

# This is the Day...Wednesday

January 19, 2022

## Silence is Golden

*“Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.”*  
(Proverbs 17:28)

As a pastor, it was always an adventure to spend time with Elmer Stanley. Elmer was a gruff, old, weather-worn man who lived in the backwoods of Montgomery County Tennessee. Elmer was not a member of my church and had never even attended the church. He was the uncle of one of the faithful members of the church who was concerned about his well-being, both physically and spiritually. My first visit with Elmer was not very pleasant. He lived in an old, run-down log cottage that was in desperate need of repairs and upkeep. Elmer was sitting on his front porch when I drove up. When I introduced myself, all Elmer said was, “Yeah, she said you might come out here.” For the next twenty minutes, I stood at the base of the porch steps talking to Elmer. He never invited me to sit with him or to go inside. I did all the talking except for an occasional, “uh-hu.” Elmer was listening, but he had nothing to say.

As I was leaving from my first visit, my initial thought was to never go see him again! But there was something about Elmer that was intriguing. The next week, I went for a second visit. Again, Elmer was on his porch and again I did most of the talking. This pattern continued over several visits as I tried to get Elmer to engage with me. I was about to give up and did not go see Elmer for several weeks. When I finally went back to his house, Elmer was on the porch again. When I got out of the car, Elmer said, “Thought you had died.” Elmer stood up and walked into his house. He left the door open, so I assumed he wanted me to follow him. When I stepped into his front room, I was amazed. There were books of every sort stacked all around the room and on massive bookshelves. Novels, Bibles, books of history, anthropology, science, and religion. When I saw his great library, all I could say was, “Elmer! This is amazing!” Elmer said, “I don’t let just anybody in here. I size them up first.”

As I started asking Elmer questions about his books and the contents, I learned that he was a treasure of knowledge. He knew more about these subjects, including the Bible, than I will ever learn! I realized that, even though Elmer was quiet, he was always listening and always thinking. That practice of listening more than talking had made Elmer into a very wise and knowledgeable person. He once told me, “People talk a lot because it makes them feel smart. But they end up proving the opposite. Some people need to be quiet”

Elmer taught me that wisdom does not come from sharing many words. It comes from quietly and thoughtfully listening. Many words accomplish very little. Thoughtful words that are filled with wisdom and understanding are powerful. On this day God has given you, let your silence be golden as you seek God and His wisdom.