

O Hush The Noise

Luke 2:8-20

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,” From heav’n’s all-gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife The world has suffered long,
Beneath the angel strain have rolled Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, And hear the angels sing!*

Since the angels broke through with their song on that first Christmas night, God has been trying to say something—something very important, of the utmost importance to you and me.

During dinner one evening, the youngest member of the family, a 4-year-old boy, stood up in his chair and shouted, “Pass the butter!” His mother was shocked at his behavior, then said, “No dinner for you until you learn some manners. Get down and go to your room.”

“But...” the little boy began. “No ‘but’s’ about it. Go to your room,” he was told.

Later, the father called the entire family into the living room. “I had the tape recorder turned on during dinner tonight,” he said. “I want us to listen to ourselves as we really are.” When he turned on the recording, they all heard themselves talking at the same time. Amid the chatter, a wee voice said, “Please pass the butter.” Later, “Would somebody *please* pass the butter?” And finally “PASS THE BUTTER!”

No one was listening. Are you listening to what God is trying to say to you this Christmas?

Can you “hush the noise” and hear the angels sing? Can you do that this Christmas? Can you hush the noise of inner conflict in your heart? Can you hush

the noise of guilt? Can you hush the noise of bitterness and long-standing resentments and stupid quarrels? Can you hush the noise of the hawkers on television and radio? Can you hush the noise of the secular world influencing you to observe a pagan Christmas? Can you hush the noise of threats of war and terrorism, a failing economy and rising debt?

We are so guilty of having so much to say about the commercialization of Christmas, and yet doing little or nothing to hush the noise in our own living rooms. We are guilty of having forgotten that Jesus is the Prince of *Peace*, and in so forgetting, we've really added to the *noise*.

And in a world like ours and a time like ours, it becomes increasingly important for us to hush the noise. There are several reasons why this is true.

There is so much that can drown out the exuberant singing of the angels. There are so many voices that our ears are deafened to the Good News of Great Joy. And if we're not careful, we might miss something God would have us hear.

Merganthaller Waisleywillow is the name of a real person. He was a young Welshman who made a trip to Paris in 1935 to tour the Louvre, the magnificent museum which houses such masterpieces as the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo and other wonderful works of art and artifacts of history. His trip is remembered primarily because he succeeded in touring the Louvre in seven minutes! Others, hearing of Waisleywillow's feat of covering the enormous treasure house of art in seven minutes flat, set out to break the record. Tex Houston (yes, that's *his* real name) of Oklahoma knocked two seconds off Waisleywillow's time. Then another American, Peter Stone, used special track shoes and took a different route, and finished his "tour" in five minutes and fifty-six seconds.

They called it a "tour" but how much of it did they really see? They went through it, but noticed and enjoyed almost none of it, because their only objective was to get through it. I wonder if Christmas, the way the world observes Christmas, has done the same for you. Will you rush through this season of the year without pausing long enough to "hear the angels sing"?

In one of Norman Rockwell's paintings he showed a salesgirl in the toy section of a busy department store. From the calendar on the wall we learn that it's December 24, and the hands of the clock indicate that it's five minutes past quitting time. The poor clerk has slumped back onto a pile of toys behind the counter—dress wrinkled, hair disheveled and arms hanging limply at her sides. She has slipped off her shoes and her eyes are rolled back as if she were barely alive. She had just made it through another great American Christmas.

Sir George MacLeod, a well-known Scottish pastor of another generation, once described the results when a small boy of the slums threw a stone through a window of a church. The stone smashed one of the letters in the inscription "Glory to God in the Highest." It was the letter "e" in the word "highest," so the inscription was changed to read "Glory to God in the High St."

MacLeod was reluctant to have the window repaired, because in Scotland, the main street of nearly every town is called "High Street." He made quite a point of how the stone thrown by the little boy had provided unintentionally what could be the motto of that particular parish, and of every congregation. "Glory to God in the High Street," or "Main Street," could mean hearing God's commands and applying them to every life situation, inviting Him into the routines and details of our lives.

But unless we "hush the noise" we just might miss hearing the angels sing, "Glory to God in the Highest," or "Glory to God on Main Street," or "Glory to God in the Living Room of Your Home," or "Glory to God in Your Heart." That is a message that we just might miss unless we hush the noise. Let us remember that Luke 2:19 reads that *"Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."* The word for "kept" means that she "preserved" them in her heart, and the word for "pondered" literally means "to throw together." Mary absorbed all that was happening around her, and threw all the images and sounds and smells together to create a treasure in her heart.

Are you storing up, preserving, the treasures of Christmas in your heart? You can't, unless you hush the noise.

God's commands and promises get muffled and mangled by the way we observe Christmas. Santa Claus is an important part of Christmas, but it is not his birthday!

We must hush the noise of our Christmas so we can hear the angels sing “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

*O God,
How can You guide us
In all the uproar
And noise?
Give to us the stillness
Of heart, at least,
Which knows You as God.
Keep us from being uncomfortable
When alone
Or uneasy
When we must be quiet.
Help us understand better
The strength
Which comes
Through quietness and trust,
And the salvation
In returning to You
And finding rest in Your care.
(Author Unknown)*

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O hush the noise this year, and allow **your** world to “in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.” It just may change your whole world.