

The Code of Silence

President Kim B. Clark

The following is a portion of the original devotional address (“The Power of the Holy Temple”) given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on January 15, 2008 in which President Clark discusses “the code of silence.”

Oh, how I pray that each one of us will follow the Savior and cut through the mists of darkness with those powerful words: “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”¹⁰

These battles are real. The Enemy is clever and resourceful and tries to attack us with many different strategies.

Sometimes he uses **deception**. He is the father of lies and a master of disguise and camouflage.

At other times he **attacks directly** by raging in the hearts of “conspiring men”¹¹ and stirring them “up to anger against that which is good.”¹²

And there are times when the Enemy simply tries to **distract** us, to lull us into complacency, or to get us so caught up in the comings and goings of mortal life that we lose our focus on the things of eternity.

The strategies of the Enemy to deceive, attack, and distract are made even more effective if he can **divide** us from one another. Division comes in many forms—contention, disunity, gossip, backbiting. But perhaps the most insidious is silence.

The principle of silence, or the code of silence, in the face of evil has been the foundation of secret combinations and the works of darkness since Cain murdered Abel. Please turn with me to Moses, chapter 5, verse 29:

And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.¹³

Wherever we find secret combinations, we find the code of silence. But silence has also become part of the culture of society.

The Savior taught us about silence in the parable of the Good Samaritan.¹⁴ When the priest and the Levite came upon a wounded man by the side of the road, they were silent. They took no action to help, nor did they tell anyone of the man in trouble. The Samaritan, in contrast, spoke in

word and deed. He bandaged the man's wounds and took him to an inn. The Samaritan told the innkeeper about the wounded man and arranged for his care.

The man by the road represents so many of our brothers and sisters, so many of us wounded by the perils of mortal life and the battles of the Great War. And yet, in our modern society, the Enemy has spread fear of getting involved when someone is in trouble and has fostered a social stigma that attaches to people who speak up in the face of evil. The Enemy whispers, "Don't get involved; it's not your problem. Don't tell; you will be a tattletale."

Here is an example: a lonely, confused young man gets addicted to pornography by first starting with the wrong movies and then edging into material that is increasingly sleazy, vile, and immoral. He stops going to church, and there is darkness in his eyes. The young man is spiritually wounded on the battlefield of the Great War. His roommates know. But they are silent. They do nothing to help him, and they say nothing to him or to anyone else as he descends into an earthly hell until he is bound in the chains of awful addiction.

Oh, brothers and sisters, don't leave the wounded on the battlefield! Stick together. You don't need to be a more "righteous-than-thou" person. We are all sinners. We all have troubles. We have all been wounded spiritually. But you who have felt the redeeming power of Christ, you who know His love and His grace, you know He can heal all wounds. If you reach out in a spirit of love and humility, you can help the spiritually wounded find the Savior. If you need to, call for the medics: talk to your bishop, call the Dean of Students, tell someone who can do something that you have a friend in trouble. Don't be silent. Don't leave the wounded on the battlefield!

¹⁰ Matthew 4:10

¹¹ D&C 89:4

¹² 2 Nephi 28:20

¹³ Moses 5:29

¹⁴ Luke 10:30-37