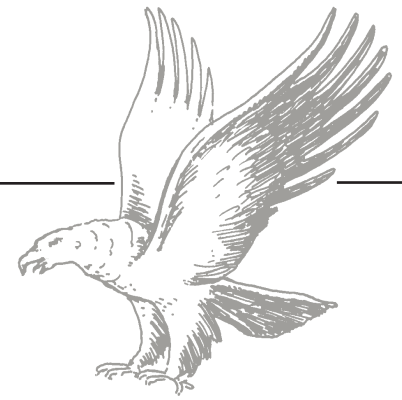


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



June 28, 2015

When God Does Not Respond

God's silence at the death of His Son has its counterpart in our own lives, when we cry out for answers, and get nothing in response. God had a reason for being silent; and that silence answers our questions.

“Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Mk. 1:11).

“. . . and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (Matt. 17:5).

“‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again’” (Jn. 12:28).

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, . . . ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” (Matt. 27:46).



Three times during the life of Jesus—at His baptism, at the Transfiguration, and just before the Last Supper—God spoke to Jesus directly from heaven. Each of these heavenly pronouncements came at a crucial point in Jesus' ministry, providing a boost to His courage—as well as informing those standing by that this was no ordinary prophet.

But while hanging on the cross, enduring the most excruciating pain and

humiliation of His life, God was silent. At the very moment when He need His Father's encouragement the most, He got nothing. Jesus felt the silence keenly. He cried out in desperation, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”, but God turned His back on His Son. Even the sky turned dark with gloom. God abandoned His Son to His fate, and Jesus had to face the end utterly alone.

Given His prior declarations of approval, God's silence at the cross has to be seen as a deliberate snub. The Father really did forsake His Son on that day, leaving Him to die a horrible death without a word of explanation or comfort. Jesus knew that God was pleased with His performance; God had shouted His approval from heaven on multiple occasions. So why the cold shoulder treatment on the day of Jesus' death?

Before we try to answer that question, let's take a moment to review our own life experiences. How many times in our lives have we faced some terrible loss or suffered some deep pain, and cried out to God for relief, for answers, for *anything* that lets us know He cares

about our predicament—only to meet by the same silence that Jesus experienced on the cross? How often have we, like Job, vented our frustration at a God who claims to be all-powerful, yet seems so indifferent to our suffering?

There is a connection between our pain and what Jesus experienced on the cross. When Jesus met His fate, He did not deserve His Father's rejection. Had God acted with pure justice, He would have roared from heaven and struck down the cowards who were abusing His Son. But God was not acting from justice; He was acting from *love*, allowing His Son to die for the sins of humanity. Jesus got the silent treatment, so that we could get forgiveness.

And therein lies the connection. When we encounter hardship, we can know that God has already spoken comfort to us, in the promises of a perfect home that awaits in heaven, a home purchased through the sacrifice of Jesus. He does not have to respond to our every sorrow; He has spoken once for all time, giving us assurance that our pain is only temporary, and a better day is coming.

— David King