

Note from Pastor Steve

I have reading the Sermon on the Mount this week as I encourage each of you to do. I find myself seeing something over and over again. A desire from God for us to live with Him the deep secret places in our lives.

I remember a few years ago, going to a nice restaurant with my wife and another couple. It was a beautiful place with a tropical savanna theme. They had running water and the décor of an Africa safari. We were enjoying ourselves and chatting when I noticed something. There was a couple sitting across the way from us. The man was looking at something on his phone and the lady was just sitting their with a sad bored look on her face. It was a picture that a lot of us have seen, where our phones get in the way of what is right in front of us. The reason why it stood out to me was the couple seated with us had an issue of sharing their thoughts with each other. It was a normal thing for one of them to go on to social media and tell the world how great the other one was. However, they never talked when they were alone. Their words to each other were always directed out to others to hear and see rather than to the one they loved.

We can look like everything is great on the outside. We can make our relationship look perfect to our friends and family. But in the deep secret place it is just dry and empty.

I love a good worship song, but sometimes it is hard to find them. There are many songs out there that just feel empty. They might have a good beat and sound pleasant but something is still missing. The songs that have the greatest value feel like they come from deep within the soul of a person. Where the author has come directly into the presence of the creator God. It becomes easy to sing those song over and over again. Joining that deep place ourselves.

Look at your life, it is more than what people see on the surface. Jesus noted that we receive our rewards in this world for the outward things we do. It is what is done in secret that God is focused on. Search for Him in that deep place inside of you the place where the songs of greatest value come. Let your soul be filled with His presence.

**When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.
Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you—Matthew 6:6**

Have You Ever Been Alone with God? By: Oswald Chambers

When they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples. —Mark 4:34

Our Solitude with Him. Jesus doesn't take us aside and explain things to us all the time; He explains things to us as we are able to understand them. The lives of others are examples for us, but God requires us to examine our own souls. It is slow work— so slow that it takes God all of time and eternity to make a man or woman conform to His purpose. We can only be used by God after we allow Him to show us the deep, hidden areas of our own character. It is astounding how ignorant we are about ourselves! We don't even recognize the envy, laziness, or pride within us when we see it. But Jesus will reveal to us everything we have held within ourselves before His grace began to work. How many of us have learned to look inwardly with courage?

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves. That is always the last bit of pride to go. The only One who understands us is God. The greatest curse in our spiritual life is pride. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we will never say, "Oh, I'm so unworthy." We will understand that this goes without saying. But as long as there is any doubt that we are unworthy, God will continue to close us in until He gets us alone. Whenever there is any element of pride or conceit remaining, Jesus can't teach us anything. He will allow us to experience heartbreak or the disappointment we feel when our intellectual pride is wounded. He will reveal numerous misplaced affections or desires— things over which we never thought He would have to get us alone. Many things are shown to us, often without effect. But when God gets us alone over them, they will be clear.

When He was alone...the twelve asked Him about the parable. —[Mark 4:10](#)

His Solitude with Us. When God gets us alone through suffering, heartbreak, temptation, disappointment, sickness, or by thwarted desires, a broken friendship, or a new friendship— when He gets us absolutely alone, and we are totally speechless, unable to ask even one question, then He begins to teach us. Notice Jesus Christ's training of the Twelve. It was the disciples, not the crowd outside, who were confused. His disciples constantly asked Him questions, and He constantly explained things to them, but they didn't understand until after they received the Holy Spirit (see John 14:26).

As you journey with God, the only thing He intends to be clear is the way He deals with your soul. The sorrows and difficulties in the lives of others will be absolutely confusing to you. We think we understand another person's struggle until God reveals the same shortcomings in our lives. There are vast areas of stubbornness and ignorance the Holy Spirit has to reveal in each of us, but it can only be done when Jesus gets us alone. Are we alone with Him now? Or are we more concerned with our own ideas, friendships, and cares for our bodies? Jesus cannot teach us anything until we quiet all our intellectual questions and get alone with Him.