

Week of Meetings 05 Be Still and Know

by Benard Fell

We need to be still in God's presence to receive spiritual growth and power, and to trust in his sovereignty and timing.

Duration: 42:56

Scripture: Genesis 27:33, Psalm 37:7, Psalm 46:10, Ecclesiastes 3:11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9

Topics: "Waiting On God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a brother who witnessed an auctioneer trying to sell a picture. While the auctioneer spoke about the picture's virtues and value, the brother's mind was focused on God, asking for deliverance. The preacher then discusses the story of Joseph, who was forgotten by the butler for two years before being released from prison. The sermon emphasizes the importance of finding time to sit at the feet of Jesus and meditate on His word, as the world's fast pace often hinders this practice. The preacher encourages the audience to present the glorious and transcendent person of Jesus Christ to others, allowing His presence to overshadow any human element.

Transcript

God is our refuge and a strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, seal up.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make loud the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved.

God shall help her, and that writes early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge, seal up. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

He breaketh the bowl, and cutteth the spear in thunder. He burneth the chariot into fire. Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the heathen, or the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge, seal up. I suppose this will be the language of the godly remnant in that coming day, when truly they will say, recognizing the Lord Jesus as their true Messiah. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. God is our refuge and strength, a very pleasant help in trouble. But I do not propose tonight to give an exposition of this psalm, rather to speak from those words in verse 10.

Be still, and know that I am God. Here we have a direct call from God for stillness, and I think we need this word today. Of all days we are living in a day of hurry, and somebody as well said that the world is out of breath, and so it is because things are traveling at such a tremendous pace.

There's a cry for speed and more speed, and so the world goes rushing headlong on. I've had this experience myself. I go back to my early days of service for the Lord in the Bahamas, and I will remember the first trip I took from Nassau to Miami.

I traveled under Becky Kay, one of the local mail boats, at the moderate speed of 10 miles an hour. The next time I visited Miami, I traveled on the Pan American Clipper, and we traveled at 285 miles an hour, and I assure you that gliding through the air was far more comfortable than being locked in the cradle of disease all night. But then when I came over from Britain this last time, we traveled at over 500 miles an hour.

And by the way, while I was in England, they were having a test with that new plane, the Concorde, and in those tests the speed attained was over a thousand miles an hour. Just imagine, that's a speed that will really counteract the rotation of the earth, and it means to say this, that the plane could leave Heathrow, London, in the early hours of 1971, and arrive in New York City before 1970 had run its course. Which, I think you will agree, is a very disturbing state of things.

And by the way, when we think of these brave astronauts, we think of them traveling at the fantastic speed of 18,000 miles an hour. Now, I did a little bit of reckoning the other day, and I noticed that it would just take 60 seconds or one minute to travel from Miami to Jacksonville at that speed. But, I'll tell you firmly that I prefer flight number 70, National Airlines, just the same.

And so the speed goes on, friends, and I do believe that with this increasing pace that we should be very careful that we ourselves as Christians do not catch this fever, because it is indeed contagious. We need to take our foot off the accelerator of life, and definitely slow down, and I believe that's the reason why we need places such as Park of the Palms, in order that we might be able to do this, and we're certainly doing it at this present time. And so, I do believe that in this hectic rush, in this hurly-burly, in this swirl of life, we need this word, be still, and know that I am God.

In fact, I think we have this exhortation right through the scriptures. Stand still, sit still, be still. Jesus never once said hurry, but he did say hurry.

That God never hurries. I would say very reverently that God, on the other hand, is slow. He is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

His purposes are very often worked out instantaneously, but never hurriedly, because there is always a set time in his wonderful plans and dispensations and purposes. He has a lot of creation for that, and we see there a set time, because God works to a plan and he never hurries. On the other hand, I'm afraid it is the flesh that tends to be so often impatient, the flesh that cannot wait, the flesh that gets into a fevered

state, a flesh that wants to run before God and not wait for his time.

Many a time, I've heard farmers and other farmers look at fruit and say that fruit is not full, and consequently it's worthless. The farmers really mean that the farmers have been in such a hurry to pick the fruit that they have done so before it had reached the point of maturity. The fifth time, shall I say, even in the realm of botany, and consequently because of that undue haste, the fruit is worthless.

The flesh likes to hurry, the flesh finds it very hard to wait, the flesh gets so absolutely impatient, and God says now, be still and know that I am God. I think we have illustration after illustration of this. Let us think of Joseph for an example.

We know he was almost a perfect type. You can't have a perfect type, for only the empty type is perfect. But, I think we see a little, shall I say, tinge of impatience in his experience, and we can well sympathize with him too.

Their languishing in the present had been revealed to him by God that he would have a wonderful future. Then he would say to himself, well I hear languishing in a dungeon. Remember those sad words to the butler? Think on me when it is well with thee.

Sad words, weren't they? Make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. But, you remember, although he was looking for creature streams, those streams dried up, and the butler forgot it. Then it is recorded that after two full years, and how full they were, full of testing, full of adversity, after two full years, and we're told that his soul entered into the iron when they put his feet into fetters.

But, after two full years, the set time came, and God began to act, and things moved very quickly. And, I think in that same chapter, it is recorded that they made him run out of the dungeon, literally run out of it, and he ran right onto the throne, because the set time had come. I'm thinking too of Moses.

Moses was also in a hurry. You remember one day he went out, and he looked upon his brethren, and he found an Egyptian, mighty one of them. He looked this way, and he looked that way, but he didn't look that way, and he stopped the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

And then, when the news went around, there was trouble, and he went for his life. Now, he supposed that his brethren would have understood how that by his hand he would have delivered God's people, but they understood not. And why didn't they understand? Because Moses was in a hurry.

He was just 40 years before God's time. But then, not only the menfolk that sometimes are in a hurry, what about the womenfolk? Well, I'm thinking now of Sarah. It had been revealed by Abraham, and also, of course, the Pharaohs, that their seed would be as the stars of heaven for multitudes, and as the fans of the sea that cannot be numbered.

And yet, Sarah was in such a hurry she couldn't wait for God's time, and resorted to carnal means. You know the result. And it seems to me that the whole trouble between the the Arabs at Israel today is all due to the impatience of Sarah.

Isn't that true? We think of Rebecca. Rebecca wanted the blessing to descend upon her favorite son, and she resorted to lying and deceit, because she couldn't wait God's time. And God intended Jacob, her favorite son, to receive the blessing.

Yea, and he shall be blessed. Well, we look into these examples, friends, and then we look into our own hearts, and we see the same seeds of impatience, and the same desire very often for the flesh to hurry and to run before God. Hence, this needed exhortation.

Be still. Be still. It doesn't matter what our circumstances may be, friends.

They may be absolutely adverse. God says, be still, for we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Let us never run before God.

Let us recognize that all things are in his sovereign control, and that all things are not some things work together for good to them that love God. We look at the back of the clock, or first of all, we look at the front. We see the hands, we see the face, we hear the ticking.

But then, look at the back of the clock. Look inside. We notice that there are a number of wheels, and they're all working, aren't they? But there seems to be working one against the other, and yet those seeming opposite movements are working in order to arrive at the accurate time.

And so it is in our life. All these seeming opposite movements, dear friends, if we'll only wait God's time for his revelation, we will see that they were ever working to arrive at the set time when he would manifest himself in his infinite love and in his abundant blessing. Why, Jacob said of old, all these things are against me.

Had he not realized, the set time had not yet come then, but it was very, very near. And all those very things, those opposite movements, were working together for his good, and that he might indeed have the greatest joy, no doubt, of which possessed his soul of seeing his beloved son face to face again. So, if we are in any doubt about any course to take, or if we are in any trouble concerning our present circumstances, the best advice I can give you is that of the promise.

Wait upon the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring you to pass? Yes. Wait on the Lord, I say, and again, wait. Be still.

Now, I'm going to suggest that we should be still for power. Power for living, and also power for dying in our spiritual experience. You remember, the Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, Carry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

That word, I understand, means until you be clothed with power from on high. So, they were to know the power of stillness in order that they might know at the same time the power of the Sovereign Spirit. And when a man is clothed with power, it isn't the man that he sees, it's the Lord Jesus he seeks to present before the eyes of men.

It's the power of God demonstrated in his wonderful testimony for the Lord. It reminds me of a brother who was going through the city of Glasgow, and he chanced to pass by an auctioneer's shop, and as he looked through the doorway he saw the room full of people, and the auctioneer was putting on the desk before him a picture. He stood behind it, and then he began to speak about its virtues and its uses and art, its value, with a view of getting a sale, of course.

But the brother said, all the time the auctioneer was speaking, he said, I didn't see him. All that I saw was the picture that he was presenting to the public. The brother said to himself, that is true witness, and so it is, dear friends.

Here we have a wonderful portrait of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in all his deep protections and surpassing excellences, in his altogether loveliness, in his majesty and holiness. What a wonderful, glorious, transcendent person we have to present to the souls of men, and we should do so with the Lord himself filling the vision, so that the human element is lost sight of completely, and this glorious person, the sole source of attraction to the souls of men and women, that is true witness. And in order to have this power, in order to be clothed with this power, so that man might be completely lost sight of, and the glorious Lord filling the vision, we must be still in his presence, and tarry to be endued with that power from on high.

Now, the apostle Paul knew something of this, surely. For, you remember, he taught the Lord Christ that that thorn might be taken away, whatever it was. And the Lord answered his prayer, oh no, it wasn't taken away, but his prayer was still answered, and the Lord, instead of taking away that thorn, gave him special grace.

For, he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, would I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon me. There it is again, that the power of Christ might spread a tabernacle over me, is the word I understand.

And, I wonder that faithful servant of the Lord, when Paul endued with power from on high, it wasn't the weak apostle Paul, as far as human weakness is concerned, that was seen. It was a mighty power of the Spirit, demonstrated in and through his words, that the man was completely lost sight of. And so, it was that the apostles, when Paul came, dynamited with all dynamite.

For, the message they had to declare was a powerful one. The gospel is the dynamic of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it, and the secret of their power was this, that in the stillness of God's Christ, they had been filled with the fullness of the Spirit, and they went forth with an overflowing heart and saw much blessing in their testimony. So, we must be still, friends, in order that we might learn these deep lessons in God's presence.

You remember that before the mantle of Elijah's power ever rested upon Elijah, first of all, Elijah took his own mantle and rented the thunder. That's pretty significant, isn't it? It means this, dear friends, that all creature power must be reduced absolutely to nothingness if the power of the Spirit of God is going to be displayed and demonstrated in very truth, and that's what the Lord is teaching, surely, to the Apostle Paul, even. My strength is made perfect, how? In weakness.

You have no power of your own, but your weakness is just your capacity to receive my power if you are a clean vessel through which it can blow. Therefore, we must carry in order to be endued with this power from on high. Now, the very fact that our dear brother comes from the city of Buffalo reminds me of the Niagara Falls.

I've been there once, just passing by. I savored the dear brother once in the city of Buffalo, when going through with Mr. Henry Armady. There were two people looking at those falls one day.

One was an American tourist, the other was a very keen businessman. The young girl said, my aren't they cute? The businessman said to himself, if I had the power of those falls I could light the whole city of Buffalo and set in motion all its mischief. And that's just how it turned out to be.

You know the story. Not only the city of Buffalo, but the whole of the New York state. And what about the provinces on the other side of the falls? All the tremendous power generated by those falls.

No wonder the post office at Niagara Falls used to stamp their letters, locate at the seat of power. It was the seat of power. You see, power very often comes from obstruction.

And before there could be power, before there could be power, there must be that obstruction. And because of that obstruction, the dynamos of course were set in motion and the power all was generated. We've proved that in the service of the laws, dear friends, over and over again.

When we have been obstructed, when we have been persecuted, the power and blessing has come from it. I well remember Brother Walker of Cuba. I met him in Miami the first time.

You know what happened there when Castro took over? Then his hostility began against the Lord's servant, and especially against the American missionaries. And so, Brother Walker and his wife found difficulties very soon appearing on the horizon of their service. Mr. Walker told me one day that one of his agents came up and put a gun in his face and said, we want your car.

And he took it. That's communism. So, the time came when those faithful servants had to leave the country, come over to Miami, as you know, and then the British workers, Mr. and Mrs. Layton, left soon after.

But you remember what happened. At that time, there were tens of thousands of refugees pouring into Miami. Mr. Walker, with his eye for the Lord's business, thought, now here is a wonderful opportunity of starting a work among these refugees, and so he did.

The result was a blessing. And our brother told me himself, he said, you know the amazing part is this, that we were able to reach people in Miami that we could never reach in Cuba itself. Doctors, and lawyers, and professional men who had no ear for the gospel in Cuba, said because of their circumstances they had to leave everything behind and come forth in destitution.

They were brought into contact with the Lord's servant, and they heard the gospel, and many of them were saved. You know the secret of all that. In Northwest 29th Street, there is an assembly of Spanish-speaking people, saved and gathered for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Power has come, shall I say, through obstruction, and the devil outwitted himself. During the last war, the late Mr. W.E. Vine wrote me a letter, and he said, you know, we have seen much blessing among the servicemen and women. Souls have been saved in the canteens and in the camps, and then he added, and in this way God is causing the wrath of man to praise him.

That is his prerogative. And through obstruction, there comes power, and there comes nothing. So, I can see all this as I look to the Niagara Falls, and I think of the tremendous power that is generated there, and I think of the slogan located at the seat of power.

Well, what are we doing? Where is our seat of power? Thank God, it's the throne of grace. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. Be still for power, keeping it in touch with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the power will come down without a question of a doubt.

And, as far as the power of the Niagara Falls is concerned, it not only gives life to thousands of factories and ten thousands of homes, but it also puts the criminals to death. The same power in Sing Sing prison, isn't that right? And friends, we want that same power, not only for living, but for dying, so that this sinful, cruel self might ever be put to death, and be kept in the place of death, so that we might go forth in the energy and power of the blessed spirit in resurrection, glory, and power truly. For, we die to live, we live to die, and the more we die, the more we live, and the more we live, the more we die.

Be still for power. After all, a machine needs to be still. You know what would happen if your car was on the move all the time, and never rested? Because of friction and attrition, it would soon cease to work.

And, if a machine needs to be still, just we say from a breakdown, how much more the human machine, the most marvelous machine ever, shall I say, formed by God himself. And, that's the reason why we need to come to places like the Palm of the Palms, where we can gather together in Christian fellowship until the stillness of his presence, to be shut out from the outside world, in order that we might be refreshed and encouraged and strengthened in our own souls, and in order that we might go forth then into the world, feeling our responsibility to those who are still in their sins, so that we might present Christ to them. The more we get to know him so, the more we find him true, and the more we learn that others might forget to know him too.

So, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings of eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. But then, we should also be still for knowledge, and it seems to me that this is what the psalmist is emphasizing here, be still and know that I am God. You remember how Mary was one who sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his word.

The master was far from still. She was in the kitchen, very, very busy, preparing a meal for the Lord. Very nice.

But the scripture tells us that she was cumbered about with much serving, and I understand the word really means she was distracted with much serving. The Lord never intended any one of his children to be distracted in his service. You remember how, with impatience, she gently rebuked the Lord Jesus, don't you care Lord that my sister left me alone? And you remember what the Lord said to her in another gentle rebuke, Martha, Martha thou art careful and troubled over many things, but one thing is meaningful, stillness.

And Mary hath chosen this good part which shall not be taken away from her. In other words, she was receiving a meal from the Lord Jesus, while Martha was preparing one for him. I'm going to suggest that the Lord had greater pleasure in giving a meal to his dear saint, sitting at his feet, than he was with regard to receiving one in the hands of Martha.

But somebody may say, oh but wasn't that very selfish of Mary to leave her sister Martha to all the kitchen chores? Not at all. There's one little word there, that little word also implies that Mary felt her responsibility in the kitchen, and she performed the household chores, but she also found time to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to hear his word. You know that the art of meditation is quickly disappearing today.

Things are moving at such a tremendous pace that there is less time spent around his word, and less time spent in seeking the face of the Lord. I'm afraid that the quiet hour is being crowded out in many instances, hence the exercise of this message tonight, dear friends. Be still, and know that I am God.

Dr. Jowett told us that he was in the National Gallery, and he was looking at Turner's pictures, enjoying them to the full, and a party of critics came in, and he said they saw the lot in five minutes. Oh they only glanced at them. And Dr. Jowett said, I thought my friend, be still and know Turner.

We have here, as I have already said, a wonderful portrait of the Lord Jesus. Oh isn't he lovely? Wonderful in his grace, marvelous in his love. Do we merely glance at him, or do we gaze, finding time to take in his loveliness, and his beauteous, but we always unveil faith.

Beholding as a member of the glory of the Lord, I change into the same image, from glory unto glory, even by the Lord the Spirit. That's why he says, if any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. Not let him come unto me and draw.

I'm afraid some of us are guilty of drawing for others, and we've failed to put in enough time drinking at the fountainhead ourselves. I always remember when I went to Spanish Wells, in those days they didn't have running water nor electric light. Things were very primitive.

Well, we went upstairs into the little apartment provided for the preachers over the gospel hall. One of the first things we do after a seat voice, of course, is to make a nice cup of tea, being English. It's very refreshing, I assure you, after a long, tedious journey.

So, my wife began to get busy laying the table, and I got the kettle and went over to the feature pump. They had one of these iron pumps in the corner of the room, and I started to move the handle up and down, up and down, and there was a lot of clanking noise, a lot of mechanical sound, but there wasn't a splash of water that came from the spout. And I said to my wife, it must be bone dry.

I went and pumped it, but no, no, no, no. Now, what's the use of having a table laid and the kettle waiting if you haven't got water? So, anyway, we went and told one of the brethren about our predicament, or we said I'll soon put that right for you. Apparently, he knew something about pumps.

He was an expert in those matters. So, he went to the neighbor, and he got a bucket of water, and he came up, and with an enamel mug, he started to pour into the pump some water, and at the same time moved the handle up and down. And it wasn't very long before the miracle took place, and there was a gurgling noise, and the water came forth abundantly.

You see how green I was. I didn't even know that the pump, having not been used for a considerable time, had to be primed first. But I learned this lesson, friends.

I learned the lesson that before the pump could give out, you had to take in. And that is true in Christian experience. Before we can give out in the service of the Lord, we must know what it is to be in His divine or glorious presence, taking in.

Let him come unto me and drink, and then we'll have the privilege, the abundant privilege, of drawing for others. I think it is wonderfully illustrated. You remember when Abram's servant went to the well, and Rebekah comes along.

She said, drink, my lord. Notice the order. And then she said, and I will draw for your tunnels also.

The drinking must precede the drawing for others. Nothing can take the place of our own personal perusal of God's will. My meditation of him shall be sweet.

Whose meditation? My meditation. In my view, we enjoy the meditation of others. We love to sit at the feet of the Lord's servants, and hear them expound the truth of God, and our hearts have been filled, have they not? Oh, I can go back to my early experience in my younger days, and think of those dear godly men, the children's seed and others.

Oh, how the truth came in all its freshness in those early days. Oh, what lessons I learned, friends, and I stand in the good of them tonight. I thank God for their ministry, but nothing can take the place or repeat of our own personal meditation, perusal of God's own word.

My meditation shall be sweet, not someone else's. So, we must be still for knowledge. The time is done.

We must be still for refreshment. We must be still for peace of heart, and peace of mind. In other words, take time to be holy, and in these days of rush and bustle, may we know increasingly what it means to go into God's presence, to endure the stillness and the quietness of it, and then to go forth into a world that's torn with lawlessness, and sin, and friction, strikes and struts, and give them the message that we have received from God himself in the stillness of his presence.

365 encouraging, take time to be holy, speak up to thy Lord. 365 abide in him always, and feed on his word. May friends of God's children help those who are weak, for getting in nothing is blessing to seek.

365 O God our Father, we do indeed thank thee that in this present evil world, we can come at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, into thy presence, and enjoy the stillness of the sanctuary. We realize that the world is rushing on, it is like a veritable hurricane swirling round about us, but we thank thee as is true of every hurricane, we can enjoy the calm central point of rest, and we can hear thy sweet voice saying to us, be still and know that I am God. So, as we go forth tonight, we pray that we may go forth rejoicing in the knowledge of thy goodness, and realizing that quietness and tranquility within our own soul, that nothing external can ever take away.

Add thy blessing for thy word tonight to our hearts, for his name's sake, and we pray for our dear brother, that he may be helped in a little message in the lounge, as he seeks to tell us a little of the work that the Lord is doing in and through him. For the name of our Lord Jesus, and for his sake, we ask these messages. Amen, amen.

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