



WHEN LIFE TUMBLES IN  
AND GOD IS SILENT  
THE BOOK OF JOB



CONNECT

Has anyone ever given you “the silent treatment”? Have you ever done the same?

WORD

**Job 23:8-10 (ESV)** - <sup>8</sup>“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; <sup>9</sup>on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him. <sup>10</sup>But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

WHAT

**What does the Bible say?**

We live in a world where there is constant noise and very little silence. We are surrounded by the noises of life from the low level hum of computers and appliances to the ubiquitous interruption of ring tones and alerts from our phones. We have actually become uncomfortable with silence. When the power goes out, the background noises that we tune out suddenly become noticeable by their absence. When someone calls for a moment of silent prayer and reflection, we shuffle uncomfortably. Even in the middle of a church service, we are uncomfortable with silence.

Silence is especially painful when it is the silence of God in our lives. When God is silent we can simply become upset with God, we can become confused, and we can start to doubt. The truth is that we just don't know what to do with God's silence. There is some sort of anguish in our lives, we are suffering and in pain. And it seems that we have been praying to God for a very long time, to help us with our problems, and all that we are met with, is silence from God. Then we begin to question if God has given up on us or has stopped listening to us and our prayers.

The Old Testament story of Job, is a reminder of crying out to God for answers and receiving silence. Job cried out to God for the first thirty seven chapters of the book of Job and God finally answered him in chapter 38. God said, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?" (Job 38:4-5). That is God's way of reminding us that God continues to be in charge of this universe even when we don't hear him.

Often, God is not silent after all; we are just not tuned into hearing him. We are surrounded by background noise and countless distractions. God is trying to communicate with us, but we can't hear him because we have blocked him out. Our minds are tuned to other things instead of listening to what God is saying. It is in those moments that we can hear that still, small voice of our creator God. And it is in those moments that we can receive answers to our worries or concerns.

There is a story that you may have heard about a man who once lost his valuable watch in an ice house. All of his fellow workers diligently searched the ice house looking for the watch. They combed every inch of it, but they couldn't find it. A little boy, hearing about their search, slipped into the ice house and quickly emerged with the watch. All of the men were amazed and they said, "How did you find it?" And he said, "Well I simply went to the ice house, closed the door, laid down quietly on the floor, and then I began to listen. After a while, I could hear the tick, tick, tick of the watch."

#### SO WHAT

What is the relevance to my life?

- What really stood out to you in today's message and lesson? What would you like to discuss further with the group?
- When we give someone "the silent treatment," we are actually communicating a great deal. What kind of things can be communicated by silence?
- God communicates with us in many ways. Sometimes it is through his word (2 Tim. 3:16), other times it is through a still, small voice (Acts 11:12), sometimes it is through the advice of godly men and women (Prov. 12:15). Still other times, he speaks to us through situations or through a sense of inner conviction and peace. Even God's silence can speak volumes. The key to all of these is that we have to be listening. How has God spoken to you? What have you done to insure that you are listening?

- The Scottish preacher, Arthur John Gossip once said, "I do not understand this life of ours. But still less can I comprehend how people in trouble and loss and bereavement can fling away peevishly from the Christian faith. In God's name, fling to what? Have we not lost enough without losing that too?" In the book of Job, we see Job holding fast to his faith. Have there been times in your life when you flung away your faith because of God's silence? What did you fling to? How did it feel to lose faith in this way? How did you find your faith again?

#### NOW WHAT

How do I apply the word to my life?

- God presents us with learning moments in a particular time and a particular place so that they will be effective in changing our lives. Why did God choose this moment to bring this lesson to you?
- What will you do to insure that you are tuning in to God's communication with you? What steps can you take to insure that you are listening?
- How will you apply this lesson to your life this week in your home, at work and in the world?
- Is there someone you know that you can share this lesson with? How will you share this message with them?
- How can we help you? How can we hold you accountable? Please share how we can pray for you and support you with love.