

August 14, 2020

QUIET!

When silence makes the loudest noise.

Mark 15:2-5

“Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

³ The chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴ So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.”

⁵ But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

“Like a sheep before his shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” These words of the prophet Isaiah, declared 700 years before Christ, said he would not speak back to his accusers. Could Jesus have defended himself? Yes, and perfectly. But pushing back against Pilate would have gone against the grain of what Christ established as his M.O.

When Roman occupiers oppressed the people of Israel, Christ did not join the revolt. When taxes were due, he paid them — even when the taxes were unfair. When Peter chopped off the soldier’s ear, Christ healed the man.

Christ was NOT a voice against the governing authorities. He did not push back against those forces, even if they were obstructing the way of life of the Hebrews.

What message does silence send? Can the act of responding gently or even not responding at all be louder than a protest?

When Christ silently knelt down and drew in the sand, the accusers of the sinful woman scattered (John 8). When Jesus remained quiet before Herod, he maintained his authority by not showing him the sign he had hoped for (Luke 23). Christ’s actions often confounded the leaders in the temple and in the government.

We have the same opportunity as followers of Christ. We can speak the soft answer that turns away wrath. We can be silent and let God be our defender. We can live a quiet and godly life that will win over those who observe our lives.

A final thought... Was Jesus just quietly going about life waiting to die for us? Far from it. He made plenty of noise along the way. It was either the noise of radical love to those most undeserving, the direct confrontation of the legalistic and abusive religious elite, or the crashing of flipped tables as he forced the Hebrew money-changers out of the temple.

May we have wisdom to know when and to whom we must make noise and when to be quiet.