



Silence

This past week we have been dealing with the remnants of hurricane Ike that blew through the area last week and although not the storm it was when it hit Texas, it nonetheless brought enough power with it to paralyze a great deal of the Midwest from Texas and Missouri all the way to Chicago, where homes flooded with partially treated waste water. The Ohio valley was one of the hardest hit in the wake of the storm with 83 of 88 counties reporting significant damage to power lines, businesses and homes. Following the storm, with so much damage and outages there was a very unique phenomenon. It was quiet. The only other time that I have heard it that silent was after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The only sound that broke the stillness for the first couple of days was the blare of sirens as fire and rescue crews were dispatched to assist those who were hurt. For the first time in years we could hear the wind blowing, the birds chirping and insects singing at night. Sounds that are normally masked in an urban area by automobiles, the barely audible hum of the electric lines overhead, air conditioning, televisions, radios and the thousands of other things that we fill our lives with to the point that we no longer know what the Earth sounds like. But there are some lessons that we can learn from all this that are applicable in a spiritual sense. In a sense all of the false doctrine and religious confusion in the world serves to hide the sound of the Gospel from us unless we learn to really listen to it. The incessant hum of various doctrines and their pleas and promises stand to entice and please those who desire to feel better about themselves and their lives but who have never really filtered out the things that hide the truth from us. Speaking of those who pursue the justice and judgment of God, David writes, ***“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.”*** (Psm 89.15). When we stop listening to the sounds of confusion and dwell on the truth of God we can understand the voice by which He calls as the scriptures in their simplicity declare the truth of the Lord. Another aspect of the si-

lence is that it reminds us of the fragility of the artificial world we have created and how lost we are without it. The same once again holds true for religious teachings. The ideas of man will fail no matter how sophisticated and well defended they appear to be. It does not matter that there is a well developed and polished organizational structure that appears to be ironclad and whose bureaucratic development is comparable to any secular conglomerate. If their doctrine differs from the scriptures it will come crashing down sooner or later. Christ states, ***“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*** (Matt 7.26-27). The world without electricity and the devices of man is unspoiled, exactly the way God created it. In the same way the scriptures and the Lord’s church are unspoiled and exist exactly as God intended when the ideas of man are taken out of the way. Without power and the conveniences that we have grown accustomed to, there was a feeling of being lost amongst many. Some expressed that they did not know what to do. In a very short period of time it was clear that living electrically had not prepared many for life without power. Spiritually the ideas of religious teachers, preachers and theologians will not prepare us to stand before Christ in judgment. Christ spoke of this comparing disciples to servants. ***“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”*** (Lk 12.47). God is calling through his word but will people stop to listen and hear before it is too late, or, continue with the noise.