



When God Is Silent (Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching)

Barbara Taylor

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“Reading of God's silence in the Bible gives me courage to explore the practice of restraint in preaching?not as a deliberate withholding of God's word nor, I hope, as a rationale for my own reticence, but as a sober reaching for more reverence in the act of public speaking about God.”

In these 1997 Lyman Beecher Lectures in Preaching delivered at Yale Divinity School, Barbara Brown Taylor focuses on the task of those who preach and those who hear sermons in a world where people thirst for a word from God. How may we approach this seemingly silent God with due respect, proclaiming the Word without violating the silence, by speaking with restraint?

Her first chapter examines the late twentieth-century language with which we talk about God in theology and speak to God in prayer. The second chapter addresses the question of God's communication in Scripture and how the “voice of God” was heard less and less in the land as the centuries progressed. Finally, Taylor explores what the silence of God means for Christians and how we may exercise “homiletical restraint” in speaking of the divine.

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