

**December 19, 2021**

## The Ministry of Silence

by Ken Weliever

Ralph and Darlene Burson was an elderly couple who lived next door to the Jacksons—Bill, Sherry, and four-year-old Jason.

A few days after Darlene died, little Jason wanted to go next door to see his friend Mr. Ralph, who was sitting on the back porch. His mother agreed.

When Jason walked up Ralph began to gently shed some tears. Upon seeing this Jason climbed up into his lap.

When he returned home Sherry asked, “Jason, what did you say to Mr. Burson?”

“Nothing,” Jason replied. “I just helped him cry.”

This story reminds me of Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. For all that they said and did wrong as they one by one added insult to Job’s physical, mental, and emotional suffering by their accusations, there’s one thing they did right.

The Bible says when they heard about Job’s adversity they came together “To mourn with him and comfort him.” At a distance, they didn’t even recognize Job. Then “they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great” (Job 2:11-13).

Often when we have a friend who’s

hurting, we simply freeze. We don’t know what to say. Or do. Offer advice? Try to cheer them up? Seek to solve the problem? Read scripture?

The initial response of Job’s friends is worth emulating when a brother, friend, or family member is hurting.

When they heard about Job’s suffering, they cared enough to come. They were not too busy to show concern. Their presence simply said to Job, “we care.”

They responded emotionally. The Bible says we ought to “weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15). Job’s suffering touched them. And they responded appropriately.

As one writer put it, “they showed solidarity with Job.” The custom in Bible times to express deep sorrow was to tear your clothes and put ashes on your head. Job had already done that. So each of them did the same thing as a visible demonstration of their feelings.

They stayed with Job. Seven days. Sometimes hurting friends need more than just a brief visit. They need someone to sit with them. To just be there.

They didn’t speak. While some commentators believe their silence may have been motivated by their belief in Job’s sins, Dave Furman suggests it was the “silent presence of encouragement.” He added, “There is a kind of ministry that is without words.” A ministry of silence.

## Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

**We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.**

## Important Dates

*If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.*

“Often we think that to truly minister to someone, we must swoop in and fix the issue,” observed blogger Zach Barnhart. “But what if, instead of offering our lessons, our insights, our theology, and our reasonings, we simply offered our ears? This is what Job’s friends set out to do.”

Unfortunately, the story of Job’s friends goes downhill after the period of silence. They completely misunderstood and misread what happened to Job. They offered insight and counsel that was all wrong.

It’s a good lesson for us when trying to help the hurting. Don’t give advice when you don’t understand the situation. There may be circumstances you’re not privy to. “Don’t try to explain everything,” advised Warren Wiersbe. “Explanations never heal a broken heart.”

The wise counsel of Mahatma Gandhi is good advice for all of us. “Speak only if it improves upon the silence.”

*{used with permission from thepreachersword.com}*

## Deity-Humanity of Christ

by Warren Berkley

From a sermon on 1 Tim. 3:16, F. W. Boreham

“He was born a tiny babe in Bethlehem – He was as human as that! Yet angels filled the air with heavenly song – He was as divine as that!

He rested, tired and thirsty, on Samaria’s well – He was as human as that! Yet He told the woman whom He found there that she had but to ask and He would give her the water of everlasting life – He was as divine as that!

He slept, exhausted, in the bow of a boat – He was as human as that! Yet, when He rose and rebuked the angry waves, they crouched like dogs at His feet – He was as divine as that!

He wept with the sisters beside the tomb at Bethany – He was as human as that! Yet, He cried ‘Lazarus come forth!’ and he that was dead left the sepulcher – He was as divine as that!”

## Prayer Requests

**Jack Wilson** has improved some but still has limited mobility.

**Jerry Richardson** is still undergoing cancer treatments.

**Karen Hallmark** has improved but is still struggling with her health and her eyes, as well as asthma.

**Dinah Williams** is home but still has very limited mobility.

**Don Simmons** is home and still struggling with his breathing.

**John Miller (Dyanne Turner’s brother)** is undergoing treatment for liver cancer.

**Mark Braddock** has stage 4 cancer and is not going to seek treatment.

**Debbie McMurray** has been diagnosed with cancer and will be undergoing chemo.

**Randall Vanaman** is having problems with one of his feet.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

**“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”**  
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord’s body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord’s will.

We are not a part of any larger organization – we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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