

Psalms 46:10

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I Am God! I Am exalted among the nations; I Am exalted in the earth.”

The Psalmist knows only too well what it means to ‘be still’ before God. He talks about nurture and abundance, and the promise of harmony and peace: **Psalm 23:** ¹The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He recognises the importance of waiting patiently for God’s timing without fear or anxiety despite the circumstances: **Psalm 37:** ⁷Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices. The Psalmist pours his heart out without reserve because He knows God and trusts in His eternal protection and providence. Not all God’s people were of the same mind, many were rebellious and strong willed for their own desires. Their faith was a fickle one that ebbed and flowed like waves on the shore. From the beginning God’s people were disobedient and needed to be constantly disciplined. Yet God’s love for them never wavered despite their stubborn hearts and accusations. **Exodus 14:** ¹⁴The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still. Time and time again God came to their rescue and time and again they doubted and disobeyed. However, when the people did listen and obey, the blessings and rewards were great indeed. Victory over evil followed by peace and rest: **Joshua 21:** ⁴⁴And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as He had sworn to their ancestors; not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. This is God’s way; when His people turn to Him in humble prayer we can be sure that He will answer and come to the aid of His children in whatever way is needed; we have only to ask. **2 Chronicles 20:** ¹⁷This battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.” These Old Testament Scriptures are extremely important and encouraging because they teach us how to come before God and how He deals with us as His people. In short they demonstrate the right way to ‘be still’ before the Lord God Almighty and live, as well as the wrong way to behave and suffer the consequences.

Our relationship with our Father in heaven is the most important relationship of all and one that we must work at to perfect. This generation, more than any other, is restless for constant stimulation. To ‘be still’ is seen as a waste of time or failure to ‘do’ something and get on in the world. But this is not how God works. God created us for companionship; He desires to spend time with us, to give us good gifts, to save us from harm and give us a helping hand when things get tough. This is no different to any good parent; I say ‘good’ because I recognise that not all parents are good. Some are too harsh and demanding; others are too soft and lack discipline. Children too can grow up for good or bad, some rebellious and ungrateful; others obedient and respectful. To grow ‘good’ before God we must ‘be still’ and allow Him to teach and discipline us in the way of obedience. How else can we be good parents to the next generation of His children? God is our parent role-model and Jesus our example of an obedient child, both of which we must learn to mirror.

How can we discern God’s will and purpose if we are always looking to rush off onto the next thing? Jesus spent untold time alone with God; we read this throughout the gospel stories of His life. Who knows what they spoke about but we can be sure that Jesus shared all with His Father and listened in stillness for His Father’s instruction. These times of stillness were times of replenishment too. Think of the many wicked words spoken over Him by those seeking to destroy Him. He would have needed healing of the deep wounds that those words inflicted in His mind and Spirit. Discerning God’s way and making the right decisions

according to God's Word requires prayer and a mind willing to 'be still', not thinking its own thoughts, nor straining to move on. God knows our heart and all He wants is for us to want to know His.

Jesus took time out to 'be still before His Father God, not a one off or just when there was an urgent matter to be dealt with. Jesus removed Himself from the noise of the world and those around Him to just 'be' with God. Jesus trusted God to the uttermost and completely gave Himself over to the will and purpose of His Father. So much so that He could sleep in a boat through a violent storm without being disturbed in any way. **Mark 4:35-41**; ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. The disciples looked only at their circumstances and became afraid. Jesus looks only to God and enjoys perfect peace in the midst of chaos. When we read the Word of God and study the teaching of Jesus, do we not understand the importance of being 'still'? When we trust God and humbly pray, we too will see the hand of God acting for our good. Because God loves us, He will never leave us alone or allow us to be destroyed by the enemy. Instead, our faith will protect, provide, heal and restore, simply because we want to know God's heart and willingly give Him ours. This is how we enter into God's rest and receive His peace that passes all understanding.

Hebrews 4: ⁹So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; ¹⁰for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours as God did from His. ¹¹Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. As God rested from His labours on the Sabbath day so He gives us rest from our work on His behalf. The Truth is that we can work as hard as we like but if it is not what God has asked of us it will profit us nothing, neither personally nor Christ's Church, **Psalms 127:** ¹Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. ²It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved. But if we have gone before the Lord in quiet stillness to contemplate His Word; if we have truly listened to His voice of instruction and resolved to follow His will, then all will be well, because all will be of God. Let us then resolve to make time to 'be still' and get to know God in all His wonder and glory. Amen!

Hymn/Song: the following can be found in SF 1067

To Be In Your Presence

By Noel Richards

To be in Your presence, to sit at Your feet,
Where Your love surrounds me,
and makes me complete.

Chorus:

*This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.
This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.*

To rest in Your presence, not rushing away;
To cherish each moment,
here I would stay.

Chorus:

*This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.
This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.*

Poem:

BE STILL ©Janice Morgan-1992

When pain and suffering lays us bare,
Our hearts turn quickly to despair.
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“My holy arm for you laid bare,
I carry you with love and care.”

When trials and tribulations come,
We cry, our world has come undone!
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“I have not left you all alone,
In you My Spirit has Her home.”

When things just go from bad to worse,
We feel the pain of Adam’s curse.
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“My ways are not your ways My child,
Refiner’s fire is hot, not mild.”

The answer now is plain to see,
Just pray, and trust, and it will be.
So hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“I made all things, yes even you,
There's nothing that I cannot do.”

When sickness lays us in our bed,
We, tired and weary, hang our head.
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“A covenant with you I sealed,
And by My stripes you have been healed.”

When life itself seems hard to bear,
Troubles too great for us to share.
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“My yoke is easy, burdens light,
Just rest in Me, I'll put things right.”

When life’s traumas on us fall,
We worry, fuss, or hide it all.
But hush now, listen, just be still,
The Master speaks to us His will.
“Your form, and features, I have planned,
I hold you firmly in My hand.”