



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Spiritual Disciplines: The Way of Silence

Speaker: Jacqueline Snape, Executive Pastor

Scripture: Luke 5:12-16

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. *Luke 5:12-16 (NIV)*

Sermon Outline:

The spiritual life is one that is not quick but takes time to grow, where we need to come back to time and time again. It is a discipline in which we need to give ourselves grace because there will inevitably be times when we fail. Giving ourselves the gift of grace helps us know and understand that failure is part of the spiritual life, picking ourselves back up again when we need to.

Silence and solitude is a spiritual discipline that we need to begin practicing in order to help us stay connected and grounded to God. It helps us grow in our relationship with God. The world in which we live in is one that is filled with constant noises of all types and forms. It is because of this, that we all long for silence and peace. If this is true, why is the spiritual discipline of silence and stillness so hard to begin practicing and even harder to keep up with? Because we don't set aside this time naturally, we need even more quiet and silence so that we have time with God.

Three factors at play in our need for silence:

- Our Identity. We pretend to be someone else rather than admit who we really are.
- We fear silence. We see God only as someone who only sees our failures and mistakes.
- We don't see the payoff. We don't have that immediate response to our time in silence.

Which of these areas listed above most resonate with you right now?

It is only when we are in silence with God, that we will begin to see him in the other – in a smile, when we are out in nature, in other people.

The payoff for us finding silence and being in the presence of Christ is not only that we are personally transformed, but also that we get to be Christ in the world. Being a loving presence is not easy by any means, especially in world that is struggling, where we see people dying and suffering from one day to the next. Practicing this spiritual discipline – silence and stillness – will help us become more Christ-like to a world that is hurting. This spiritual discipline is not about how we feel, as it is in those times when you feel the least is happening that the most can be happening.

When we step into silence and solitude, we allow God to do the deep work and connection that our souls long for.

The world needs you. Not your false self, but the Christ-centered self that He created you to be. For it is in times of silence and stillness where we can shed our false self and get to know who we truly are in Christ.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Jacqueline Snape, Executive Pastor, begins a new sermon series on Spiritual Disciplines. Today Pastor Jackie explores The Way of Silence, what it looks like for us to begin practicing silence and solitude and what this means for us individually and as a community.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, were you taught that it was okay to fail, to give yourself grace and to get back up again? Or were you taught that failure was not an option? How does what you learned and experienced growing up affect you now when things in your life don't go the way you planned?
3. How do you feel when you hear that the spiritual life is one of discipline that takes time to grow, where you must give yourself grace? Are you able to give yourself grace, knowing that there will be times when you will fail in your silence and solitude, know that this is okay and expected? If not, sit with God and offer this up to him.
4. Which of the three factors listed above do you feel you resonate with now? Do you find your value in your identity (how other people see you, in your job or who you are married to)? Are you afraid of silence (do you run away from God, believing He only sees your failures and mistakes)? Or do you not see the payoff (don't feel as though anything is happening during your silence and quiet time)? Find time this week to journal about how you are feeling, offering this up to God.
5. Is practicing silence and solitude a new spiritual discipline for you? If so, find time this week to begin practicing silence by beginning with 2 -3 minutes of silence. Can you reach out to a brother or sister in Christ this week to help you begin to practice this discipline? Another option might be to download the Centering Prayer app on your phone to help you begin practicing silence and stillness.