

Text: Psalm 29

Purpose: that the hearers more fully listen to the Word of the LORD by receiving His peace

Psalm 29 makes a pretty bold claim: there is only one Voice you should be listening to. The LORD's Voice. No other voice compares to the LORD's Voice.

That's the claim. The LORD's Voice can blow up California Redwood trees while simultaneously speaking baby deers into existence. A Voice that can destroy and give life.

But if our lives are like foxholes, we spend more time listening to the shells overhead, and we ignore the Captain's commands which are designed to get us through the fight. Too much fear listening to the shell's (whistle) and too little time listening to the Commander saying, "This way to safety, Private!"

So could we spend some time 1) MUTING the distracting sounds; 2) MAGNIFYING the LORD's VOICE? Muting & magnifying.

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What kinds of voices need to be muted from our hearing? Where to begin? The simple answer though according to the Psalm is any voice that claims authority over you but lacks the power or the majesty of the LORD -- needs to be muted. That kind of noise is unworthy of your attention. But that's the hard thing because there are lots of voices that convince you that if you do not act according to what they command, you will disintegrate; you will break down as a human being. You are worthless. That's what these untrue voices claim.

Example - false guilt. False guilt is an internal voice that screams: "You could have done more!"

"Had you taken your spouse to a better hospital earlier then maybe they'd be alive today!"

I'd imagine false guilt shouts at hospital staff too: "Had you prepped the machine earlier!" "If you didn't let them return home!" "If you hadn't prescribed the pain meds, maybe they'd still be around!"

And I can only imagine if you're a parent: "You should have held them back a grade!" "You should have made them read earlier." "You should have done this!" "You shouldn't have done that!"

False guilt - an internal voice screaming at you that you failed. The problem with false guilt though, is that it's FALSE; it's overreaching. You responded to your spouse's health problems; you didn't just leave them. The same goes with hospitals. You worked through your protocol. You did what you needed to do.

Look - are there things we can improve upon. Sure! And there are moments where we genuinely mess up..even sin in those callings. But TOO often, we listen to this false guilt, because it's as loud as a tornado siren.

We can't stop replaying the moment in our heads like it's a crime scene where we're looking for evidence that would have allowed us to make a different decision. We listen to that false guilt, and we get gun shy - like we can't help anybody else because they'll end up just like your spouse or your child or your patient. This voice prevents you from moving forward.

There are SO many other little voices - internal and outside of you from others - that you're listening to too much. And here's the problem with these voices. They don't give life. They only tear down. They convince you that there's a throne in hell with your name on it.

And that's why these voices have to be muted. Voices bent on your destruction need to be shut off. But a new voice has to fill that void. I think as human beings we require words to live. You need something speaking into your life to know where you're standing; to evaluate your worth.

So it's muting the untrue voices like false guilt, but it's also replacing the untrue voices. Psalm 29 claims the LORD's Voice needs to fill the void. The LORD's Voice needs to be magnified. Why? Because the LORD tears down for sure: "the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon" "and strips the forests bare." But as much as He may terrify us and challenge us when it comes to sin, He also "makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox." "The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth." In other words, the LORD's Voice can tear down just as much as He speaks life. And typically, when He tears down, His purpose is to remodel you by the way.

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Jesus took a nap on a boat. His Disciples were ferrying Him to the other side of the Lake. Then a loud storm sparked over the Lake. The boat was going up and down, up and down. Possibly 10 foot waves! Water splashed into the boat. They were going to drown. But what was Jesus still doing? Napping. Out like a light.

That storm spoke to the Disciples: "You are nothing compared to me and my waves. Either I'll electrocute you with lightning or I'll drown you with water, and you can't do or say anything to stop me." The storm spoke death to them, and the Disciples believed it.

And that's why they whimpered over to Jesus: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" In other words, "We've listened to what this storm has to say, Jesus, and the lightning made a good point -- we're dead men."

Many of us are in the boat with the Disciples. You're looking over the events that led up to your husband's death -- hindsight yells, "You should have done more!" You're thinking, "I see my patient's face -- I could have done more." "I'm watching my kid walk right into the hurricane, and I can't stop them. I should have done something differently."

False Guilt is splashing you in the face, and you either want to jump into the ocean because you're done -- you want to give up -- OR you're convinced that you are guilty for circumstances that were outside of your control.

You know how Jesus responded to the storm that night in the boat? "The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters [Psalm 29:3]." Remember the Psalm? "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever [Psalm 29:10]."

Jesus said three words to the storm (technically only two words in Greek): "Peace, be still." The storm shut up. It had no other choice but to bow in the presence of the King of the Universe. Psalm 29: "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever."

You see, your biggest problem isn't that you responded negatively or too slowly or unprofessionally to your spouse, your patient, your kid. Your only problem is that you believed you had the power to shut up the storms your loved ones face -- that's our sin -- believing we had the power to calm the flood. We don't.

And that's why we've been listening to this internal voice of false guilt among a whole bunch of voices we don't have time to name.

But you know what Jesus, the Voice of God made flesh is doing right now? Last verse of the Psalm: "May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with **peace!**" This God who is capable of speaking your destruction into existence, speaks life into you right now.

Jesus told that storm, "Peace, be still." And that's what He's saying to the negative voices filling you right now.

"I should have taken my wife to the doctor sooner" Jesus says to you, "You did what you could. Well done -- so now..peace, be still"

"If I had 10 extra minutes, I could have saved the patient." Jesus says to you, "Are you sure...your Father in Heaven is the only who knows how long each person will live. I don't think you're privy to that information. You did what you were called to do. Well done, good and faithful servant. Peace, be still."

"What if I had parented differently?" Jesus says to you, "Look, you raised them up in the Christian faith; you put a roof over their heads. You did what you were called to do. They may be done with you or God, but My Father isn't done with them. Peace, be still."

That's muting the voices and magnifying THE Voice. And that's what you're going to do. This week, when you're confronted with untrue words, but you're tempted to believe those voices anyways -- I'm a loser, I'm a failure, I should have responded differently -- you're going to say to yourself, "Peace, be still."

And that's going to change you. Why? Because those aren't your words. You possess them, sure. BUT those words matter because that's God's voice spoken by God's Word. John, one of Jesus' Disciples, said, "In the beginning was the Word," maybe we could say...just for today...that "In the beginning was the Voice." [---] "And the Voice was with God, and the Voice was God."

That Voice -- Jesus, the Son of God, has the power and majesty envisioned in Psalm 29. Don't believe me? Then why were the guards at Jesus' tomb tinikling their tunics when Jesus rose from the dead? They collapsed like dead men on Easter, because they came face-to-face with the God who can just speak AND He shatters the biggest, strongest Oak tree you've ever seen.

But even though this God can destroy, He also enlivens you with the truth. You don't save people; you're God's instrument for people's salvation. Whether it's putting food in your kid's stomachs or helping a patient experience another decade of life. You are the hands of God's kindness and providence in those moments -- not the source.

So when internal voices convince you that you should have done God-like miracles. You say to yourself, "Peace, be still." And those words will matter because they are God's Words to you. Those words matter because they were spoken by the only Person in your life Who has validated Psalm 29's claim that God is able to destroy and make things live just by speaking.

Because Jesus is the One who told a storm to be quiet. Jesus is the One who told His friend Lazarus to stop being dead and wake up, and Lazarus walked out of his grave. The Father most likely did the same thing to Jesus, His Son: "Son wake up," and Jesus came back to life.

You are called today to mute the untrue voices, and magnify -- turn up -- say out loud to yourself this week when you're overwhelmed -- "PEACE, BE STILL!"

When you do that, you will live, because it will be the true King -- as the Psalm puts it -- who is giving you, His people, STRENGTH and blessing you with PEACE. Amen.