

SILENCE | *Be Still*

Before we get into our message for this morning, we're going to take a few minutes for some spiritual practice.

I don't know how you're finding the constant noise and endlessly swirling turmoil in the world these days. I often find myself feeling exhausted – *like soul-level exhausted* – by it. Wouldn't you like to take a break from it all? An actual, real break? Wouldn't that feel so good?

And you might think: "Sure yeah, that'd be a nice luxury, to be able to take a break" – it's not a luxury at all – it is actually **essential** to your soul's survival! To (on a regular basis) intentionally close out all the noise, and just let the waters go still. In your **mind**, and in your **heart**, and in your **body**. We call that the spiritual practice of Silence.

In Matthew 11:29 Jesus says: ***"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest in your souls."***

He is talking about how – in farming – two oxen are often attached together by a big wooden yoke, so they are forced to move down the field together in tandem, at exactly the same pace. They can't escape each other, even if they try, because of the yoke!

Silence is the practice of un-yoking ourselves from some of the things we've attached to that are pushing us down the field, draining the life out of us – whether it be noise, constant motion, busyness, drama – and re-yoking ourselves back to Jesus, back into his ways of quiet, of gentleness, and rest.

So we're going to practice that – practice letting the waters go still for a minute.

Now, because this is actually a difficult practice for us, we're going to ease our way into it. Think of this like slowly inching your way into the lake water at the beach. We're going to descend into it in stages.

PRACTICE

So first, we're going to drop that background pad. Feel that? And now I'll invite you to close your eyes, which closes out the visual stimuli around you. That isn't essential to Silence, but can also just be another thing to try. And now just feel yourself breathing for a few seconds. We're going to play a song by Audrey Assad called *Be Still*. So that won't be silence yet obviously, but as it plays allow yourself to just start to let go of whatever busy thoughts, and emotions you might be carrying right now, into this moment. Use the song as a processing space where you do your best to release anything that's going to prevent you from being truly silent and still in the space that will follow. Ease into the water. When the song ends, we'll sit together for about 90 seconds of quiet. It might feel a little bit awkward at first. Just let it be. Try to simply sit and **breathe in** the fresh air of stillness, doing nothing except being fully present to the God who is fully present to you.

Audrey Assad – Be Still – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Snj7eymV-A4> (3:48)