaim* in Psalm 19:1 means to reveal something or make it plain. The second feature of this divine witness is that it is universal. God’s self-testimony continues day after day and night after night, even though no audible voice is heard. “They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them,” the psalmist says. “Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” (Ps. 19:3–4). The fact that God’s self-testimony is expressed nonverbally through what He has made means that language is no barrier to its message. It is readily accessible to everyone.

Because of this, all people are without excuse when it comes to God. What can be known about God has been made plain through what has been

made (Rom. 1:19). Yet the witness of creation is not enough. God’s testimony of Himself cannot be avoided, but it can be ignored.

As a result of our fallen nature, humanity’s default response to the testimony of creation is to stifle its message. We are inclined to suppress and distort what creation teaches us about God (Rom. 1:18, 22–23). This means that creation can be a kind of primer but it can never serve as the final text about God.

Fortunately, God has also given us another, clearer testimony about Himself. The psalmist describes this explicit witness in Psalm 19:7–9: the testimony of God’s written word. God’s law, statutes, precepts, commands, and decrees will not change our thinking automatically—to truly understand God, we must also know Jesus Christ, who is God’s final word about Himself (Heb. 1:1–3; John 1:1–4). He opens our eyes and changes our hearts by His Spirit. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more, read *General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues* by Bruce Demarest (Zondervan).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Jamie Janosz

Take Moody Radio with You!

Alexa, play Moody Radio! With today's technology, it is easier than ever before to listen to Moody Radio. In fact, more than one million listeners in as many as 195 countries listen to Moody Radio on a regular basis. Here are a few convenient ways you can listen:

Mobile

Now you can take Moody Radio with you wherever you go by downloading the Moody Radio app to your iPhone, iPad, or Android device.

Listen to your local Moody Radio station for the latest news, weather, and programming. You can also listen live or on-demand to the Moody Radio programs you don't want to miss, such as *In the Market with Janet Parshall*, *Equipped with Chris Brooks*, *Chris Fabry Live*, and *Moody Presents* without downloading or syncing.

You can find a full list of Moody Radio stations, and also view a weekly program schedule to see when your favorite program will air on any Moody Radio station around the country.

Looking for an uplifting soundtrack or message? Try streaming any of Moody Radio's internet stations, including *The Praise & Worship Channel*, *Majesty Radio*, *Urban Praise*, and *Proclaim*.

CD/MP3 (Moody Audio)

Experience Moody Radio's archive of compelling content including current programs like *In the Market with Janet Parshall*, *Equipped with Chris Brooks*, *Chris Fabry Live*, and *Moody Presents*, as well as programs now off the air such as *Radio School of the Bible*. All of these can be purchased on a CD or as a digital MP3 download from MoodyAudio.com.

Online (Player)

The Moody Radio player provides a convenient way to listen to Moody Radio on any computer, smartphone, tablet, and more! You can listen live or on-demand to the Moody Radio programs you don't want to miss without downloading or syncing.

iTunes and Podcasts

You can even subscribe to your favorite Moody Radio programs so you can keep up on every new episode we release. You can do this with iTunes on your computer or the Podcasts app on your iPhone. You can also use the podcast feeds of your favorite Moody Radio programs in your favorite podcasting app to keep up!

For more details and information on how to listen and how to download links, visit moodyradio.org. ■

MANAGING EDITOR

Heather Moffitt

SENIOR EDITOR

Elena Mafter

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jamie Janosz

John Koessler

WRITER

Brad Baurain

ART DIRECTOR

Lynn Gabalec

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Larry Bohlin, Rachel Hutcheson

MARKETING & PRODUCTION

Paul B. Currie

MOODY GLOBAL MINISTRIES

INTERIM PRESIDENT

Greg Thornton

INTERIM PROVOST

John Jelinek

INTERIM CHIEF OPERATING

OFFICER

Mark Wagner

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Ken Heulitt

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Samuel Choy

VICE PRESIDENTS

Tim Arens

Larry Davidhizar

Jim Elliott

Bruce Everhart

Collin G. Lambert

Frank W. Leber Jr.

Bryan O'Neal

Paul Santhouse

James Spencer

Janet Stiven

Anthony Turner

Debbie Zelinski

TRUSTEES

Christopher Denison

Orbelina Eguizabal

T. Randall Fairfax (Chairman)

Thomas S. Fortson

Manuel Gutierrez

Jerry B. Jenkins

Paul Johnson (Emeritus)

James Meeks

David Schipper

Julianna Slattery

Mark Wagner

Richard E. Warren

Richard Yook

TODAY IN THE WORD™

Hearing God in the Silence

Paul Simon's song "Hurricane Eye" from his 2000 album *You're the One* combines metaphors, contemplation of life's mysteries, and even some practical advice. One piece of advice is offered to an aspiring writer: "You want to be a writer / but you don't know how or when / Find a quiet place / use a humble pen." This is also good advice for our Bible study with *Today in the Word* this month.

Let us quieten both the outside noise and our inner monologue, and with a humble spirit and inner silence let's learn about silence in Scripture and how to hear God. As we read from different books of the Bible, we'll look at human and divine silence, the silence of waiting and of self-control, of grief and empathy, fear and faith. We'll consider the importance of persevering in prayer until the end, "till [the Lord] establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth" (Isa. 62:7). And most important, we'll learn about hearing God even when He is silent.

We pray this month's study will help you hear the "still, small voice" of the Lord in the hurricane that our lives often resemble. May we have ears to hear our God who is worthy of our undivided love and faithfulness. Thank you for studying with us and for your support of this ministry! ■

Moody Global Ministries is the sole publisher of *Today in the Word*, copyright © 2018 by Moody Global Ministries. All rights reserved. Please direct all *Today in the Word* inquiries to Donor Resource Management, 820 N. LaSalle Blvd., Chicago, IL 60610. Scripture taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV®, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Printed in the U.S.A. *Today in the Word* is published monthly. Printed on 30% recycled paper.

FRIDAY
JUNE

1

A time to be silent and a time to speak.

Ecclesiastes 3:7

Introduction: A Time for Silence

One Square Inch of Silence is a research project in Olympia National Park in Washington State. It's a small red stone on top of a moss-covered log three miles down a hiking trail, at a spot identified as "the quietest place in the United States." The purpose is to highlight differences between human noise and natural sounds, including the effects of noise and silence on the environment.

Silence is hard to come by in the modern world. We're relentlessly surrounded by cell-phones, piped-in music, engine noises, and multimedia clamoring. Yet as Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens," which certainly includes "a time to be silent" (vv. 1, 7).

The *Moody Bible Commentary* notes that the items on the list in this passage are *merisms*, "a literary device

highlighting the totality of something by indicating its two extremes and everything in between." To say there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak" captures the complexity of life and the necessity of wisdom. Sometimes the right thing to do is to speak, but sometimes the right thing to do is the opposite—to be silent. Wisdom is knowing which is which, the right thing at the right place at the right time. Wisdom comes from God, the One who sees the big picture and the One who has ordained all seasons (Prov. 9:10).

Our topic this month is silence, both its positive and negative aspects. We'll explore this biblical theme in ways that contribute to our spiritual growth and knowledge of God. In a world awash in words and noise and a culture that often sees silence as unproductive or troubling, we'll see what Scripture teaches about human and divine silence.

APPLY THE WORD

As you begin this study, pray for God's blessing, especially the blessing of learning what He would have you learn. Sometimes we've already made up our minds and only look to Scripture to confirm what we already think we know. But through His Word God might want to teach us something new or surprising this month. Are we ready?

PRAY WITH US

William Bielawski and Erik Hultquist oversee the operation of Moody's Facilities Maintenance department that takes care of our campus on a daily basis. They ask for your prayers for the team and for their service to the Moody community.

*The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him.*

Habakkuk 2:20

SATURDAY
JUNE

2

Human Silence: Let All the Earth Be Silent

According to Ross W. Muir in *Canadian Mennonite*: “Silence was a part of biblical worship and was held in high esteem by the early church. . . . Silence needs desperately to be recovered in our worship services if the words that are spoken and sung are to have any depth or ring of truth to them, in the same way that lament needs to be recovered in order to make our praises more honest and less hollow.”

Today’s verse and especially the phrase “Let all the earth be silent before him” is often used in calls to worship (v. 20). But what exactly does it mean? Here the silence that is called for indicates finality. God’s presence is the absolute reality, the bottom line of everything that exists—as opposed to the fakeness and unreality of idols (vv. 18–19). Given the fact that “the LORD is in his holy temple,” nothing else needs to be said. Silence is the best, most reverent, most worshipful

response. As one translation renders it, “The whole earth is speechless in his presence!”

If words are needed, God will speak them! When “the LORD is in his holy temple,” a time of judgment has arrived (Ps. 11:4–7; cf. Zech. 2:13). Justice will be done; righteousness will have the victory. Zephaniah, too, invited his listeners: “Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near” (Zeph. 1:7). To recover silence in worship, then, is to focus on the Lord’s justice, righteousness, judgment, and sovereignty. We are to bear witness, hope in, submit to, and worship these attributes and actions of God.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,” the hymn says. “Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”

APPLY THE WORD

One day, Habakkuk 2:14 tells us, “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD.” That day is the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Until then, we watch, worship, and pray, “Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus.” Let that be the prayer of our hearts today, as we wait in godly silence before His awesome presence.

PRAY WITH US

As we continue to pray for the Facilities team, please add to your list Nathan Detwiler and Ryan Yoder in Exterior Maintenance. Ask for God’s grace and protection as they work on landscaping in all seasons and every weather in Chicago.

*This is what the LORD spoke . . .
“In the sight of all the people I will
be honored.” Aaron remained silent.*

Leviticus 10:3

Human Silence: Aaron and the Silence of Guilt

Computer scientists recently used new techniques to read a 1,500-year-old text known as the Ein Gedi scroll. Because it had been badly burned, archaeologists had been afraid to open it lest it crumble into dust. So researchers at the University of Kentucky used X-ray scan data and special software to digitally “unwind” the scroll—and read the first verse of Leviticus, “The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him.”

The book of Leviticus sets forth God’s Law, His instructions to the nation of Israel. The main purpose of these instructions was to ensure that God’s people could be in a relationship with Him and that God was shown proper respect. The consequences of failing to do so were serious and often deadly. That’s what happened in today’s reading (vv. 1–2). Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu offered “unauthorized fire” at the altar of the Lord. Immediately the fire of God consumed them. Not even

priests—especially not priests!—could get away with disregarding God’s instructions and dishonoring His name (v. 3).

Aaron’s silence in this episode was an acknowledgment of guilt. His sons’ motives are unknown to us—drunkenness may have been involved (see the warning in v. 9)—but no reason or rationalization could justify their disobedience. For Aaron to keep his mouth shut was the only appropriate response to Moses’ rebuke.

Furthermore, by staying on duty at their priestly posts while the bodies were disposed of, Aaron and his remaining sons demonstrated that God took precedence over mourning for family (vv. 4–7). This might seem harsh, but it was necessary and proper to show the Israelites the absolute importance of obeying God and worshipping Him rightly.

APPLY THE WORD

When we count the cost of discipleship, following Christ is more important than family responsibilities and relationships. Skipping church during sports season to attend the kids’ games, lying to cover-up a relative’s wrongdoing, or taking lavish vacations while refusing to give financially to support the Lord’s work all turn family into idolatry (Luke 14:26).

PRAY WITH US

Again, our prayers go to God for the staff of Facilities Maintenance: Carl Bjerga, John Addison, Joshua Burkhardt, and Matthew Morris. May God bless their work of repair, replacement, and preventative maintenance of MBI’s equipment and facilities.

*How long will you waver between two opinions?
If the LORD is God, follow him.*

1 Kings 18:21

Human Silence: Israel and the Silence of Unbelief

In Walker Percy's novel *The Second Coming*, a depressed character named Will Barrett decides to put God's existence to the test. Is He really there or not? Will enters a cave and resolves not to come out unless God gives him a sign. If not, he will die. Rather humorously, during this experiment Will gets a toothache, can't stand the pain, and escapes from the cave. Was that God's answer?

In today's reading, the Israelites also put God to the test. Their silence during the confrontation on Mount Carmel was the silence of doubt or unbelief. When Elijah asked the people, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him," this was their chance to declare their faith in their covenant-keeping God. Elijah was in fact sarcastically urging them to do so, because the Hebrew verb translated as "waver" can also mean

"hesitate" or "limp" or even "dance" (v. 26). The idea is that the people were hobbling between two irreconcilable beliefs. No matter how fancy their dancing, they could not choose both God and an idol.

Nonetheless, the Israelites said nothing (v. 21). They refused to choose, though they agreed to the challenge (v. 24). They stood by silently during the hours of frenzied pagan rituals carried out by the priests of Baal. Baal, of course, kept silent as well. Even as he taunted the idol's priests, Elijah's heart must have been breaking over his people's continued silence. As he rebuilt the altar and prayed, they still had nothing to say (v. 37).

Only after the fire of the Lord conclusively ended the challenge did the Israelites finally make their choice: "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!" (v. 39).

APPLY THE WORD

The prayers of the priests of Baal were frantic and long-winded; Elijah's was simple and heartfelt. Jesus instructed us, "When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:7–8).

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion of our prayer time for the Facilities Maintenance team, would you uphold in prayer Paul Heggeland, Thomas Addison, and Vincent Camera? We appreciate their dedicated service as they make sure our campus looks neat and attractive.

TUESDAY
JUNE

5

*I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth.*

Job 40:4

Human Silence: Job and the Silence of Humility

When Isaiah received the call to be a prophet, He saw a vision of the Lord and responded, “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” God graciously sent an angel with a cleansing coal to touch Isaiah’s lips and consecrate them to ministry. Then and only then was he ready and able to respond, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isa. 6:1–8).

Job had a similar response to his vision of God. Prior to that experience, he had been vociferous in complaining, lamenting, arguing with his so-called friends, and calling for justice from the Lord. While he acknowledged God as sovereign, he had been demanding that God hear his case and explain the unjust suffering he had been enduring (Job 31:35–37). When God appeared in chapter 38, it was not to answer Job’s “summons” but to forcefully remind Job,

through a series of rhetorical questions, that His ways are higher.

Job made the only appropriate response—silence: “I put my hand over my mouth” (vv. 3–5). As with Isaiah, Job’s vision of God also led to a more accurate perception of himself in relation to God. Whereas before Job had known in his head that no one could win a debate with God (Job 9:2–3), now he finally understood in his heart his utter unworthiness to argue with God or call Him to account. The entire idea was presumptuous and ridiculous! God’s governance of the universe is perfect. Whereas before he had been eager to press his case, now Job declared, “I will say no more” (v. 5).

Choosing silence was for Job an act of humility and wisdom. When he finally did speak again, they were words of repentance (Job 42:1–6).

APPLY THE WORD

Today let’s examine our prayer attitudes. We can say anything to God, but do we say it in faith and humility? Do we truly listen and look for His answers? Or is prayer like reading a grocery list of things we want Him to do? To approach God’s throne of grace is a tremendous privilege (Heb. 4:16). Come humbly into His presence today!

PRAY WITH US

Greg Thornton, senior VP of Media, asks for your prayers on behalf of Moody’s leadership team. May they be guided by God’s will for Moody and may they follow the heart of God for His people in charting the course of Moody Global Ministries.

*I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother.*

Psalm 131:2

WEDNESDAY
JUNE

6

Human Silence: A Quiet Child in a Parent's Arms

Ruth Haley Barton wrote in *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*: “I believe silence is the most challenging, the most needed and the least experienced spiritual discipline among evangelical Christians today. It is much easier to talk about it and read about it than to actually become quiet. . . . We are starved for intimacy, to see and feel and know God in the very cells of our being. We are starved for rest, to know God beyond what we can do for him.”

Our psalm for today speaks to this need and desire. The silence at its core is, as seen in the simile of the “weaned child with its mother,” the silence of peacefulness, rest, and complete trust (v. 2). Interestingly, David here has “calmed and quieted” himself, indicating a conscious, self-disciplined choice. But it is the Parent who is the foundation for his faith and thus the actual source of his contentment.

Why specifically a “weaned child”? Because the relationship is not based on need fulfillment, as with an infant. The peace and satisfaction flow from presence and intimacy—a child snuggling close for the sake of closeness and the relationship itself. No wonder this is a “song of ascents,” that is, a psalm composed to be sung during the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and designed to prepare the heart for worship.

How did the psalmist make this choice? By seeking humility and letting God be God (v. 1). It is the nature of human pride to think we can master our own destinies, build a tower to heaven, and discover all the secrets of the universe. We don't like limits. But as we read yesterday, God alone governs creation. We must trust God to be God and put our hope in Him from now to eternity (v. 3).

APPLY THE WORD

No doubt the psalmist had questions to express to God. But in this psalm, he simply rested in Him, enjoying His presence. We need that as well. Don't go to Him today in a spirit of *What have you done for me lately?*, but in the peaceful, faith-filled spirit of “a weaned child with its mother.” Enjoy the richness and rest of your relationship with the Lord.

PRAY WITH US

Moody's undergraduate students are on summer break now. Today we'd like to invite you to uphold them in prayer—wherever they are—for a good rest, spiritual refreshment, and growth in commitment to God and His Word.

*LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent.
Do not be far from me, Lord.*

Psalm 35:22

Divine Silence? A Prayer for God Not to Be Silent

Moody professor John Koessler wrote about the silence of God in a recent blog post. We tend to interpret the silence as “proof of His absence,” “a sign of disinterest” or “disengagement.” “We worry that it means that God can’t hear us or even worse that He *won’t* hear us.” But we’re mistaken. “Silence often acts as God’s exclamation point, forcing us to focus on the situation at hand. Instead of speaking to us in words, God communicates through our circumstances.”

These are the dynamics underlying today’s reading. Now that we’ve considered some of the meanings of human silence in Scripture, the next section of this month’s study explores divine silence, and especially how we feel and respond when it seems that God is not listening or answering. Theologically, we know He is never absent, always listens, and always cares. But it doesn’t always feel that way!

In Psalm 35, David was in a difficult situation. His enemies were ravaging lions and he was their helpless victim (vv. 17, 19–21). He was praying for God to come to the rescue (vv. 23–26).

The lynchpin is verse 22: “Do not be silent. Do not be far from me, Lord.” To David, silence meant absence or passivity. From his perspective, it appeared that God was not interested in seeing justice done or defending his struggling worshiper. Thus, his primary prayer was a simple cry for God to show up and speak.

Without God’s help, David’s praises would be silenced. Notice his step of faith by giving praise to the Lord (vv. 18, 27–28) while simultaneously praying for Him not to be silent. Believing that God would respond, he chose not to remain silent but gave God the glory while the answer to his prayer was still pending.

APPLY THE WORD

David’s situation is not unusual for followers of Christ. Opposition might be a sign that we’re obeying Him. As Jesus warned His disciples: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. . . . Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (John 15:18–21).

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Larry Davidhizar, VP and dean of the faculty, requests your prayers for the ministry of Moody’s undergraduate school. Please pray that Moody education continue to have the Word of God as its foundation and the Holy Spirit its guide.

For if you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit.

Psalms 28:1

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Despair

Rodrigues, a seventeenth-century missionary in Japan in the novel *Silence* by Shusaku Endo, wrestled with the silence of God. Where was God, he wondered, when His church was suffering? Where was He when powerful and godless authorities exploited the poor and insulted His name? Where was He when new converts and young believers were tortured and martyred for their faith?

Despair is a natural feeling in response to the silence of God. As in Psalm 35 yesterday, Psalm 28 cries out to God not to be silent (v. 1). If the Rock turns a deaf ear, David feels he might as well be “like those who go down to the pit” (which is death)—or as it has been translated elsewhere, “I might as well give up and die.”

God’s silence is an absence not only of words but also of actions. So David prayed that the Lord would show

mercy and rescue him, as well as repay the hypocritical evildoers what they deserved (vv. 2–4). The main reason they have earned His punishment is their disregard for the Lord (v. 5).

The psalm then turns from despair to joy (vv. 6–9). This shift in David’s emotional journey is raw, heartfelt, anguished—and full of faith. The psalms are emotionally honest, but they never wallow in self-centeredness. Despite his feelings, David still knows God to be his strength, shield, and shepherd. Though He seems silent now, He is a God who hears, speaks, saves, and blesses, and He will be true to His character.

Anticipating this, the psalmist trusts and sings praises to God. In fact, he “leaps for joy” (v. 7)! His knowledge of God goes deeper than his present circumstances, and so the joy of faith overcomes the despair he feels from God’s momentary silence.

APPLY THE WORD

Like the psalmist, we can take our feelings—any feelings—to the Lord. He can handle them. But also like the psalmist, we should not wallow in self-centeredness or turn our emotions into an idol. We should express our feelings in faith. In the end, the arc of faith, however long it takes, leads to the joy of the Lord. He is our Rock!

PRAY WITH US

Please join us in prayer for our Communications faculty, asking the Father that everything our students learn from David Fetzer, Karyn Hecht, Kelli Worrall, and Matthew Moore carry the message of God’s goodness, love, and salvation—to change lives!

SATURDAY
JUNE

9

*O God, do not remain silent; do not turn
a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God.*

Psalms 83:1

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Abandonment

The Lovebox device and app is marketed to lonely people in need of encouragement. This device is a small Wi-Fi-connected box with a heart on the front. When the heart spins, it means someone has used the app to send an encouraging message or picture. The heart continues to spin until you lift the lid of the box and read the message or view the picture on the tiny screen inside—no doubt cheering you up!

Feeling discouraged, lonely, or abandoned is another natural emotion in response to the silence of God. To experience a situation in which God doesn't speak when we expect makes us feel as if He's distant and uncaring (v. 1). *The Message* paraphrase suggests it's as if God is giving His people the silent treatment. To feel Him as absent is surely the loneliest feeling in the world!

The poetic imagery here describes being hopelessly surrounded by one's

enemies (vv. 2–4). In contrast to God's silence, these foes are loud. The picture in verse 2 describes soldiers being mustered for battle. Words used by different translations to convey the noise include “growl,” “commotion,” and “uproar.” These enemies are doing everything they can to humiliate and destroy the nation of Israel. Since these are the people God cherishes, where is He? Some have suggested that the occasion for this psalm might be found in 2 Chronicles 20, when Moab, Ammon, and their allies invaded Judah in the days of King Jehoshaphat.

The psalmist prays for God to come to the rescue and win the victory (vv. 13–18). Though he feels abandoned, he knows God is faithful. These enemies need to learn that they cannot treat God's people this way with impunity. They need to learn that God is God!

APPLY THE WORD

God's voice often encourages us through our brothers and sisters in the church. One response today would be to send a fellow believer an encouraging note, text, or email about God's love. It might seem as if God is silent or has abandoned them, but He hasn't. There's absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love (Rom. 8:38–39).

PRAY WITH US

Today we continue to support in prayer our faculty in the Communications department—Robert Gustafson, Rosalie de Rosset, Angela Brown, Brian Kammerzelt, and Jill White—as they are getting ready for the next school year at Moody.

*Will you keep silent and
punish us beyond measure?*

Isaiah 64:12

SUNDAY
JUNE

10

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Being Punished

In centuries past, a “cage of shame” was used for public punishments in many European towns and villages. The offender—who was deemed guilty of anything from adultery to public drunkenness to gossip—was placed inside a large metal cage and put on display in the town square, often during market days or festivals. He or she would often be spit upon or even pelted with rocks and rotten vegetables by the crowds.

Divine silence can make us feel as if God is punishing or shaming us like this. In today’s reading, the relationship between God and His people seems broken. At first, the relationship was close and trusting (v. 8). He was the Father, and the Israelites were His children. He was the Potter, they were the clay (cf. Isa. 29:16; 45:9). When they sinned against Him, Isaiah prayed for forgiveness (v. 9). His anger was just, but surely He would forgive, look on

them again with favor, and restore the relationship.

Now the Promised Land has become a wasteland (v. 10). Solomon’s great temple has been burned to the ground. The people have been conquered and sent into exile. Will there be no end to God’s judgments? These events and feelings culminate in God’s silence as the most severe of all the punishments (v. 12). In light of all that had happened, would He really continue to hold out or withhold Himself? That is the real misery, the worst affliction, the most painful humiliation of all!

Isaiah’s faith and hope is revealed by the fact that all this is embedded in a prayer. He still cried out to the Lord. He did not believe that the relationship is over or that God will remain silent forever. God’s covenant with Israel is based not on Israel’s merit but on God’s faithful love (Isa. 65:1–3).

APPLY THE WORD

In Scripture and elsewhere, language and silence are often relational metaphors: *to speak* indicates a strong relationship, presence, and blessing, while *to be silent* indicates an impaired relationship, absence, and judgment. To explore more, visit the *Today in the Word* website, todayintheword.com, and check out the October 2012 study.

PRAY WITH US

Would you uphold in prayer the ministry of Samuel Choy, chief marketing officer? May the Lord guide him and help him to lead several marketing teams and communicate with effectiveness the vision for Moody Global Ministries to our donors.

MONDAY
JUNE

11

I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

Psalms 109:22

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Being Overwhelmed

Pastor Gregory Fryer has taken a tip from the *Peanuts* comic. Outside his church on the upper east side of New York City, every Tuesday morning he sets up a yellow booth like Lucy’s (“Psychiatric Help 5¢”) and offers prayers, Bible stories, and a listening ear for a nickel. He even has a plate of nickels available, just in case.

When we pray and it seems God is not listening, we can feel overwhelmed. At the start of Psalm 109, David was drowning in troubles (vv. 1–5). His response as a “man of prayer” was to call out to the Lord not to remain silent or passive. His enemies certainly had a lot to say as they “opened their mouths” against him. They were telling lies, speaking hatefully, and attacking for no reason. He had counted these people among his friends, but they had betrayed him and repaid evil for good. As David put it elsewhere, “Their throat is an open grave” (Ps. 5:9).

The psalmist called for God to help based on the glory of His name and His unending love (vv. 21, 26). His description of his psychological suffering is quite vivid (vv. 22–25). He feels “poor” and “needy.” His heart is “wounded.” Though he fasted and prayed extensively, the Lord has not answered and he feels invisible and weak. Is he nothing more than a passing “shadow” to God? An annoying “locust” to be shaken off? His enemies “shake their heads” in scorn. How pathetic!

Overwhelmed from within and without, stressed out and emotionally exhausted, David nonetheless continues to trust God to save him (vv. 26–31). His false friends need to learn that the Lord comes to the rescue of those who abide in Him. That’s the sort of God He is: “He stands at the right hand of the needy to save their lives from those who would condemn them” (v. 31).

APPLY THE WORD

Our faith is founded upon the rock-solid character of God. To trust Him with our needs and anxieties is both a privilege and a necessity. Too often, we indulge in worry or try to take care of things ourselves. Today, prayerfully break that habit and instead “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7; cf. Ps. 55:22).

PRAY WITH US

We invite you to pray for our Marketing Communications staff as they work hard to connect the larger Moody community to our ministries. Please mention Lynn Gabalec, Larry Bohlin, Linda Piepenbrink, Alex Rathbun, and Rob Tracy in your prayers.

Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

Habakkuk 1:13

TUESDAY
JUNE

12

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Anger

In 2007, flamboyant Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers filed a lawsuit against God. He wanted a permanent injunction against the Almighty, whom he blamed for various natural disasters and for failing to stop terrorism. He said he had tried to contact God previously about these matters but received no response. The suit was dismissed because the court did not know where to serve notice.

Sometimes we feel angry about the silence of God. Why does He allow natural and man-made tragedies? Is it really part of His loving plan? The prophet Habakkuk was thinking along these lines in today's reading: "Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?"

The dilemma was that in Habakkuk's opinion silence did not suit God's character (vv. 12–13). He is holy and just and perfect. His eyes are "too pure

to look on evil." Why, then, would He use one wicked nation (Babylon) to punish another (Judah)? Where was the righteousness or justice in that?

In verses 14–17, Habakkuk developed a stinging and sarcastic metaphor to give his question more force. Powerful people are like fishermen who catch fish, sell them, and use the money to live in luxury without giving a second thought to the fish. Their victims are like the hapless fish who are caught, killed, chopped up, and sold. The powerful basically worship their fishing nets, that is, the tools that give them power. Power is their idol. How long will this state of affairs continue?

Why would the Lord use such a vile nation as an instrument of His justice? Why would He remain silent while it continued its evil ways? Habakkuk felt angry, but he asked his question in expectant faith (2:1).

APPLY THE WORD

God did answer the prophet's question (beginning in 2:2). What about us? Can we give answers for the hope and faith that we have (see 1 Peter 3:15)? To better prepare yourself, read *The Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel, which deals with the "problem of evil" (Habakkuk's question here) as the first objection to God made by many unbelievers.

PRAY WITH US

Staying connected with the Moody community is the vital task of Marketing Communications staff: Jamie Janosz, Kevin Mungons, Cheyenne Lehto, Anneliese Rider, Julia Baad, and Katherine Madonna. Would you support their work in prayer?

WEDNESDAY
JUNE

13

*Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?*

Psalm 30:9

Divine Silence? Our Feeling of Emptiness

Following God’s victory at Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah fled from the vengeful anger of Queen Jezebel. After providing food, water, and rest for His exhausted and depressed servant, God told Elijah to stand at the entrance to the cave in which he was resting at Mount Horeb. First came a powerful wind, “but the Lord was not in the wind.” Then came an earthquake and a fire, but He wasn’t in those either. Finally, God spoke to Elijah in a “gentle whisper” or a “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:1–18).

Elijah had been feeling spiritually empty. He needed to know that God not only acts through impressive miracles but also shows His love in smaller and more personal ways.

In today’s reading, David also felt spiritually empty. He had been calling out to the Lord for help and mercy (vv.

8, 10), yet God had so far apparently remained unresponsive and silent.

The psalmist’s rhetorical argument is that one silence begets another (v. 9). If God remains silent and does not rescue him, then he will die and be unable to offer any more praise: “What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit?” Only the living can worship God, a point made throughout the psalms: “It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to the place of silence; it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore” (Ps. 115:17–18).

With faith that anticipates God’s answer, David ends this psalm with praise (vv. 11–12). Silence will be transformed into praise, weeping into dancing, and grief into joy! The feeling that our final destiny is the pit of death is a horrible one—but not a true one. Faith knows God will be faithful.

APPLY THE WORD

David wrote Psalm 30 for the dedication of the temple he wasn’t allowed to build. It may also be connected to his census of Israel, followed by God’s discipline (see 2 Samuel 24). Yet he still praised the Lord! We too can praise Him no matter what. Tough circumstances? God is in control. Sin? God forgives. This is the day that the Lord has made!

PRAY WITH US

As we conclude our prayers for the Marketing Communications team, pray for Rachel Hutcheson, Rhonda AuYeung, Paul Currie, Elena Mafter, Nikita Cunigan, and Jacob Iverson. May they always follow Christ and honor Him with their service at Moody.

Our God comes and will not be silent.

Psalm 50:3

THURSDAY
JUNE

14

Divine Silence? God Speaks!

Sooner or later, God always chooses to speak in ways we can hear. In the words of the great hymn writer Fanny J. Crosby, “The Lord Will Answer Prayer”: “His eye foresees our greatest good, / While we at best are weak, / And thus in wisdom He withholds / The boon that oft we seek . . . Then murmur not, but trust in Him / Who knows our every care, / And better far than we can ask, / The Lord will answer prayer.”

Though God may at times seem silent, the ultimate reality is that He speaks! Throughout this section of our study, the question mark after “Divine Silence” has indicated that this is our perception, not the reality. Theologically, we know God is omnipresent, always faithful, and always loving. Experientially, however, we don’t always feel the reality or power of these truths. Our emotions are real, and God cares about them, but they can create misperceptions, so

we should not be slaves to them. The psalms especially model this complex dynamic of faith for us.

Psalm 50 shows the faith that knows God will speak—and for believers, the utter joy of the moment He does! Sinners, though, should be afraid, which is why God is pictured here as a judge. He speaks with authority to summon all the earth to His courtroom (v. 1). His glorious justice is beautiful and perfect (v. 2). Whereas other psalms wonder how long it will be before evil is punished, here the time for accountability has now arrived. God will no longer be silent (v. 3). Verses 4 through 6 make clear that the target for judgment or discipline is God’s own people, based on their covenant.

Days of reckoning are coming. The One who spoke the universe into being will also speak—in the perfect timing of His perfect plan—perfect justice!

APPLY THE WORD

Just as David used his emotions and faith to write psalms, consider using your own emotions in creativity and faith. You might compose a poem, prayer, or song. You might also paint a picture or craft a sculpture. Since we’re made in the image of a creative God, exercising our creativity can strengthen our faith!

PRAY WITH US

Our Human Resources department, under the leadership of vice president Debbie Zelinski, plays an important role in bringing new employees to Moody. Pray that God would guide the efforts of Darric Obinger, Jill Douglas, and Joseph Bolz.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Dr. Michael Rydelnik, Professor of Jewish Studies and *Open Line* Host

Q **Where does the Bible teach that a baby in the womb is a living human being?**

A Scripture clearly states that God forms, sees, and ordains life in an unborn baby in the womb (Ps. 139:13–16). God also sets people apart for service to Him from the womb, as He did Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5) and Paul (Gal. 1:15). If they were not living persons while still in the womb, that would not be possible. Moreover, it's possible for God to work spiritually even in an unborn baby's life. John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15), and the Spirit prompted John to leap while in his mother Elizabeth's womb when Mary, pregnant with the Messiah Jesus, visited (Luke 1:41). It's plain from Scripture that an unborn child is a fully human living person, made in the image of God, and therefore precious to God Himself.

Q **Even if the Bible teaches that a preborn baby is alive, should we still try to impose our religious views on secular society?**

A Abortion is not a religious issue but a moral one. We can't say, *I'm personally opposed to murder or rape because the Bible forbids it, but I don't want to impose my biblical values on others.* That's because murder and rape are moral issues, not

personal religious ones. Some say that abortion is a decision made between a woman and her doctor, but don't forget that a third person is involved—the unborn baby. Who will speak for the child? Who will protect the one who is unable to save herself?

We need to remember Proverbs 24:11–12: "Rescue those being led away to death. . . . If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he who weighs hearts consider it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?" We must never learn to tolerate abortion, and we must use all of our rights as citizens to work legally to protect the unborn.

Q **Does Exodus 21:22 teach that an unborn baby does not have the same rights of a fully living human person?**

A Some have argued that the Law of Moses seems to treat an unborn child as less than a fully living person. The 1977 version of the NASV translation says, "And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide." Therefore, some people conclude that

God forms, sees, and ordains life in an unborn baby.

since there is no requirement of the death penalty for an assault and battery that causes a miscarriage, the Bible treats an unborn baby as less than a fully living person.

But this is based on a mistranslation. The Hebrew word translated *miscarriage* literally means “to go out.” So if a man strikes a pregnant woman and the child comes out—in other words, she has a *premature* birth but the child lives—he still has to pay a penalty. This translation is reflected in virtually all contemporary English versions, including the updated NASV (which reads, “If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely . . .”). This corrected translation shows that God is even concerned for the rights of preborn children.

Q **Is abortion the unpardonable sin?**

A Termination of a life, even before birth, is so serious that some people think this is the one sin that God can’t forgive. Jesus did indeed speak of a sin that was unforgivable: “Every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” (Matt. 12:31). Clearly, the Lord was not speaking about abortion but rather about the blasphemy of the Holy

Spirit. According to the context, the blasphemy of the Spirit is declaring the miracles of the incarnate Son of God to be works of Satan (Matt. 12:24–28). Such a declaration is a final and full rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and Redeemer of humanity.

Many years ago, a woman came to my congregation plagued with guilt for an abortion she had about 15 years earlier. She kept telling herself that she was just removing unwanted tissue—but her conscience kept telling her otherwise. When she met with my wife and me, we were grateful that we could tell her that God still loved her and that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). If she put her trust in Jesus’ death on her behalf and His resurrection to new life, she would be forgiven forever (Eph. 1:7–8), and “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). This dear woman responded with joy and trusted in Jesus upon hearing the good news. Amazingly, she has been free of guilt now for many years.

What about someone who is already a follower of Jesus and then has an abortion? Scripture teaches that even that person can be restored to fellowship with God and experience true pardon (1 John 1:9). No sin is greater than God’s ability to forgive and restore, and that includes abortion.

FRIDAY
JUNE

15

*Much dreaming and many words
are meaningless. Therefore fear God.*

Ecclesiastes 5:7

Silence and Spiritual Walk: Many Words Are Foolish

The term *dobbellist* has fallen out of use, but lexicographer Kory Stamper of Merriam-Webster would like to revive it. This word means “fool,” specifically the kind of fool who appears to be smart but actually isn’t.

Solomon seems to have exactly this kind of fool in mind in today’s reading. Today we begin a new section in our month’s study, examining silence as a part of our daily walk with the Lord. The beginning of Ecclesiastes 5 makes a simple point in this regard: wisdom is associated with silence or few words, while foolishness is associated with the opposite (see Eccl. 9:17).

These points are made in the context of worship: “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God” (v. 1). To “go near to listen” means to go with a humble, teachable, obedient attitude, one that is slow to speak in light of God’s greatness. “God is in heaven and

you are on earth, so let your words be few” (v. 2). The “sacrifice of fools,” by contrast, is the babbling of many words. The proverb of verse 3 is a guarantee: As surely as many cares cause restless or idle dreams, so also foolishness causes many words.

When making vows to the Lord, for example, many words can get one in trouble (vv. 4–6). Even if people speak impulsively or insincerely, they will not be let off the hook but will be held accountable. God does not forget—promises made to Him must be kept!

To fear the Lord, then, is to avoid the trap of many words and to exercise self-discipline of the tongue (v. 7). The word *meaningless* connects this point with the main theme of Ecclesiastes. Language is created by God; therefore, words have significance, meaning, and power and should be handled with caution and reverence.

APPLY THE WORD

Are our prayers long and showy (Matt. 6:5–8)? Are we constantly posting on social media? Or are we listening quietly for words of wisdom, and perhaps even speaking some from time to time? Ask the Lord to help you guard your tongue and avoid the trap of foolishness that masquerades as too many words without wisdom.

PRAY WITH US

Today, continuing to pray for the Human Resources employees, we ask that God’s blessings would follow the lives of Marcy Torres, Mia Gale, Peter Miller, and Michelle Hughes, as they oversee many aspects of Moody’s work environment.

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted
away through my groaning all day long.*

Psalm 32:3

SATURDAY
JUNE

16

Silence and Spiritual Walk: Resisting Conviction

Augustine said about confession of sin: “Because I have sinned, I must declare my unrighteousness, confess my sins to the Lord, and stop trying to hide my guilt. The emphasis must be on that I did it myself. It was not fate, not my horoscope, not the devil. He did not force me to sin, but I consented to his persuasive temptations. And when I confess my rebellion to the Lord, I can say with the psalmist, ‘And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.’”

Psalm 32 is a beautiful poem about the blessing and beauty of God’s forgiveness (vv. 1–2, 11). David had at first resisted this blessing—His silence here is the silence of resisting God’s conviction of sin. His rebellious refusal to confess his sin brought about much inner suffering (vv. 3–4). In the end, God broke through and David repented and experienced the profound relief and blessing of forgiveness (v. 5).

The psalmist exhorted his fellow worshipers to do the same (vv. 6–8). God loves us. He can be trusted with our shameful secrets—in fact, He already knows them. He’s not waiting to ambush or punish us, but to forgive us. Sin interferes with closeness to God, so He also wants to teach us how to avoid sin and live righteously. To be under conviction of sin means God is graciously driving us to do what’s right and what’s good for us.

Why, then, would we act like a stubborn mule (vv. 9–10)? Don’t do what I did, David warns. Only an idiot would refuse to confess and repent! The “woes of the wicked” and the unrepentant are self-inflicted, but if we confess and repent, we can trade inner anguish for being immersed in God’s unfailing love (v. 10).

APPLY THE WORD

Confession of sin should be a regular habit. Our society doesn’t talk much about sin, preferring to say people make mistakes or are trapped in systems or “act out” and need therapy. But by repenting of sin and accepting God’s forgiveness, we demonstrate that repentance brings peace and joy in our relationship with God and brings glory to Him.

PRAY WITH US

Please pray for the ministry of Mollie Bond, who serves in Foundations and Corporate Relations, as she establishes relationships with various companies and organizations, involving interested partners in Moody’s ministries.

Peace!
Be strong now; be strong.

Daniel 10:19

Silence and Spiritual Walk: The Silence of Waiting

In “A Better Resurrection,” Victorian poet Christina Rossetti expressed the pain of waiting in silence before the Lord: “I have no wit, no words, no tears; / My heart within me like a stone / Is numb’d too much for hopes or fears; / Look right, look left, I dwell alone; / I lift mine eyes, but dimm’d with grief / No everlasting hills I see; / My life is in the falling leaf: / O Jesus, quicken me.”

Today’s passage describes Daniel’s difficult days of waiting for the Lord to answer a prayer. When the angel God sent at last appeared, Daniel fell with his face to the ground and later responded with speechless anguish. Both times the angel touched him to give him renewed strength (vv. 10–11, 15–19).

Being overcome with fear is a common reaction in Scripture to divine phenomena. In the Christmas story, for example, Zechariah, Mary, and the

shepherds all had to be told by an angel, “Do not be afraid.” When Christ appeared to John the Apostle in his apocalyptic vision, John fell at His feet as though dead, overcome by God’s glory (Rev. 1:17–18).

The date was 536 B.C., which means Daniel was 84 years old. The first Jews had returned from exile to Jerusalem two years previously, but things were not going well. Daniel had been praying and fasting continually and earnestly for God to come to their aid. God sent an angel with an answer for His “highly esteemed” or “greatly loved” servant, but the angel had been delayed twenty-one days due to warfare with a fallen angel (vv. 12–14). This had been a difficult time for Daniel as he waited on the Lord. Notice that “waiting” here does not mean passively standing around; rather, “waiting” means actively seeking and worshiping the Lord.

APPLY THE WORD

Daniel’s experience reminds us that we often don’t have all the information “behind the scenes” in the spiritual realm. We aren’t promised that God will tell us about the spiritual warfare being waged on our behalf, but we have His assurance that He continues to hear our prayers and heartfelt cries to Him. Our waiting can be worship.

PRAY WITH US

On today’s Father’s Day, as we honor fathers in our lives, let’s thank God for His Father’s love, mercy, and grace. What joy it is to be a child of God and to come to Him with Jesus’ words, “Our Father in heaven”!

The people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, “Do not answer him.”

2 Kings 18:36

MONDAY
JUNE

18

Silence and Spiritual Walk: The Silence of Self-Control

In *Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning*, Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung described a spiritual exercise she did with her students on the vice of “vainglory,” defined as “the disordered desire for attention and approval.” The exercise: No talking about yourself for one week. This proved more difficult than anticipated. “[W]e quickly got a robust experiential taste of how deeply rooted a vice can be, and how blissfully unaware we were that we even had it.”

Silence requires self-control. The army of Assyria besieged Jerusalem in the days of King Hezekiah. The field commander also engaged in psychological warfare, speaking Hebrew and hoping to prompt a revolt against their leaders: *Don’t believe whatever your king is telling you. Assyria is stronger than Judah; you have no chance of winning. And don’t trust God to deliver you either. The*

gods of Assyria are always stronger (vv. 30, 35).

Insulting God was a fatal mistake. The Lord is no local deity, no handcrafted piece of stone like the “gods” of other nations. By denying that God could deliver them, the commander essentially guaranteed his own defeat.

The Israelites on the wall responded admirably—with silence (v. 36). They didn’t argue. They didn’t beg for favorable terms of surrender. They followed King Hezekiah’s orders to say nothing. While the king’s envoys were appalled by the blasphemy and thrown into grief and despair, the people endured the taunting in silence.

The ability to control one’s tongue requires the Holy Spirit’s help. Without Him, “no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8).

APPLY THE WORD

Consider doing the same exercise from the opening illustration. For one whole week, don’t speak about yourself, either orally or in writing (yes, this includes social media). Instead, listen to others and attentively observe the world around you. Pray that the Lord will use this exercise to decrease our self-centeredness.

PRAY WITH US

Today, pray for Dr. Bryan O’Neal, VP and dean of Moody Distance Learning, and the staff in his office—Albert Chelladurai and Ewa Gutierrez—who work together to provide Christian education to students around the country.

TUESDAY
JUNE

19

*It is good to wait quietly for
the salvation of the LORD.*

Lamentations 3:26

Silence and Spiritual Walk: The Silence of Grief

Nineteenth-century businessman Horatio G. Spafford suffered one tragedy after another. His son died of illness. The Great Chicago Fire destroyed much of his wealth. When he sent his wife, Anna, and four daughters to Europe, a shipwreck claimed the lives of all four girls. During his voyage to rejoin Anna, the place where the disaster occurred was pointed out to him. Spafford went to his room and penned the classic hymn, “It Is Well with My Soul.”

How could he do that? How could he say that? Because like Jeremiah in today’s reading, he had unwavering hope in God’s unfailing love (vv. 21–23). Though “the bitterness and the gall” are real and cause his soul to be downcast (vv. 19–20), he recalls an even more important truth: “His compassions never fail. They are new every morning.”

What was Jeremiah lamenting? The “yoke” of deserved suffering (v. 27;

cf. 1:14), which is suffering that results from reaping what one has sowed and receiving the Lord’s discipline. That comprised the bulk of Jeremiah’s prophecies, and now it was happening to the nation during his lifetime.

His response was to wait quietly on the Lord: “Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him” (v. 28). Putting one’s face in the dust signifies submission to God’s will (v. 29), and turning the other cheek signifies humility before others (v. 30). Both actions are appropriate to the mood, content, and form of lament.

The silence of lament is complex, involving patience, restfulness, and faith-filled expectancy as well as grief, which is strong. But hope is even stronger, because God’s character is the most absolutely real thing in the universe (vv. 31–33; cf. Isa. 54:7–8).

APPLY THE WORD

Does it feel as though your prayers are being shut out (Lam. 3:8)? Lament is an appropriate response. In lament, grief and pain can be expressed while at the same time one waits on the Lord in peace, patience, and steadfast faith. Scripture provides us with helpful examples of lament; in addition to the book of Lamentations, read Psalm 102.

PRAY WITH US

For the next two days, include in your prayers the Financial Aid Office team. Thank the Lord for Heather Shalley, Tammy Easter, and Timothy Krug for their service of helping our students receive a Moody education and go into ministry without debt.

No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

Job 2:13

WEDNESDAY
JUNE

20

Silence and Spiritual Walk: The Silence of Empathy

Visiting people in the hospital and sitting by sickbeds is very often a ministry of listening and silence. What we might want to say to comfort and encourage them is very often the wrong thing or mere platitudes—nothing truly helpful, and sometimes things that are actually harmful. But to just listen and be with people is a ministry of presence that can bring God’s comfort and encouragement.

When Job’s friends came to visit, they started well with the silence of genuine empathy. Job had recently suffered the loss of his considerable earthly goods, his social status, all his children, and his health. He did not know what readers of the book know about the council in heaven, but he had nonetheless stood steadfast in his faith in God (1:20–22; 2:10).

Having heard the stunning news, Job’s friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and

Zophar agreed to meet up and go to “sympathize with him and comfort him” (v. 11). Despite what happens later, their desire to console him was apparently genuine. When they saw him, scraping his sores as he sat among the ashes, they were utterly shocked. They hardly knew the man they had called a friend. They wept aloud, tore their clothing, and sprinkled dust on their heads—all signs of intense grief and mourning (v. 12).

Then the three of them sat silently with him for an entire week (v. 13). This showed a deep empathy for his physical, mental, and spiritual suffering. It also showed respect—Job should be the one to speak first. Perhaps words seemed powerless in the face of what had happened. Perhaps they were afraid of making things worse by speaking (as did indeed happen). If only they had never opened their mouths at all (see Job 13:1–12)!

APPLY THE WORD

If your church has a visitation ministry, consider volunteering for it. If not, consider helping to start one. There is much pain and brokenness in this fallen world. It doesn’t matter if you don’t know what to say. In fact, it might be better that way, for this is a ministry primarily of presence not of words (see Rom. 12:15).

PRAY WITH US

Mention in your prayers the staff of Financial Aid Office: Daniel Auzenne, Sherry Allen, and Vanita Francis. We pray they would have peace and joy in their hearts, and confidence in God’s guidance for their lives.

THURSDAY
JUNE
21

*When you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.*

Psalm 4:4

Silence and Spiritual Walk: Self-Examination

Jenn Granneman, author of *The Secret Lives of Introverts*, described “12 things introverts absolutely need to be happy.” One is “comfortable silences”—friends they can be with without talking. Another is “a quiet, calm space that’s all theirs,” as well as “time and space to work uninterrupted.” Yet another is “time to think before responding,” or even the freedom not to respond at all.

Silence enables many qualities and activities. One of these is self-examination, as David pointed out in Psalm 4. The purpose of silence in Christian self-examination is to help clear the mind of distractions in order to focus on God (Ps. 46:10). God is the source of accurate self-knowledge, and, as we seek to reflect on our experiences, we need His help to understand them fruitfully. Scripture also uses such words as “meditate” and “ponder” to describe this discipline (see Ps. 77:12; 107:43).

Psalm 4 opens with a call for God to answer and help (v. 1). A warning is then issued that He is on the way (vv. 2–3). It closes with David’s confidence in the Lord, including the security, joy, and peace he experiences through trusting Him (vv. 6–8).

At the center of the psalm are two verses about the kind of worshiper David wants to be, and the kind of worshipers he as king wants his people to be (vv. 4–5). A genuine worshiper doesn’t respond to a crisis primarily in fear or panic, but rather with self-examination: “Search your hearts and be silent.” The search is focused on two implied questions: Are you offering “the sacrifices of the righteous”? That is, do you have any sin to confess? And are you trusting God completely? Such self-examination results in either repentance or increased faith, both of which will draw the worshiper closer to the Lord.

APPLY THE WORD

It might be a helpful idea to post verses 4 and 8 of today’s reading near your bed as reminders. Verse 4 suggests, “When you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.” Verse 8 rejoices, “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.” Another option is to “sing for joy” on your beds (Ps. 149:5)!

PRAY WITH US

Vice president and dean of Moody Theological Seminary, Dr. John Jelinek, invites you to praise God for the graduate education ministry He has granted to Moody over the years and to pray that the coming school year would continue to glorify Him.

*If you remain silent at this time,
relief and deliverance for the Jews
will arise from another place.*

Esther 4:14

FRIDAY
JUNE

22

Silence and Spiritual Walk: Silence, Fear, and Faith

Pastor Martin Niemöller spent seven years in Nazi concentration camps. At the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., his words are on display: “First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

In today’s reading, Esther faced a similar moral and spiritual challenge. Haman had plotted and the Persian emperor had decreed genocide against her people. Would she speak out? Would it do any good?

Esther’s uncle, Mordecai, told her to plead to the king for mercy. Such a course of action involved risking

her life, for if she entered the king’s presence without being summoned and if he then didn’t pardon her by extending his scepter, she would be killed. (The king already considered queens to be disposable; see Esther 1.) When Esther pointed this out, Mordecai responded that the bigger risk was God’s disfavor. If she remained silent, He would save His people by another means, while she and her family would perish (vv. 12–14). Remaining silent would be a choice of fear, not faith. Saving her skin would be possible only by denying her own identity and ignoring the possibility that God had placed her where she was “for such a time as this.”

Esther bravely chose to do as her uncle advised, but she did not act alone (vv. 15–17). She asked all the Jews in the area to fast and pray with her for three days. Then she would go to the king and see what God would do.

APPLY THE WORD

How can we follow the examples of Esther and Pastor Niemöller and speak up for powerless and victimized people? Current examples in our nation include the poor, the unborn, and refugees, with many more groups around the world. Speaking against injustice may or may not be popular, but it is not the world’s approval we seek—only God’s.

PRAY WITH US

Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, and his team provide overall direction to Moody’s financial management. Join Ken in prayer, thanking God for unique financial partnerships and friendship with our donors over the years.

SATURDAY
JUNE
23

*In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength.*

Isaiah 30:15

Silence and Spiritual Walk: The Quiet Strength of Faith

In *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, Parker J. Palmer wrote of his efforts to establish a discipline of silence in his classrooms: “Eventually my students feel a sense of community in the silence that is deeper than what they feel when the words are flowing fast and hard. Words so often divide us, but silence can unite.”

As we’ve seen, silence is a key dimension—sometimes negative but often positive—in our spiritual walk. It’s part of community, it’s part of worship, and it’s part of our relationship with the Lord. Today’s reading reminds us that strong faith is often quiet faith. This makes sense, for if we find our security in the Almighty there’s no need to boast or “talk ourselves into it.” Such faith may be “silent,” but it speaks volumes to those around us.

This is the way it should be: “In repentance and rest is your salvation,

in quietness and trust is your strength” (v. 15). To repent is to turn back to the Lord, to rest in the certainty of His forgiving love. In such rest and trust there is no need for posturing or anxiety—God is in control! Like all faith, quiet faith is strong because of its object—God.

Tragically, the people of Judah “would have none of it.” Instead of repenting and waiting on the Lord, they put their confidence in earthly factors such as horses (cf. Ps. 20:7). In God’s poetic justice, they would eventually be forced to flee on horses (vv. 16–17).

Despite their stubborn rebelliousness, Isaiah reminded them that God remains gracious and compassionate (v. 18). Justice will be done—that is, Judah’s conquest and exile—but that would not be the end of the story. One day they would again be blessed by Him!

APPLY THE WORD

In what do we find our strength? Maybe we know we’re supposed to answer “God”—but is this true for you? Or do our lives reveal that we put our confidence in our brains, our “correct opinions,” our vocational success, or our bank accounts? Are we willing to daily confess and repent from sin, then simply rest in God’s forgiving love?

PRAY WITH US

Would you join us in thanking God for the service of the Student Dining Room crew? Today, let’s encourage in prayer Brianne Dueck, Gonzalo Garcia, Gregory Dickson, and Jeffery Williams who provide our students and faculty with nutritious meals.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

Silence and the Gospel: Jesus as the Logos

Aramaic was the lingua franca of the Middle East in the days of Jesus. Everyone spoke it. Parts of the Bible are written in it. Though Arabic replaced it as the key language for the region in the seventh century A.D., Aramaic endured through the centuries. But linguists now believe it is dying, with its last two generations of speakers driven from their homes by war and persecution now spread out around the world.

Human languages may die, but Jesus is the divine Word who has conquered death and given eternal life to all who believe on His name. Our month's study now moves into its final section, "Silence and the Gospel." In light of the fact that Jesus is God's final *Logos*, what roles has silence played in the Gospel narrative?

John knew both the Jewish and Greek senses of the word *Logos* and clearly

intended to signify both as well as to transcend both. To the Jewish mind, *Logos* meant God's words, specifically the Law, and by extension God's creation and governance of the world. To the Greek mind, *Logos* referred to both spoken and unspoken language and more importantly to an impersonal principle of reason or rationality.

The coming of Christ the *Logos* is like light in a dark place—the best Word humanity has ever heard! Just as God spoke light into creation, now comes His Son to speak life where there had been only death. Darkness and death have been overcome once and for all by the victorious Christ.

The theme of silence and the gospel must be situated within the context of Christ as the Divine Word. He broke four centuries of "prophetic silence" to accomplish God's mission of redemption and bring hope to us all!

APPLY THE WORD

The apostle John opened his Gospel with words that directly evoke Genesis 1. If you have time, we suggest you read Genesis 1 as part of your devotional time today. Set the two passages side-by-side in order to better examine the themes and parallels. Creation and Incarnation are inextricably intertwined and life-changing realities!

PRAY WITH US

As we continue to keep our Food Service team in prayer, please add Hoa Lam, Jonathan True, Martin Rios, and Paul Houk to your list. It's not an easy task to feed several hundred people every day, and we are so grateful for their hard work and positive attitude.

MONDAY
JUNE
25

And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens.

Luke 1:20

Silence and the Gospel: Zechariah's Gift of Silence

In *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre observed: “Silence is hard to come by. . . . We surround ourselves with ubiquitous means of filling or simply obliterating it. . . . But if we are to care for the work that words do, we must be willing to open up silences in our minds and in our days. Our words matter only to the extent that they have been allowed to germinate and take root in silence.”

Given this, silence can be a gift. And it was a gift God gave to Zechariah, though we are not accustomed to reading the narrative in this way. In today's reading, in response to Gabriel's announcement that he and his wife would finally have a child, for which they had long prayed, Zechariah responded doubtfully, “How can I be sure of this?” (v. 18).

As a punishment for his lack of faith, and as a sign of the truth of the angel's

message, Zechariah was told he would be “silent and not able to speak” until his son's birth (v. 20). He was immediately *kophos* or mute, as we see in his inability to pronounce the blessing (v. 22). But *kophos* can also mean deaf (or both mute and deaf), and we can infer his deafness from the text since his neighbors had to make signs to him to figure out how to name the child (vv. 61–63). In addition, they were amazed at his response, which they wouldn't have been if he had heard all that had been said.

From this perspective, God gave Zechariah a precious gift of time—nine months. Nine months in a perfect cocoon of silence—to repent of his lack of faith, to prepare spiritually for parenthood, to praise God for answered prayer, and to meditate on the prophecy that his son would be filled with the Spirit and bring people back to the Lord.

APPLY THE WORD

The book *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre is well worth reading. One chapter is titled, “Cherish Silence,” but most of the book deals with words and language. How does the Creator of language intend for us to use it? And in what ways does that differ from how words are used in contemporary society?

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion of this time of prayer for the Food Service team, please mention Rachel Campbell, Sarah Revor, Seth Mendez, Steven Frausto, and Vinh Sy Hoang during your time with God. Thank the Lord for His leading and direction in their lives.

*Astonished by his answer,
they became silent.*

Luke 20:26

TUESDAY
JUNE

26

Silence and the Gospel: Pharisees' Silence of Defeat

Atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell was asked what he would do if he died and Christianity turned out to be true. He would arrive at the gates of heaven and God would ask, “Why didn’t you believe?” What would he say? Russell said he would answer: “Not enough evidence, God! Not enough evidence!”

God has already given His reply—the evidence is sufficient (Rom. 1:18–20). But for those who refuse to believe, there is never enough “evidence.” That was true for Bertrand Russell, and it was true for the religious leaders in today’s reading. Despite Jesus’ miracles and authoritative teaching, they simply refused to believe. Instead, they asked trick questions to try to trap and discredit Him.

By this point, they weren’t coming in person, for that would have been too embarrassing. Instead they sent “spies, who pretended to be sincere”

but whose goal was to get Jesus in trouble with the political authorities (v. 20). They thought they had the perfect question: “Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” (v. 22). It was a lose-lose question. If He said no, He would be in trouble with the government. If He said yes, He would be in trouble with the Jews, who hated collaborators (like tax collectors).

Jesus saw through their duplicity and gave the perfect answer (v. 25). So the silence in this story is the silence of their defeat (v. 26). One wonders why they were “astonished,” since every previous trap question had also failed. Predictably, the Son of God was smarter and a better debater, not to mention that He had a perfect knowledge of truth. The Sadducees would make one more run at Him on the topic of the resurrection and marriage, but after that no one dared to ask Him any more questions (vv. 27–40).

APPLY THE WORD

Some skeptics are hardened against Christianity. Others are genuine seekers who want to know why we believe. One insightful book that has stood the test of time is *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis. Another, more contemporary resource that has helped many is *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* by Timothy Keller.

PRAY WITH US

Please include in your prayer time Moody’s IT team headed by Frank Leber, vice president of Information Technology Services. Thank the Lord for this team’s computer expertise that adds an important part to the big picture of God’s work at Moody.

WEDNESDAY
JUNE

27

Jesus remained silent.

Matthew 26:63

Silence and the Gospel: Jesus' Silence of Victory

Eighteen years ago, archaeologists uncovered the site of one of the most famous events in the New Testament—the trial of Jesus. They were preparing to expand the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem by getting rid of an abandoned building next door. But when they started digging, they found the remains of Herod the Great's palace, where at least one of the trials preceding Christ's crucifixion occurred.

During His trial before the Sanhedrin in today's reading, Jesus remained silent. The seventy members of the Sanhedrin (a kind of religious high court) included chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law, presided over by the high priest, Caiaphas. They had already decided Jesus was guilty and should be put to death, so this was a kangaroo court. All they needed was enough false evidence to make a decent show of it (vv. 59–60). Despite some confusion, two witnesses testified that He had

said He could destroy and rebuild the temple in three days. They may have had in mind the words of Christ in John 2:18–22, in which He used the temple as a metaphor for His body and His future resurrection.

Caiaphas challenged Jesus to defend Himself, but He didn't respond (v. 63). He knew the witnesses were coerced. He knew the verdict was rigged. He knew what would happen next. And most of all, He knew this was God's perfect plan. To remain silent was thus an act of obedience and submission to the Father's will.

When Caiaphas challenged Jesus a second time, he used formal, serious language that would have been extremely rude to ignore. So Jesus answered, but still not to defend Himself. Instead, He affirmed that He was indeed the Messiah and in fact the very Son of God (v. 64).

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus had demonstrated His ability to best any antagonist or debating challenge. But true victory lay elsewhere. For us, too, winning debates and defending ourselves isn't always the point. Along these lines, it's worth considering Christ's example in today's reading. Where in your life might silence show godly obedience and submission?

PRAY WITH US

We ask that you uphold in prayer Collin Lambert, vice president of Moody Radio. Pray that the Lord would bless the ministry of Moody Radio and would give Collin wisdom in making decisions and strength in facing everyday challenges.

*As a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

Isaiah 53:7

THURSDAY
JUNE

28

Silence and the Gospel: “He Did Not Open His Mouth”

Preaching from Luke’s account of Jesus’ trial before Pilate, theologian Gary Millar argued that Jesus’ silence was “a calm and considered strategy,” not “despair or stubbornness.” It was more than a refusal to “put on a show for Herod” or to “be drawn into defending himself in a sham trial. . . . He is silent. And by his controlled silence, he brings his death for us one step closer. By choosing not to speak, he exercises perfect control of the situation.”

Jesus’ silence was obedient, purposeful—and prophesied long before. Today’s passage is a messianic prophecy and part of the fourth of four “Servant songs” in the book of Isaiah. Despite being “oppressed and afflicted,” Jesus “did not open his mouth” to complain or protest or beg for relief (v. 7). “He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

Jesus was unjustly condemned and suffered greatly before His death as a criminal in the eyes of the world (vv. 8–9). Mysteriously and wonderfully, this was God’s perfect redemptive plan (vv. 10–12). The Messiah’s death would not endure—“he will see the light of life” (v. 11). He would win the victory over sin and death.

As the conquering Lamb of God, Jesus was the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. John the Baptist identified Him as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). In his apocalyptic vision, the apostle John saw a vision of the risen Lamb (Rev. 5:6–13), who is worshiped with these words: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus could have fought His persecutors, but He chose not to do so. Instead, He followed God’s plan and left justice and revenge in His hands (see 1 Peter 2:21–24). We should do the same: “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:19–21).

PRAY WITH US

The staff of Moody Radio’s KMBI—broadcasting from Spokane, Wash.—are Joe Gonzalez, Scott Carlon, Dee Marie, and Chris Wright. They have this request: “Please pray for each of us, that we would keep the road He has laid for us in clear view.”

FRIDAY
JUNE

29

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Revelation 8:1

Silence and the Gospel: Silence in Heaven

Singer-songwriter Sandra McCracken believes that “Our Silence Is Music to God’s Ears,” the title of a recent article in *Christianity Today*. “When I’m quiet,” she admits, “things float up to the surface from the shadow places in my heart that I haven’t wanted to deal with. But after a time, I can tune my ears to hear the still, small whisper of God. . . . Silence is the waiting posture that helps us to be poised to hear God’s voice.”

That’s the basic significance of the “silence in heaven” following the opening of the seventh seal by the Lamb, Jesus Christ (v. 1). One study Bible calls this a “dramatic pause.” Another says the silence “sustains the suspense.” In other words, this is the calm before the storm, since the seventh seal begins the seven trumpet judgments, which in turn lead into the seven bowl judgments. The silence here does play this narrative function, but is that its only role?

The *Africa Study Bible* adds: “This monumental occasion was such a significant event that even the inhabitants of heaven had to stand in silent awe.” *The Moody Bible Commentary* notes that silence can indicate both anticipation and submission and is a fitting response to God’s judgment (Zeph. 1:7). In our month’s study, this points us back to Habakkuk 2:20, where silence is a reverent and worshipful response to the bottom-line reality that God is sovereign and righteous.

When the heavenly silence is broken, it’s by the “prayers of all God’s people,” as symbolized by the golden censer and incense presented by an angel before God’s throne (vv. 3–4; cf. Rev. 6:10). The narrative resumes, with “fire from the altar” striking the earth to signal the start of the trumpet judgments (v. 5).

APPLY THE WORD

As we reflect on today’s passage, how is silence part of our daily worship and of our relationship with the Lord? Are we always talking to God and never listening? What does He have to do to get our attention? Are we alert for His “still small voice”? Do we have that “waiting posture that helps us to be poised to hear God’s voice”?

PRAY WITH US

Please join the staff of Moody Radio Chattanooga—Paul Martin, Jason McKay, Tabi Upton, and Brent Manion—in thanksgiving for how the Lord has touched countless lives over the years through WMBW’s biblical teaching and inspirational music.

*Till her vindication shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.*

Isaiah 62:1

SATURDAY
JUNE

30

Conclusion: “For Zion’s Sake I Will Not Keep Silent”

Jeremiah did not particularly enjoy being God’s prophet. It brought him “insult and reproach all day long.” But if he tried to remain silent: “His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.” God Himself said that the words of a true prophet would be “like fire . . . and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces” (Jer. 20:7–9; 23:25–32).

God’s prophet Isaiah was compelled to proclaim the awe-inspiring word of the Lord: “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent” (v. 1). Why not? “For Zion’s sake” or “for Jerusalem’s sake” means for the sake of God’s people—until they are saved and vindicated. Israel’s salvation will be a “crown of splendor” or a “royal diadem” in God’s hand, a witness to all the world that He keeps His promises, loves faithfully, and is mighty to save (vv. 2–3). That day will be like a joyous wedding celebration (vv. 4–5).

We are to pray relentlessly for this event—which we now know to be Christ’s Second Coming—to arrive (vv. 6–7). Watchfulness is a key biblical theme related to Christ’s return, as seen, for example, in the parable of the ten virgins, lamps, and oil (see Matt. 25:1–13).

“Watchmen on the walls” are the ones who see first what is approaching. In the same way, those who are faithful in prayer (Col. 4:2) will be the first to rejoice when the time comes.

Among and around the riches of the biblical theme of silence is the life-saving truth that ultimately God is *not* silent. He has spoken and acted to reveal Himself in creation, history, Scripture, and the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ!

APPLY THE WORD

Isaiah could not keep silent, and neither should we! Sharing the good news of the gospel is our sacred privilege and responsibility: “I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8–9).

PRAY WITH US

As we come to the end of this month’s study, let’s praise God for speaking to us and for hearing our prayers. We’d like to thank you, members of the Moody family, for your faithful prayers, generosity, and friendship.

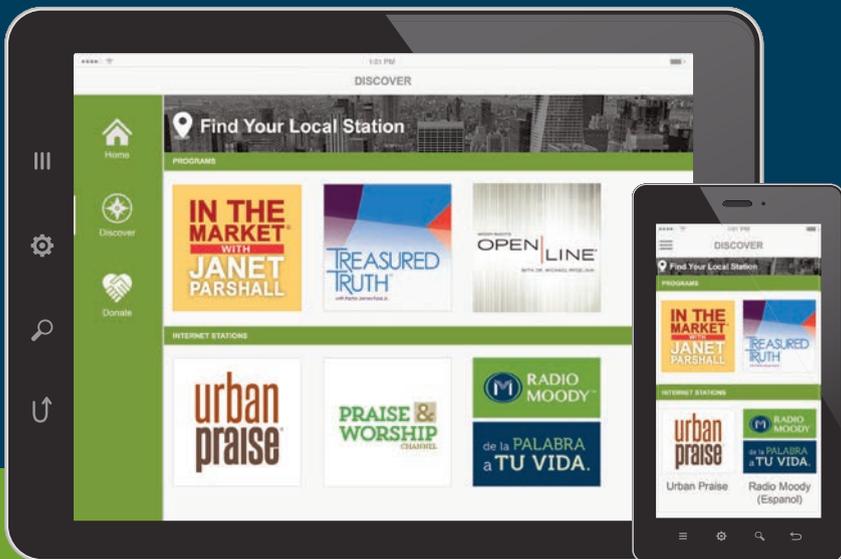


MOODY
RADIO®

from the
WORD to **LIFE.**

DOWNLOAD THE APP TODAY!

TAKE MOODY RADIO WITH YOU ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE OR TABLET



- Listen to your local Moody Radio station.
- Stream programs live and on demand.
- Hear programming in English and Spanish.
- Enjoy a variety of Christian music.

▶ *For more information, visit*
MOODYRADIO.ORG / MOBILE



Your Investment Makes a Difference

Let Moody manage your IRA or trust



Enjoy professional IRA or trust management services (at no cost in certain qualifying circumstances) and invest in the ministry leaders of the future. Your gift makes a difference in a world that desperately needs the hope of Christ.

GET MORE INFORMATION

Contact Moody's Stewardship team today!
plannedgiving@moody.edu | (800) 801-2171



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES®



THE EVERYDAY BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES

This month Moody Publishers is pleased to release new editions of five popular volumes from this classic commentary series.

Daniel • Isaiah • Romans • Acts • Revelation

These concise, expository paperbacks focus on a single book of the Bible and feature commentary by trusted Bible scholars, including Charles Ryrie.

Find them at your local or online bookstore or buy directly from Moody Publishers by calling **(800) 678-8812** or at moodypublishers.com.



Visit us online to request resources and view past issues.

TodayInTheWord.com



Today in the Word



@TodayintheWord



TodayInTheWordDevotional



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES®

Moody helps equip you with the truth of God's Word as you impact your community and the world for Christ. We believe that understanding and sharing God's Word is a lifelong journey. Let us help you take the next step in your relationship with Christ.

Learn more at MOODYGLOBAL.ORG or call **(800) DL MOODY** today.

MOODY
Bible Institute™

moody.edu

MOODY
Theological
Seminary™

MOODY
Bible Institute™
DISTANCE LEARNING

MOODY
Publishers®

moodypublishers.com

MOODY
Radio®

moodyradio.org