

The Silence of the Lamb

Luke 23:1–12

Have you ever felt like the whole world was against you? Accusations flying, people twisting your words, or gossiping about you—and you were unsure whether you should defend yourself or not, say something or not?

I want to submit to you that if you've never felt that tension, you may not be Spirit-filled.

Let me ask you:

Are you wise because you're willing to speak up? Or are you wise because you know when to shut up?

There are times we need to speak up—this message isn't excusing passivity or the “cover-up” we can fall into when we stay silent about an injustice that is harming others. But in a world that believes whoever screams the loudest wins, the wisdom and virtue of holding your tongue seems almost lost.

That's exactly where Jesus stood in Luke 23. He was falsely accused, dragged from one courtroom to another, mocked, and treated with contempt. Yet He said very little. But His silence wasn't weakness. It was sovereign strength.

Today we'll see why He remained silent, how that silence spoke louder than words in the best possible way, and what it teaches us about true strength in a noisy, self-defending world.

Sermon in a Sentence:

The strongest response isn't louder words—it's the meek wisdom that trusts God's sovereignty and lets character and Christ speak louder than words.

1. The Silence That Fulfilled Prophecy and Demonstrated Trust

Notice first, in the face of accusations, **the Silence That Fulfilled Prophecy and Demonstrated Trust**. The religious leaders drag Jesus before Pilate with three charges: misleading the nation,

forbidding to pay tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ, a king (v. 2). These are clever accusations that twists the truth to make Jesus sound like a political threat.

So Pilate asks Jesus directly: “Are you the King of the Jews?” (v. 3).

Jesus replies simply: “You have said so.”

That’s it. No elaborate defense, no argument, no counter-accusation. But Pilate immediately declares, “I find no guilt in this man” (v. 4). Yet the crowd persists, urgently accusing Him further: “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place” (v. 5).

Hearing “Galilee,” Pilate learns Jesus is under Herod’s jurisdiction and sends Him there to shift the responsibility (vv. 6–7). Herod is glad because he has long desired to witness Jesus perform miracles. Yet Herod has no real interest in justice—he’s not about to stick his neck out for anyone unless there’s something in it for him.

Luke records: “So he questioned him at some length, but he [Jesus] made no answer” (Luke 23:9).

Why the silence? First, it fulfilled prophecy. Isaiah 53:7 said of the Suffering Servant: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”

Jesus wasn’t silent because He was caught off guard—He was fulfilling what was written about Him.

Furthermore, His silence demonstrated perfect trust in the Father’s plan. He didn’t need to defend Himself because He knew the Father was in control. As King David demonstrated in the face of betrayal in Psalm 109:4, “In return for my love they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer.”

There is a time to speak boldly for Christ—think of Peter on the day of Pentecost or Paul before Roman rulers. But impulsive speech, defensiveness, or demanding our rights is often fleshly weakness, not

strength. Real strength is meekness—which is not weakness. It's a controlled tongue, a quiet trust, and a dynamic faith that says, “Father, You handle this.”

Jesus shows us: when we entrust ourselves to God, silence can be louder than any argument.

2. The Silence That Exposed False Strength and False Unity

Now watch what the silence of Jesus does—it exposes the emptiness of worldly power and the selfishness behind false unity.

Herod and his soldiers treat Jesus with contempt. They mock Him, dress Him in splendid clothing like a fake king, and send Him back to Pilate (v. 11). Pilate has already declared twice: “I find no guilt in this man” (vv. 4, 14–15). Herod finds nothing deserving death either. Yet no justice follows. Instead, something shocking happens, Luke 23:12:

“Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.”

Two enemies were united. What brought them together? It wasn't love for truth, justice, or Christ. It wasn't concern for the people. Rather it was mutual self-interest.

Herod wanted to look clever and avoid trouble. Pilate wanted to keep peace and protect his position. Jesus was the convenient scapegoat. Their alliance wasn't built on righteousness—it was built on preserving power, reputation, and security.

We see this today. Sometimes people form grievance groups or alliances not for justice, but for shared resentment, blame, or victimhood.

When a person's character is truly blameless, critics can't find real fault—so they're forced to invent charges, twist the facts, or even manipulate the rules to trap them. That's exactly what scripture records happened to Daniel: his enemies searched diligently but found nothing to accuse him of, so they schemed to change the law itself, turning the king's decree into a weapon against him (Daniel 6).

Silence doesn't always bring justice in the moment, but it reveals hearts. And it leaves the door open for God to act.

And yet, beloved, the deepest comfort is not found in winning the argument or forming alliances—it's found at Calvary. The silence that led Jesus to the cross becomes our comfort and security when gossip swirls around us, when those we love turn against us, or when betrayal cuts deep.

Charles Spurgeon said it so beautifully:

“The hill of comfort is the hill of Calvary. The house of consolation is built with the wood of the cross. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like the scene on Calvary.

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There grace has dug a fountain, which ever gushes with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourging of [Jesus] hath often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.”

Jesus' silence led straight to the cross—and there, in the midst of the greatest injustice, we find the deepest consolation and the truest victory.

Reflecting on His sacred silence should give us strength to hold our tongues. Because when we wield our words as weapons against others, we spurn the love of our silent Savior and lay another stripe on His back.

3. The Silence That Calls Us to Meek Wisdom and Godly Restraint

Lastly, Jesus' silence calls us to meek wisdom and godly restraint. Again, though He was silent, no fault could be found in Him. After gathering the religious leaders to report his findings, Pilate declared:

“You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him’ (Luke 23:14).

He further explained that Herod, having questioned Him at length, also found nothing deserving of death and sent Jesus back unchanged—no new verdict, no new sentence, no new evidence (Luke 23:15).

Jesus’ character spoke louder than any defense. He knew that God knew the truth—and that was all the security He needed.

In a world quick to accuse, mock, and demand answers, Jesus shows us that true strength often looks like restraint.

James asks a question in James 3:13 that gets to the heart of it: “Who is wise and understanding among you?” (James 3:13).

Who are the truly wise people in your life, in your church, or even in your online feeds? Do you know how to spot wisdom from above?

We live in a culture saturated with noise—outrage gets more clicks than grace. Polarization divides families, churches, and nations. On social media, countless voices and influencers compete for your attention, your likes, your subscriptions, your loyalty. Not all do so with pure motives; many prioritize influence, affirmation, or even profit over your soul’s good.

Yet James reminds us: true wisdom is not measured by volume, charisma, credentials, or viral reach. It’s proven in the quiet testimony of a life lived well.

He writes:

“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13).

James doesn’t point to eloquent arguments or impressive knowledge first. He says: Look at their life. Do their actions flow from a meek, humble, controlled strength that builds up rather than tears down? That’s the real evidence of wisdom from above.

This matters because knowledge and wisdom from above are not the same thing. You can master theology, quote Scripture flawlessly, and win every debate—yet still harbor bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, or a divisive spirit (James 3:14–16). As James warns, “This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.” James 3:15

But heavenly wisdom, as James outlines, “...is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.” James 3:17

True wisdom from above is not seeking to win a debate for the sake of one’s ego, but to win a disciple for Christ for the sake of His mission.

There is a time to answer a fool and a time not to (Proverbs 26:4–5). There is a time to speak boldly for Christ. But being a bold witness is not the same as being impulsive or unkind.

I heard a story once of a professing Christian telling a fellow co-worker that he was being persecuted at work, that no one wanted to get close to him because of his bold witness. His co-worker replied, “People keep their distance from you not because you’re a bold witness, but because you’re obnoxious.”

I once sat down to write a letter to someone who sinned against me through gossip and slander. I poured out everything—every fact, every hurt. It was well-written, and nothing in it was untrue. But before I hit send, I forwarded it to my brother, who knew the situation. After reading it, he called me and said, “It’s accurate, but it doesn’t have any restorative point. There’s no gospel motivation here. You’re just venting.”

He was right. I reread it prayerfully and realized the same thing. And rather than rewrite it in anger, I deleted it and decided to meet the person face to face.

There’s something powerful about being in the same room with someone. When you look them in the eye, it’s harder to treat them as an enemy or a problem to be solved. You see them as a human being

—a brother or sister—who deserves patience, truth, and restoration, not just a scolding.

Historians tell us that Abraham Lincoln did something similar. He often wrote sharp, angry letters to generals or critics during the Civil War—letters full of frustration and blunt truth. But he almost never sent them. He would file them away, label them “Never Sent,” or tear them up. He reportedly said he never regretted holding back a letter written in anger.

That’s wisdom. Vent if you must. Write about how you feel—it can clarify your thoughts—but don’t send it (or speak it) in the heat of emotion. Wait. Pray. Seek counsel. Meet face to face when possible. Let love and restoration guide your words, not anger.

A wise person in the Bible is not described as someone who speaks his mind or is impulsive in speech. That’s a fool. A godly wise person is slow to speak, thinks biblically before speaking, and when he does speak, his words are seasoned with salt, with grace (Colossians 4:6). He doesn’t gossip or slander—he talks to people, not about them.

Do you know that the name “devil” means “slanderer” or “accuser” (Revelation 12:10)? That’s what he does. But when your security is in the God who sees and His smile is what matters most to you, you don’t have to defend yourself. You can leave that to God.

And when you’re a godly wise person, you certainly won’t act like a devil or be used by him to slander, gossip, sow discord, or division. You won’t be a keyboard warrior. Again, you will talk to people, not about them.

The book of Proverbs drives this home repeatedly:

Proverbs 21:23

“Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”

Proverbs 17:28

“Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”

Proverbs 10:19

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.”

Proverbs 15:1

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 12:18

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

I found this simple but wise acronym helpful here: **THINK**. Before you speak, ask: Is it **T**rue? **H**elpful? **I**nspiring? **N**ecessary? **K**ind? If not, hold your tongue. That’s wisdom from above (James 3).

And yet, wisdom from above doesn’t intimidate people from sharing honestly. Spiritual maturity isn’t achieved where fear shuts down questions or doubts. I came across a reflection that captured this so well:

“Growth can’t happen where fear silences honest hearts. God never builds through control, He nurtures through truth, humility, and love. Healthy spaces allow questions. Holy spaces allow grace...Let’s create space in our hearts and lives where voices are heard, consciences are honored, and growth is guided by love... not fear.”

Jesus welcomed honest questions. When John the Baptist, for example, was imprisoned, he sent his disciples to ask if He was the One, and Jesus answered with grace and evidence (Luke 7:19–23). Wisdom is “open to reason” (James 3:17). Let’s build communities where people feel safe to ask, to doubt, and to grow—guided by love, not fear.

God, who sees all things—including the hidden motives of the heart—holds us accountable, especially those who teach or speak in His name. James warns: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).

In an age where anyone can become a “teacher” with a platform, we must guard our ears, our hearts, and our imitation. Who we listen to shapes who we become. Who we follow influences how we live. And the Spirit uses those who reflect Christ’s character to sow seeds of righteousness and peace.

When we pursue Jesus’ wisdom above everything else—praying for it and reflecting His likeness in our broken world—it reshapes our relationships, our character, and our communities.

Ultimately, Christ-like wisdom is not simply about how much you know, or even knowing how to apply what you know, but doing so in a Spirit-filled manner and motivation, with self-control, and with the goal of restoration, rescue, and peace to the glory of Jesus.

Again, let’s strive to be those wise ones James describes—known not by our words alone, but by lives that reflect the Savior.

Conclusion

Jesus’ silence was not defeat—it was victory. He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23). When we face injustice, accusation, or the urge to speak impulsively, may we learn from the Lamb and trust deeply, speak sparingly, and let character and Christ speak loudest.

Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father through the darkest moment—and God turned the cross into our redemption.

If the Spirit is speaking to you today—perhaps about impulsive words, holding grudges, aligning with wrong motives, gossip, slander, or simply needing to rest in God’s sovereignty—come before the Lord in prayer right now, wherever you are.

In a moment we are going to partake in communion. If you’re a believer, you’re welcome to partake, but let’s do so in a worthy manner. Let’s prepare our hearts.

Take a quiet moment to examine yourself honestly before God. Confess where you’ve spoken too quickly or trusted too little. Confess

where you've impulsively defended yourself instead of entrusting it to Him. Confess where silence could have spoken grace, but anger or fear spoke instead.

And then—rejoice.

Rejoice that Jesus was silent when He could have called legions of angels. Rejoice that He opened not His mouth when accused, so that we might be declared not guilty. Rejoice that His silence on the cross absorbed every accusation that could ever come against us.

As we take the bread, remember His body broken in silence for our healing.

As we take the cup, remember His blood poured out in silence for our forgiveness.

Let the silence of Jesus speak to you today.

It speaks pardon.

It speaks peace.

It speaks victory over every sin, every injustice, every accusation.

When you receive the elements, again, examine your heart. Confess your need. Rejoice in His finished work.

As we partake together, let His silence remind us:

We are forgiven.

We are free.

We are His.