

I. The Inducements for Keeping Quiet

1. To gain good relationships with the enemies of the cross.
 - A. This would probably be to their personal and financial advantage.
 - B. It would probably put them in a better and social position in their community.
2. To avoid suffering and persecution
 - A. Peter plainly accused them, in v. 11, of crucifying Jesus Christ. This would certainly arouse their wrath.
 - B. In v. 17 they "threatened them".
 - C. In 5:40 the apostles were beaten.
 - D. In chapter 7 Stephen was martyred.
3. They might have excused themselves on the grounds of their lack of learning and education, v. 13.

II. The Consequences of Keeping Quiet

1. They would have lost their own peace of mind.
2. They would have lost their own self-respect.
3. They would have lost the respect of others.
4. They would have lost the approval of their Lord.

III. The Impossibility of Keeping Quiet

1. Because of their relationship with Jesus. v. 13, "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."
 - A. You will talk about the one you love.
 - B. It is a law of our nature that we become like those whom we habitually admire and love.
 - C. In China, Buddhist priests have been heard to say, "Think of Buddha, and you will be transformed into Buddha. If you pray to Buddha and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays, and not the mind."

2. Because they were filled with the H.S.
A.v.8, "Peter, filled with the H.S."
B. I fear that the reason many Christians today do not have the boldness of the apostles in chapter 4 is that they have not had an enduement like they received in chapter 2.
C. In v.31 we read that again they were filled with the H.S.
D. In Eph. 5:18 we have the continuous command for Christians to "keep on" being filled with the H.S."

3. Because they had something to talk about.
A. They had seen and heard things that were worth talking about.
B. What the Christian has seen and heard is worth repeating.
C. If you believe, you must speak, Ps.116:10 "I believed; therefore have I spoken."
D. There is a connection between believing in the gospel and making it known.

4. Because they were so concerned about lost people around them.
A. The ant which no sooner tasted the sugar, than it went to invite its friends to become partakers of its joy.
B. In the old Bread Riots, when men were actually starving for bread, no word had such a terribly threatening and alarming power about it as the word "Bread!" when shouted by a starving crowd.
C. There are myriads of people all over the world today pining for the Bread of life.
D. Though they hardly know it, yet there is a cry coming up from them for something which they can not find except in Christ.

5. Because their Savior was the ONLY Savior.
A.v.12, "Neither is there salvation..."
B. "Other refuge have we none; ^{for} _{now} Hangs our Helpless Soul on Thee,"

6. Because they must be obedient to God.
A. Imprisonment of Mr. Martini in Spain
B. Ancient Christian Bishop before the heathen king.

There are two things critics of Christianity cannot get away from:

1. The undeniable influence of Christ in the lives of Christian believers. Like the early apostles, they may be of no extraordinary powers, and they may have little formal education and no prestige. Yet they are bold to witness for their Lord, and their power comes from Jesus Himself through the Holy Spirit.

2. Secondly, they cannot get away from the undeniable evidence of transformed lives that have been touched and changed by the Master.

Those who were spiritually lame have been made whole, and they stand before the amazed critics of the cross. The undeniable evidence of moral and spiritual power is always like that.

Lives have been fundamentally & completely changed. The fearful psychotics and neurotics have been given boundless confidence by the touch of the Master's hand. The immoral have been cleansed, the criminal forgiven, the addicts delivered, and the mean, vicious and brutal made loving, mild, and compassionate.

The followers of Christ were on the Lord's side, and they were not about to give in to threats and persecution. When the authorities forbade these men to talk about Jesus, they might as well have commanded the tides of the sea to stand still.

A pilot came back from overseas during WWII. He had been shot down over Germany and spent 9 mos. in a German prison camp. He was telling his experiences to a friend. He told how in his days of training he was instructed in the use of a parachute but he never actually used one. He was never given an opportunity to bail out. Then, the time came in combat over Germany, surrounded by many enemy fighter planes, when his own plane was struck and it burst into flames. "Then," he said, "I knew that I had to jump. I could not pull the string at once because I was surrounded by enemy planes and I had to free fall for quite a while, waiting until I fell into the clouds before pulling the cord." His friend said in amazement, "I don't see how you could do it, never having done it before." "I could do it," he said, because I knew it was my only chance."

