

December 25, 2022
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"Do You Hear What I Hear?"

One of my favorite Christmas carols is "Do You Hear What I Hear?" The song takes us through some of our five senses, especially hearing, seeing and well, "knowing." This song has taken on a whole new meaning for me this year. Let me explain.

Way back in 1978, I had surgery on my right ear, something called a radical mastoidectomy. At that time I was told I would have a hearing loss and I did. I had another test done in 1989 and was told, "You really need a hearing aid." Vanity got in the way. Subsequent tests said the same thing but I resisted, until today. They were amazed at how good the left ear was but the right ear was pretty laughable. I snapped photo of the results of the test if you want to see them. The hearing loss in the right ear is significant and scored "moderate to severe" as the waves go up; no wonder I couldn't understand what the girls were saying to me.

She put in the hearing aid today and I started to cry, especially when the audiologist whispered in to my right ear and I could hear. I will have it "for real" on Tuesday. I apologize to all of my friends for my stubbornness and you having to repeat things to me for 44 years.

In the meantime, I thought about how stubborn we can about what we hear, what we don't hear, what we see, what we don't see, what we refuse to see, what we

know or don't know, and what we choose to ignore. And I have a great amount of questions. How often have we heard the prophecies from Isaiah during Advent? Probably most of our church-going lives. Do we actually listen, though, and then make the connections to what is told to us in Matthew and Luke? How many of us have heard the stories proclaimed and have seen them in a pageant? And, those folks who came to Bible Study this Advent now know the differences between the Infancy Narrative as found in Matthew and Luke, why they were different, why they were different and why they mattered to their original audiences. I left them to decide on their own what it meant to them. Perhaps they are still deciding.

What do we do with what we have heard this Christmas? What do we do with what we have seen this Christmas? What do we do with what we know this Christmas? First of all, let us revel in Christmas. You have heard, seen and know the stories. Over the next few days, many of us will celebrate with families and friends. You may have even learned a few things. In the past twenty four hours, two of my friends announced that "she said yes" and another posted a picture that "Santa was going to make him a big brother this year." Celebrate with your families and friends. They may not be grand celebrations but do what you can with what you have.

I also suggest that we take some time to reflect on how we will let Jesus enter or re-enter our lives this year. Let us take what we have heard, seen and know and do something with it this year. We can even make New Year's resolutions about this. "In an effort to live out the Incarnation, God becoming human, I am going to do _____." Let the spirit of the Christ-child enter into our hearts.

Our lives are simple. None of us live in grandiose palaces, have chauffeurs, and eat off gold plates. Our Savior came to us as simply as possible and did not live a life of luxury either. But God loved us so much that He sent us his only Son. This we have heard with our own tired ears, seen with our failing eyes, and know with our minds chock full of information. Celebrate this Christmas Octave!! Our own decorations will be up until January 8 through the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. But let the words of theologian and author, Howard Thurman, gives us something to think about when our celebrations are complete. He wrote,

***"When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart."***

Do you hear what I hear? Do you see what I see? Do you know what I know?

Merry Christmas!!!

