

John 16:12-15

**Sermon** *Silent Sermons*  
*June 3, 2007*

Motion pictures have made leaps and bounds in terms of technological advances through the years. If you look back to motion pictures of just a few years ago it is amazing to see the progress that has occurred and one of the more noted progression is that of sound. In fact, the first motion pictures were silent. Involved were stars like Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin. Some names that might be completely unfamiliar to some in our sanctuary today. But it was as sound came to motion pictures that their entire designation changed to that of the talkies. And it was in 1927 with the movie *The Jazz Singer*, the first full length sound motion picture with Al Jolson that we entered into the new era. In 1971 it was Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* that featured Dolby noise reduction. In 1976 *A Star is Born* is the film in which there was Dolby stereo. In 1992 the *Batman Returns* featured Dolby digital sound. 1993 the film *Jurassic Park* had DTS sound. And in 2006 with the release of *Phantom at the Opera* we had high definition sound.

Think of the difference of going into a silent movie and then finding yourself transported to this time and place and seeing a film today much more so hearing a film today. Now think of the disciples as they are with Jesus and they are preaching the kingdom of God. There they are unformed, if you will, in the full knowledge of exactly is to happen with Jesus. But they are there ministering in his name where others hear them and see them. Now go to Paul preaching the resurrected Jesus Christ with power of the spirit behind his words and the power of Christ still alive being a part of the ministries. Hear that message, hear what is said and unsaid by the disciples. And it is as different as hearing a black and white movie without sound and hearing one in today's high definition sound. It is the power of the spirit that comes. It is the power of clarity. It is the power of God himself of taking human action and amplifying by that which is divine.

We read in our passage that the spirit will speak and declare. It is the spirit that is engaged in this process of speaking and we are the one's who hear. In fact, the spirit gives us that ability to hear. It gives us the ability to hear spiritually things. It gives us the ability to hear that which is unspoken. That which is unseen. Jesus says to the disciples you're really not able to bear it now. You're really not able to understand all that I have to say about this work of the spirit. You haven't been able to understand what it means for me to suffer and die and then be

raised again. You fight amongst yourselves, you see me as the King that will bring back Israel. You simply are not able to bear it.

The gift of the spirit actually gives us the ability to hear spiritual things. Kind of thinking of getting out of the swimming pool, I'm not sure it does any good, but leaning my head over and trying to knock the water out of my ears so that I can hear again. Or the man who's wife had trouble hearing and he went into the doctor and he said to his doctor, you know my wife is so self-conscious and I'm worried about getting her mad or embarrassing her. But she can't hear and I'm not sure what to do. The doctor said well why don't you try getting closer to her maybe about 15 feet away and say to her what you want to say in a loud voice. So there she is cooking in the kitchen and he comes about 15 feet away and he says, rather loudly, honey what is for dinner? No response. He moves 5 feet closer and much louder says honey what is for dinner? No response. 5 feet closer, honey what is for dinner? Finally he sneaks up right behind her and gives her a hug right in her ear honey, what is for dinner? And she says, I've told you four times steak and potatoes.

The spirit gives us that ability to hear. But to hear spiritual things. To hear that which is of Christ that which is what God might say to us. It opens up to us a possibility that moves us from a silent movie to the magnitude and beauty and power of the spirit of God in our world. That is open to us by the spirit. But not only are we given the ability to hear we are given the ability understand that which we do hear. We're able to comprehend the things of God; for it is the spirit that will guide us. The spirit that will lead us into all the truth. Here we are talking about the things of Christ. Those who had the mystery of the gospel who sat on the edge of understanding are suddenly brought into the full comprehension of all that God is doing. The spirit reveals to us the richness of God. The gift of God that is around us, the very presence of Christ. We may look upon someone we admire and that we see all kinds of Godly qualities. And we may look upon them and readily see Christ. Or we may look upon someone that we have hard time with, someone whose face is simply not a welcome sight to us. And we may have to see as God sees that person and see the things of Christ. Or we get up in the morning and look in the mirror and suddenly we are able to comprehend the things of Christ that are about us. The simple treasure that is there. The things of the spirit that are all around us from the mundane to the spectacular.

Joshua Bell a renowned a renowned violinist being sponsored by the DC paper did a unique experiment about recognition. He went down into the DC Metro and took his violin, threw out a hat and began to play. As folks were walking in and coming out as this mass of humanity was being transported as there were people all over the place and noise his violin began

come in with the beauty of his skill truly offering a glorious masterpiece to the people around him. As he began to play Mozart and Schubert and he put a few dollars and coins in the hat as seed money and the idea was to see how many people might recognize and how many people might stop and listen. And here was a person just a few weeks ago had sold out the concert hall in Boston for whom tickets were going for \$100 a pop. Here was a person with three million dollar rare violin, a Stradivari. And what was his take at the end of the day? \$37. People simply did not comprehend what was before them and they did not comprehend the magnitude and the masterpiece and the beauty that was there. They walked on by in the soundlessness of the noise around them.

Spirit of God allows us to comprehend that which we hear of God. It allows us to comprehend that which is of Christ. What is the end game of the spirit. What is the purpose behind all this design. The purpose behind the ability for us to perceive and hear things spiritual. The end game behind our comprehension of what it is that God is doing of his presence in of the grace of Jesus Christ. It is connection. The spirit is not an innovator, it is not one to suddenly bring a sense of complete newness on the scene. It is that which of the Father that is given to the Son and that which is of the Son that given through the spirit. It is the sense of the quest goes throughout father to son to holy spirit that comes to us. And so it is that the spirit connects us to Christ and through the spirit we grow closer to God. Through the spirit we have ever deepening relationship with the divine creator, the God of the universe and through the power of the spirit we find a communion with that that is God.

Many of you may not know this I don't put it on my resumes cause I'm not exactly proud of it but I am a licensed teacher of evangelism explosion. Evangelism Explosion is a program for doing evangelism. The reason I am licensed is that I went to the training seminar. In fact, back when it was offered and I was younger I thought I didn't know very much about evangelism so I wanted to attend and learn something. I quickly learned that it wasn't my cup of tea and I was uncomfortable being there. I didn't like the program because I felt like it was rather reductionistic and it wasn't a dialogue it was more sort of a tour de force of presentation. So I quickly looked at my watch and was waiting for all of it to end and feeling like I could just slink out. Cause it wasn't for me. Only to learn that this was not merely a lecture, that we were going to have a laboratory experience and we were going to get to be with real live heathens that we could convert to Christianity. They were known as visitors to the church and instead of giving them a cup we were going to show up on their doorstep with evangelism explosions version of the gospel. I was not the most willing participant. We went to several houses and one in particular it was my turn to be up and I did not have the best attitude. It was not as if I

exemplified the poster child for the one that would do this kind of ministry. And the amazing thing was at the end of all this with rolling my eyes the person said that they wanted God in their life. And that really made me think. How could that happen? How could that happen? It certainly wasn't about me because I hated doing what I was doing. I hated having to be there and be put in that position and I came with worst attitude imaginable and I had the worst tone and probably the worst facial expressions and I had to be doing in such a way that no one would ever want to know God. and it couldn't be the material because as far as I was concerned it was flawed. It wasn't in a way that I thought was conducive or inviting for people to come to God. and it wasn't about this man because I learned that his life was a mess. He certainly didn't have anything to commend him so why was it that he came to faith. I mean as he said he wanted to give his life to God I almost wanted to stand up and say "no, no, no you don't, don't do it". And I realized as a minister that probably wasn't the right reaction. But I still had to reflect on why was it that this happened.

It was because of anything earthly. It was simply that this man heard to the power of the spirit and it's very humbling to realize that God can take anything and use it. Can take what happens here, he can take what happens in an evangelism explosion class, he can take what happens half way around the world in Belize. we have no merit to offer it is simply the power of the spirit that allows people to hear, that allows them to comprehend and ultimately allows them to connect in a deep and abiding way with God. It is the promise of Pentecost. And as we tend to the silent side of life as the noise of the metro station and the DC traffic that goes by, the noise of our lives as we are still and we are quiet so we begin to hear the silent sermons. Sermons that are born of the spirit that draw us into ever-deepening relationship with God. Not only do we hear in here but we're able to hear outside of here. and if we listen for just listen and I invite you as you leave this place to attune your ear to that which is God and listen for you just might hear something. Amen.