

HOLD YOUR PEACE – Exodus 14:10-31

In Exodus 14, at the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses exhorts the children of Israel to “hold their peace!” I believe this is a timely message today given the fact that in this world *there are many enemies of peace!* A peaceful day can be shattered by violence as we have witnessed recently, in El Paso Texas and Dayton Ohio. The unexpected, even a slight comment can rob us of our peace! One thing we do know and that is, peace is an essential part of life; **without it you can’t go far!**

Recently, I read about an NFL Buffalo Bills offensive lineman who “retired,” at the age of 26, because of the “unknown.” He said: *“I have lived the last two years of my NFL career waging war with myself mentally. With constant anxiety, persistent worry and fear of the unknown and of what comes next? If I were to be done.”* For some the “unknown” (future uncertainty) can rob them of their peace.

The “fear-factor” is what causes many to live without peace. **But this is not the “spirit” in which we are to live, as believers. (2 Timothy 1:7) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** Why? So that our faith will progress, and **not regress!** We can progress in our faith, (in life) because the peace

we have is not of this world! **(John 14:27) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.** Thus, the “peace” we hold, is not of us, but of Christ! **(Ephesians 2:14a) “For He Himself is our peace...”** With God and man, in heaven and on earth!

Paul said, it’s a peace which “surpasses” understanding! Having said that, why is it so hard at times for believers to “hold their peace?” **In Exodus 14 we find three obstacles to our peace, as believers. In this current “hyper-political election” year, with so much hatred and division, couple with “growing instability” in the world! We need to take heed to Moses’ exhortation, and “hold our peace!”**

In **Exodus 14** Israel’s back is against the wall, with the Red Sea before them and the mighty Egyptian Army bearing down on them. Many of you gathered here may be facing a similar situation; your back is against the wall of circumstance and the enemy is bearing down upon you! But remember this; **God is at His best when we are at our worst! (Psalm 34:19) Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.**

In **(v.10-12)** we find three obstacles of our peace, which we must guard against, in order to “hold our peace,” in Christ. **(1) Faithless prayer. (v.10b, 11a). Notice:** they “cried out” (prayed) to the Lord; but said to Moses.” ***We cannot hold our peace, if what we say does not match what we pray!*** They “prayed” as if they trusted God, but

lived (acted) as if they didn't! **(James 1:5-8) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.** To *hold our peace* is to place our trust in God, alone!

The second characteristic of *fear* is, **(2) Blame shifting. (v.11b)** The people started blaming Moses. ***Everyone loves you when you're winning, but they also love to kick you when you're down!*** We are always looking for someone to blame about our circumstances; this is a clear lack of faith, *unbelief* personified! Even Sarah, *Abraham's wife*, fell victim to "blame-shifting!" *I know you want to blame your spouse, employer, economics, parents, ethnicity, but the fact is you're just that "jacked up!"* The problem with "blame shifting is that it will **never** produce "lasting peace!"

It's only when we "own" our part, that we can hold our peace! In **Luke 18** Jesus said it wasn't the "self-righteous" Pharisee who went down from the temple "justified," but the "tax-collector" one of the most despised members of Jewish society. He did not "blame-shift" but beat his breast praying, ***"Have mercy on me a sinner!"*** Thus, **David prayed: (Psalm 139:23-24) Search me, O God, and know my**

heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

The third obstacle to hold our peace is, **(3) Returning to carnal logic.** (v.12). We cannot hold our peace by leaning on our limited understanding of the situation! The people respond to Moses based on their limited understanding; ***“We told you this would happen!”*** (v.12).

Historically this was a pattern for Israel. Again, and again, they would return to “human logic,” their own assessment of a prosperous life, and start *worshipping idols and relying upon men*, rather than trusting in God’s word! And every time the result was “disastrous! **(Proverbs 3:5-6) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**

What have we learned thus far? ***Faithless prayer, blame shifting, and carnal logic*** can “loosen” our “hold on His peace.” In (v.13) Moses provides a **three-fold** remedy, to “strengthen” our hold on peace.” **(1) Do not be afraid.** The Hebrew word for **not – *al: it implies preference***. In other words, after the initial shock of a fearful situation, fear becomes a “choice!” Will I walk in fear and live as a “victim” or walk in faith and live as a victor, in Christ!

Here's a practical day to day way in which we can chose faith over fear; **1) Put some praise on it!** "Defiant praise" is like "Neosporin" to the soul; it heals our wounds caused by fear! *I heard a pastor say once that he had a friend, who was going through a difficult time, being harassed by the devil, he set up two chairs facing each other and said, "Devil sit down, I'm going to worship God and you're going to watch me!"* **(Acts 16:25) But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**

2) Stand still. Naturally, when trials come, we want to "run!" "**Fight or flight!**" Moses exhorts them to "**fight!**" Paul said, "**I've fought the good fight of faith!**" Faith is a fight, that we win by "standing still,"; surrendering our mind, body, and soul to what God has "promised," rather than what we feel! **(Psalm 46:10) Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!** When we are "fighting" God stands still, but when we stand still God "fights" fo us; only then can we *truly* know that He is God!

3) See the Lord's deliverance. I'm looking for God's "salvation" in the situation. Salvation - Yeshwu'ah: **deliverance, welfare, victory.** God is our deliverance, welfare, and victory! If I will look for His salvation, *His will*, rather than my "solutions!" **(2 Chronicles 20:12) "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."**

CONCLUSION: 2 things: Beware of “procrastination: **Procrastination is the enemy of our peace. In v.15-18 – Although Moses spoke words of “great” faith, acting upon them, was another thing! Once God has told us what to do, we don’t need another “prayer meeting!” **Move forward!** Moses, “**move the people forward!**” Secondly remember:- **Let your peace return.** Mark 10 – Jesus told his disciples if they went into a house and the house did not receive them, to “let their peace return to them.” **Some of us have left our peace with an ex-spouse, - relationship – a bad decision, abusive parents, a negative comment, etc. Let your peace return to you!** Jesus gave it to you freely, let it return in the same way! Notice: if not we will rob God of His “glory.” Read: (v.18).**

CLOSE: (Isaiah 26:3) You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.