

# **Silent Reflections**

**Tuesday 30th April 2024**

**The Sounds of Silence**



Confession time - I am a huge fan of the music of Simon and Garfunkel. The song "The Sounds of Silence" released in 1964 is probably one of their most well known songs. Art Garfunkel who co-wrote the piece with Paul Simon summed up the meaning of the song as follows:-

The song is about the "inability of people to communicate with each other"

Sixty years later this still has resonance. We live in a chaotic world in which we are bombarded with an ever growing amount of technology designed to keep us connected with others - and yet more people than ever before describe themselves as feeling disconnected. In a recent survey 77% of people asked how they start their day responded by saying that they reach for their mobile phone first. Thus, the moments of quiet which we would find in our daily lives have potentially gone for many people and with it the capacity to be truly in the present.

What impact might this have on our ability to communicate in the present with God?

### Jesus and Silence

The Bible tells of how Jesus valued times of silence in which He deliberately withdrew to spend time in silence with God. Jesus had a busy life and as his ministry developed a growing number of people surrounded Him and wanted His attention. At times He withdrew in what seemed to be the middle of things.

If Jesus felt the need to withdraw into silence to hear the voice of God - should we?

You may wish to read some of the following biblical verses. As you read reflect if any seem to be speaking directly to you

- **Luke 6:12**

12 Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.

- **Matthew 14:13**

13 When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself

- **Matthew 14:22**

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side of the lake, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it

- **Luke 5:12-16**

12Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' 13Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leprosy left him. 14And he ordered him to tell no one. 'Go', he said, 'and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them.' 15But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. 16But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.

Jesus taught His Disciples by example the need to be in silence with God to be led by the Spirit. His commitment to silence underpinned his ministry and yet for many of his followers this is not part of their framework of living on a regular basis.

As William Barclay wrote:

"It may well be that the whole trouble in our lives is that we give God no opportunity to speak to us because we do not know how to be still and listen; we give God no time to recharge us with spiritual energy and strength, because there is no time when we wait upon Him. How can we shoulder life's burdens if we have no contact with Him who is the Lord of all good life?"

As Fulton Sheen wrote:

"Prayer begins by talking to God but it ends by listening to Him. In the face of Absolute truth silence is the soul's language"

The importance of making an intentional space and time for silence in order to hear God is challenging. In that space of silence we open ourselves up to the work of the Holy Spirit - and what God both offers and wants of us as His disciple. It is the space of transparency where we are called to be and not do. It is where as described in 1 Kings chapter 19 the prophet Elijah heard the still small voice of God which some suggest in Hebrew is the Sound of Sheer Silence

- Psalm 46  
‘Be still, and know that I am God; ♦

For reflection:

- How could I make space for silence in my daily life?
- You may consider saying a "Breath Prayer" - inhale saying "I give you my worries and cares" exhale saying "For you care about me" (1 Peter 5:7)
- Imagine Christ was sat next to you now. In a moment of silence what might He say to You?

Father

Help me to find a space each day where I can hear your still small voice

To rest in your presence

And remember how much you love and care for Me

Amen