

## When Words Won't Come

I sat at the keyboard and I was unable to type one single word. The words would not come. I had been waiting, somewhat impatiently, for this month's reflection topic and having received an idea I was anxious to get it onto the paper. I realized that my inability to put words on paper was closely related to the topic and the way I feel when I am in a conversation and words won't come. Have you ever been in a situation when it seemed as though you should speak, but the words wouldn't come?

Well the first thing we should do in this case is don't panic. The absence of words to say may turn out to be a blessing. In fact, the words found in Psalm 141:3, "Take control of what I say, Lord, and keep my lips sealed", can (and probably should) be a guiding prayer for our daily interactions with others.

How often have you stumbled to find the right words to say? I think most often our words fail us when we want to offer support to someone experiencing a loss. Recently, I stood silent with a man grieving the loss of his wife. As I held his hand, he nodded his head and said, "I just don't know what I can say." I assured him that there were no words needed. It was okay for us to simply be together, spirit to spirit, grieving his loss.

Perhaps the bigger problem with words is not when they won't come, but when they do come too quickly without consideration or without a filter. Have you ever heard someone say, "I shouldn't say this, but..."? I most often wish they would follow that instinct and hold their tongue. Holding the tongue is far more courageous than lashing out in judgment. It is frustrating to hear inconsiderate words being thrown around in judgment of situations far removed from the individual making comments. We live in a world that feeds on finding blame. Argumentative words often start with he said she said, pointing a finger at someone else, and are spoken in a vengeful manner.

We need to be more vigilant with our words. Each of us has the power to contribute to the argument or end the argument and I don't mean have the last word. Rather it might be best to hold the last word. It is important to guard our tongue in times of anger, frustration, and

in times when we may say the wrong thing to someone who is grieving just because we feel like we have to say something.

I have come to realize that there can be a blessing in struggling to find the right words. It makes me pause and not speak too quickly. It reduces the risk of saying something I will regret later. We read in Proverbs 17:27-28, "a truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought to be wise when they keep silent; when they keep their mouths shut, they seem intelligent." The bible provides us with great guidance in regard to the use of our tongue, but also assures us that we don't have to feel bad for using fewer words. Remember, it could be a blessing when words don't come.

### Questions to ponder:

- When do I struggle with what to say?
- How can I allow silence to lead the conversation?
- When does God invite me to hold my tongue?
- How can I express my support without words?

May God's Peace Be Yours,  
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