

The same disturbing challenge comes when we are invited to revisit and review and perhaps even change some allegiances, some long and strongly held opinion, to let the light of Christ shine into our lives. It comes to us as a challenge to change thoughts, words and actions. That activity of reflecting deeply makes noise and can disturb our peace until we come through to the other side.

Noise, internal and external, disturbs our peace.

We long for peace. We long for peace in our world and we long for peace in our lives. The place peace will begin is within ourselves. Peace in our hearts is the starting place for any real peace, however far it may ripple outwards.

That peace will come when we find the ways in which to be authentic, to put together the pieces of our lives which rattle and rub against each other creating the noise. It is about finding integrity, being and becoming whole.

I am sure that some of those who heard John the Baptist thought that they would find peace if he just shut up and stopped rattling them. It is one way that some people think peace will come if the annoying voices just go away and we can slip into familiar patterns of denial of the call to live authentically and deeply and compassionately. 'Let me be at peace' is sometimes a cry to be left in ignorance which is actually usually a lot less than something blissful.

John's challenge to those who heard him was a challenge to address the disruptions inside all of us, the ways in which we have been caught up in patterns which create jarring internal noise. That is why 'repent' was his loudest cry. Repent, turn around and change those patterns. Have the humility and the courage and the openness of heart to be able to open the noisy box inside us and remove the discordant pieces of our lives. Ignorance is not bliss. It is just ignorance. And we are not ignorant. We are not unaware of the calls of God on our lives.

Long for peace, strive for it, and begin with what is inside. When the message we hear God speaking to us rattles us ... listen. Jesus did not come to pat us on the back and say that whatever we think and say and do is all good so long as we call ourselves a Christian. He came to call us to become a new creation and to be renewed constantly and to find life by letting go of all that is not life-giving.

Let this be our journey to Christmas. Let this be our journey towards peace. Notice the noise and deal with it.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding will fill our hearts and minds.

Amen.

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