

I have some problems with my hearing. One of the ways it manifests is that I often struggle to tell where noises are coming from. If I lose my phone, then I have a hard time finding it even if it is ringing. And if I am in a very loud room, then I will get overwhelmed. If I am in a place like a concert or a loud restaurant with music pumping, TV's blaring, and loud people then I won't hear a thing. And all of the noise around me will affect me internally. I'll start to get anxious and overwhelmed. My heart will beat faster and I will want to do anything I can do escape.

You might not have my hearing problems, but we all live in a loud world. Our world is like a gym with a thousand screaming Middle Schoolers. Everything everywhere is demanding your immediate attention. The average smartphone user gets 46 notifications every day. That means 46 times a day just your phone screams at you. And there is all of the other noise from our work, families, the news, advertisements and everything else.

And all of that noise seeps into our souls whether we like it or not. The question is: how can we have a quiet soul in a loud world? When everything else is going crazy how can we stay calm? And how can we do it without running away to the desert or monastery? How can we remain in our normal loud lives without letting the noise get to us?

By quiet soul I mean one that is calm and at peace. One that is not shaken by what is going on around it. A quiet soul is at peace even when others are panicking. A quiet soul is humble even when others are jockeying for power. A quiet soul is relaxed even when the rest of the world is going crazy.

Our passage this morning is Psalms 131. In these three verses King David shows us how we can have a quiet soul.

Point 1: Quiet your soul through humility (v. 1).

It is not hard to find an arrogant person.

They usually make themselves known rather quickly.

Because prideful people are often the most loud.

And so if we want to have quiet souls, then we need to humble ourselves.

The first step we see in the Psalm is humility.

Verse 1, **"O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high."**

Last week was all about how we should lift our eyes to the LORD.

So, it might seem confusing why King David is not lifting his eyes or heart.

But here he is not talking about looking up at hills.

He is describing an internal attitude.

The description of the heart is another way of saying,

"My heart is not too full of myself."

Or

"My eyes are not looking down my nose at you from my high horse."

He is describing humility.

He is describing how he is combating pride and arrogance.

This is a Hebrew phrase that normally is translated as haughty or proud.

In the Bible most of the people people get proud because of their expanding wealth and power.

Most of the time their pride leads to less faith in God.

This has always been a problem for kings.

King Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26:16 grew proud, with a haughty heart and tried to make the sacrifices himself instead of waiting for priests.

In his pride, he was struck with leprosy.

King Hezekiah so sick that he was going to die.

He prayed desperately to be healed and God did so.

But, his heart was too proud and he never thanked God.

As a result, he and his whole kingdom were punished.

King Saul was too proud to accept that David had been anointed King.

He hated that the people loved David more than him.

He spent his last years as king trying to kill him.

Saul was also too proud to repent publicly.
He wanted to hide his shame so that no one would know.

King David had many flaws and sins.
But he was humble.
He never seemed to forget his roots as an average shepherd.
He didn't let the crown go too far to his head.

Because arrogance and pride ruins our souls.
One of the church fathers, Augustine said that pride is the root of all evil.
He meant that if you dig deep into any of our sins,
Then you will discover they all lead back to our pride eventually.
We don't have time to chase down how every single sin relates to pride.
Nor do we need to talk about every single way pride destroys us.

There is one primary way David sees this playing out in our lives.
"I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me."

This is how our pride manifests itself.
We occupy our time with things above our pay grade.

The idea of occupying myself has the idea of "to busy oneself" or to apply a considerable amount of time and effort into it.
This is someone spending way more time than they should,
thinking about things they shouldn't be worrying about.

The occupying is what gives us the idea of obsessing.
Someone who has covered their room with wires and red string.
Pictures covering all the windows and they don't look like they have slept in a long time.

The idea of occupation is one that takes all our time.
It's fine to think or worry about many things.

But once it takes all of your time.
Once you spend every moment of you day dreaming and worrying about
people thousands of miles away from you.
Then you have gone too far.
Then you are occupying yourself with things above your pay grade.

Many Christians are occupied by politics.
They are more disciplined by news and people who seem Christian but
aren't.
It isn't a bad thing to be informed.
It is a bad thing to be occupied by politics.
It isn't a bad thing to be knowledgable and a good voter.
It is a bad thing to spend all your free time worrying about places and
things you just learned about ten minutes ago.

Often these things are important,
But they aren't important enough that they demand all of your time.
They can be worth caring about.
But they are not worth all of your emotional energy.

I don't like talking or preaching about politics as a pastor, even though it's
a popular thing for pastors to do now.
Because I think pastors shouldn't be owned by political parties.
We need to speak where the Bible is clear and where Christians should be
united.
But in places were Christians can disagree we need to be gracious.

Honestly, I am more nervous to say things like this then I was during the
whole Wednesday night series we did on how the LGBT's view of sexuality
and gender is sinful and wrong.
I'm afraid to touch it sometimes because it is one of the biggest idols I
think Christians have.
And it comes down to the fact that we are often occupied by it.
We spend more time studying the news than God's Word.

If you think it isn't an idol, but you spend all of your time thinking about it.
Talking about it.
Reading and watching it.
Then I have some news for you.
You are occupied with things you don't need to be.

Much of what we spend our time worrying about is above us.
We worry about elections and matters we have no vote in.
We worry about God's plans for the world.
And our prideful concern makes our souls so loud.
It makes it impossible to have peace.

The **"things too great and marvelous."** are the things of God and His mysteries.
Most of what we overly occupy ourselves are things out of our control.
Sometimes Christians obsess with the things of God.

I have usually seen this when Christians get obsessed with eschatology.
They occupy themselves with the end times.
Every conversation is about who the anti Christ could be.
How this is all building up to the rapture.
What form the mark of the beast will take.
Studying Revelation is a great thing.
But you do not need to occupy yourself with it.

Or people will get obsessed with studying Calvinism or Arminianism.
They want to solve the problem of how God is in control and man has free will.

You can tell when someone is occupied by thoughts because they usually want to argue with everyone about it.
They can't let it go.
It comes up in every conversation.
It's the first thing they ask someone else they meet about.

When we occupy our thoughts with things beyond us we are like the prophet Habakkuk.

We are sitting up on our towers demanding God explain the world to us. That He tells us His plans and why He is doing what He does.

This is why God responds by saying, **"I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told."** Habakkuk 1:5

God understands our complaints.

He doesn't keep us in the dark because He is cruel.

He does so because we cannot fathom it.

And even if we could, then we simply wouldn't believe God.

My kids don't even really get the concept of what day it is.

They don't understand that Wednesday comes after Tuesday.

They don't understand that before was years ago not just yesterday.

They're just enjoying life.

They're just worrying about the things that they're supposed to be worrying about because they're little kids.

There's sometimes they try to ask me questions and it gets to a point where it's just beyond them.

I can't explain it to them.

They aren't going to be able to understand it.

And even if they could understand it it doesn't matter to them it's not going to affect their day-to-day life so they just need to not worry about it.

The Psalm is telling us it's the same thing.

There are things that are too great and too marvelous for us to understand.

So instead of getting worked up,

instead of getting frustrated,

Instead of obsessing over,

We need to humble ourselves so we can have quiet souls.

Point 2: Quiet your soul through childlike faith.

We need to have faith like a child.

In the gospels when the children are brought to Jesus the disciples try to keep them from coming.

But Jesus tells them no don't keep the children from coming because the kingdom of God belongs to children.

Jesus says that you can't get into the kingdom unless you have the faith of a child.

The Psalm plants the seeds for that story.

David tells us in verse 2, **"But I have calmed and quieted my soul."**

this is the kind of key passage that I've focused on so far in our sermon.

This desire to calm and to quiet down or very souls.

So that no matter what is going on around us.

No matter what is happening in our circumstances or in our lives, we can be calm and quiet.

And he tells us how he does this and the rest of the verse,

"like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me."

now just about all of us in this room have been weaned.

We learn to stop relying on our mother's milk and to eat food that has been given to us.

But you've probably not referred to yourself or thought of yourself as weaned in a long time.

So why does David compare himself to a child that has been weaned?

Remember the Psalms are poetry and song.

The Psalms love to paint images and pictures and illustrations for us to aid our prayers and our worship.

Any repeats this image of the weaned child twice because repetition is a common theme in Hebrew poetry.

He also wants to make sure that we don't miss it.

So there are a couple things happening in this image.

The first thing to note is that during day best as we can tell children were usually weaned by the time that they were 3 years old.

And the image that they would have is comparing a fussy baby with a well-behaved toddler.

So go ahead and picture a baby.

But don't think of a cute one that's asleep beautiful and perfectly content.

Think of the one that's whining.

Think of the one that's awake and crying.

And it's the middle of the night and parents are desperately trying to figure out what do we do?

Do you think they're hungry?

No I've tried to feed them and that they're not they're not latching they don't I don't know if they're hungry.

Then you just sleep here let me rock and let me shush them.

No, I don't think they're sleepy maybe they just need to be bounced let's sing their favorite song.

That is the image that the psalmist is giving us of an unweaned baby.

It just spends a lot of its time that it's awake crying and fidgety.

Compare that to a child that has been weaned.

A child that now can think and talk and reason.

That you can explain things to.

A picture of that child calmly and quietly sitting in its Mother's lap.

Not fidgeting or moving around.

Not trying to climb up and rip off of mom's jewelry.

Not spitting up all over her dress.

Not trying to get away in escape.

Just a young child happy to sit and just be with mom.

That is the image the psalmist wants us to have.
We are to be like a content child who is sitting in God's lap.

It is not just us on the outside but are very souls.
We are to quiet our souls like children and the rest in Jesus.
We are not the weaning mother to our own souls.
God is like the mother who weans us.
God is like the mother who teaches us to be calm.

This is one of the few places in Scripture that we see God described in feminine terms.
It's important for us to notice it because it happens rarely but it reminds us that God does not have a gender.
He is referred to as God the Father.
Jesus had a gender being born as a human man.
But the Godhead is not male.

Because both male and female were made in the image of God.
In both of us separately reflect only part of who God is.
Only when we come together in a community can we reflect the full and total image of God.

And one of the ways that women reflect the image of God is in their tender loving care for their children.
Because it is how God feels for us.
And God is a safe place to run to.

As a child runs to their parent when they fall down and are hurt.
We should run to God when the world gets overwhelming.
We should run to the floor and our souls get too loud.

Honestly there sometimes we just need to take a deep breath.

It's one of the things you have to do with children.
They can hyperventilate as they get so angry about simple things.
It's all from our house over and over I say take a deep breath.
Just take a deep breath first calm and quiet yourself,
and then we're going to figure this out.
It's going to be okay.

I think there are many times that we do have to take a deep breath.
Then we need to just breathe calm down and have faith.
Have a child like faith that trust that God can take care of everything.
Like a child that believes it's parents can solve all of their problems.
Children often believe that their parents are like gods.
There is nothing they cannot do.
There's nothing they cannot fix.
There's no wish I have they cannot grant.

As a parent you know that's not true.
Children will learn that eventually.
But our God is God.
As we grow sometimes we'd be in to lose our faith.
Because we start to doubt that God is God.
But He is God.
He is in control.
There is no issue you are facing that God cannot handle.
So I have childlike faith that trusts Him.

Don't try to do it yourself.
Run to God let Him grab you in His arms.
Let Him shower you with kisses on all of your boo boos.
And find true calm and quiet.

There's another reason I think that David tells us we are to be like a weaned child.
Because children eventually need to grow.

There comes a day where their bodies are more developed and it's time for them to eat some real food. They're too big to still be having breast milk and formula. Now it's time for them to eat.

This is true for us as Christians as well. There comes a time when we are to leave the spiritual milk behind. There comes a time when we are to leave the childlike things behind and continue to grow in our faith as men and women of God.

One of the things that I need to grow in, and I suspect many of you need to grow in as well. We need to be weaned from our desire to know and understand everything. Need to be weaned from our desire to have God to explain all of His decisions in the world to us.

We need to be weaned from the belief that every Christian in the world has to think exactly like us on every secondary issue. We need to be weaned for a desire to be entertained all the time. We get annoyed by children who constantly tell us that they're bored. And when some people come to church they always expect to be entertained. And their spiritual infancy cry out that they're bored and they might go somewhere else. As if coming and getting to worship with the body of Christ, with the presence of the spirit of Christ among us, praying through the blood and the power of Christ, to the incomprehensible Eternal and infinite God, is boring and we need something more.

Ultimately faith is about trust. Faith is trusting God even when we don't understand. Faith is being content even when we don't know what's happening.

Faith is sitting like a child in God's arms.
We need to be weaned.
We need to have childlike faith.
We need to be willing to just sit in the presence of our savior and smile.
Without fidgeting or trying to climb out of his arms,
but being content to just rest with a quiet soul.

Point 3: **Quiet your soul with childlike hope.**

We need to have childlike hope.
Not a generic hope.
Not a hope in the goodness of the universe.
Not a hope that things will just work out.
Not a hope that says if you just envision it and want it bad enough then it's going to come.
But a hope it just trusts in God no matter what.
A hope that is unshakable no matter the circumstances.
A hope that cannot be moved.
A hope that believes with everything in it.
And it has to be a hope that is centered on the god of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
The hope that is rooted and in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
Because that is the only place you can find real and lasting hope in a very loud world.

Verse 3, **"O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore."**

First, see that he is calling on Israel to hope in the Lord.
The song is a plea for the people of God.
You could put your own name in here and the place of Israel's and hear David sing out to you.

Calling for you and inviting you to join him to hope in the Lord.
It is a plea and an invitation.

David is telling you how he was able to calm and quiet his soul.
He did so by putting his hope in God.
Not in any god.

Is not saying that if you just find the right thing to believe in then you're good.

Is not saying just find some higher power and that faith will be enough.
We need to **"hope in the LORD."**

He says that your faith needs to be in the **"I AM."**

Your faith needs to be in The God Who revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.

He says that Israel your faith needs to be in the God who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

He says, Israel your faith needs to be in the God who brought you out of captivity and Exile from Babylon.

Israel your faith needs to be the God who gave you the Promised Land.

The God who broke down Jericho's walls.

The God who sent the plagues against the tyrant pharaoh.

The God who promised He would always be your God.

The God who promised that He would never leave you nor forsake you.

The God who never abandoned Israel even in their darkest most wicked days.

They need to put their hope in that God.

They need to put their hope in the I Am.

We need to do so **"from this time forth and forevermore."**

The first part means that we need to decide hope in God now.

If your soul has been too loud,

then you need to put your hope in God today.

You need to decide that now in this moment I will hope.

Hope is a radical and dangerous idea.
Hope is countercultural.
Because there is very little hope in our world.
Everywhere you turn to you will see despair and groaning.
We might be very divided as a country over almost everything.
But we are very united on our lack of Hope.

I am always amazed that no matter what news station you turn on,
whether it is the most far left or far right almost all of them will tell you that
everything is horrible everywhere.
Most of them will have very little hope to offer you.

If they have any help to offer you will be fleeting.
It won't last.

Because certainty is anathema in our culture.
We doubt everything and everyone.
We don't trust any experts.
And believe anything that anyone tells us.
We are suspicious of everything and we doubt everything.
So to have any kind of certainty is radical.

If someone asked you why you weren't in despair and you said "because I
have hope."
They would wonder what in the world you have hope in.
If they told you that you have hope in Jesus Christ they would wonder how
you can be so sure that your hope is true.
Because more offensive than what your hope is in is the idea that you are
right someone else might be wrong.

But we as Christians are to decide that today our hope is in Jesus.
We are to mean it.
And we are to live like it.
My question for you is are you living as if you have hope in Jesus?

Christians should not be a people of despair.
Christians should be a people of hope.
Not because of our circumstances of what has happened.
But because our hope is in the LORD.

Not just are you living as if you have hope in Jesus today, what are you going to do so tomorrow?
Is your hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever more?
Do you believe that Jesus really is your only hope in life and death?

I have shared before that working on it catechism with my children.
It's a series of questions that work in teaching theology.
The very first question is what is your only hope in life and in death?
The answer is that I am not my own but belong to God.

Every time I repeat that question with my children it reminds me of my hope.
It reminds me that my only hope is that I am not in charge.
I don't even belong to myself.
My hope is that I belong to God.
My hope is that I am God's son.
My Hope Is that I am loved by God and he is in control.
And that is my only hope.

And it needs to be our hope no matter what happens.
It needs to be your hope no matter who has won an election.
It needs to be your hope no matter what law has been passed.
It needs to be your hope no matter what the doctor says.
It needs to be your hope no matter how you feel today even if it is very very weak.
It needs to be your hope no matter what is going on at work.
It needs to be your hope no matter what is going on in your family.
Jesus needs to be your help from today to the end of your days.

And if you put your open Jesus you can have a quiet soul.
If you are not a Christian I invite you to come find your hope in Jesus.
And trying to find your hope and other things are in other places because they all will fail you but Jesus Christ never ever ever will.
Come to Jesus and put your hope in Him.
I, or any of our elders would be happy to talk to you about it.
There is not a mystical prayer you must pray in exactly the right words.
You just need to put your faith and hope in Jesus.

If you are a Christian, then put your hope in Jesus.
Stop putting your hope in other things.
Stop being occupied by things above your pay grade.
Have hope in our savior today and for the rest of your days.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] How can we have a quiet soul in a loud world? We can have a quiet soul through humility, childlike faith, and hope.
2. When you walk out those doors the noise of the world is going to resume. The music will play and the people will scream for your attention. You do not have to let the noise of the world get into your soul. Not if your faith is in Jesus. So let us go into the world as those whose souls are quiet because of our Savior.