

A few weeks ago, my grandson, Cason, heard me say that I was glad the month of May had come to an end. For me, the month began with my brother passing away, which set the tone for the rest of the month. I spent some days in bed all day long sleeping, just so that day would pass quickly. I wasn't able to be with my kids for Mother's Day, attended my brother's funeral in Reno, then turned sixty years old right after that. Cason then said that I probably wasn't looking forward to June either. He reminded me of some issues I had to deal with last year, which I had basically forgotten about.

To some degree, Cason was right. I had completely forgotten about how I nearly quit my job on the spot, due to something I absolutely disagreed with being forced upon me at my workplace. It wasn't just a personal issue, but it challenged my beliefs and rights as a Christian, and I felt like I was standing up for God, not just for myself. Believe me, I could use this platform to share my beliefs on this subject, but when I asked God for his words and not my own, I believe he gave me the following verse to share instead.

Isaiah 55:6-9 NKJV

"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

I do believe there will be a time and place when we will be required to speak hard truths, at the risk of hurting our friends and family, at the cost of losing a job or being the only one who is standing for what is right. But for now, when I read the words above, I can see the love and compassion of my God for all who will return to him, or to those who find him for the first time. His ways and thoughts are so much higher than mine, and I am thankful for that.

As a younger woman, I can remember being so arrogant in thinking others 'needed' to hear my opinions about things. That woman still exists when I'm with close family and we get into heated debates. But as I grow older, and after receiving wise counsel from dear friends, I'm trying very hard to listen more and speak less. Of course, I have my opinions about the state of our world and the craziness going on all around, but ranting my thoughts out loud to whoever listens won't change a thing.

There are so many scriptures that talk about keeping our mouths shut. Here are just a few of my favorites:

James 1:19-20 (NIV):

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

James 1:26 (NIV):

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

Proverbs 29:11 (NIV):

Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end.

My friends, believe me when I say that as I write these words, I am speaking to myself first. I am reminding myself that I belong to Jesus, and I represent him with the words I choose and the ways I act. There are times I have failed him, and yet he continues to forgive me. He knows we are learning to be like him every day, and his patience is unending. If I can leave just one more thought with you, it is meant for those moments you truly feel led to speak up.

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV):

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Blessings,

Lisa Jo