

The Noise
By Don Brackbill, Jr
July 29, 2008

There is a sound in my mind
That drowns out the tenors and trembles around me
It rises above the decibels of the television and radio,
The yelps of the dogs and blare of the traffic
The natural sounds of the world and nature
As they pass by.

The sound in my mind
Are the cacophony of noises of an unsettled heart
Of a troubled and unquieted spirit
And an anxious and worried soul.

The noises are so great they deafen the ears
And crowd out the sounds that are so important.
They resound and reverberate
Louder than everything else.

The noise of the unfinished
Nags at the spirit and heart.
Things that are still undone
And that even when done need redone.
The unfinished form a background clutter
That is never quite stifled or stilled.

Another load of dishes to be done
Another pile of laundry to be washed
Another meal to be planned and prepared
Another room to be cleaned
Another errand to run
Hair to be cut, dogs to be fed, trees to be trimmed....
The ordinary every day marches to the sound of
And ongoing drum beat
The noise of the unfinished.

The sound of duty and responsibility
Erupts like a clanging cymbal, ringing in the ears
People who need ministry,
Letters and cards that need writing,
Services to be prepared, planned and led
Conversations to be had
Lessons to be learned

Visits to be made, hospitals to go to,
Hurts to be mended
The noise of the duty rings in my soul.

The noise of performance
Like the sirens wail cannot be ignored
It calls me to attention to divert and give heed
The performance calls to achieve, succeed and do

Perform the duties of a “good” pastor
Fulfill the responsibilities of a “good” husband
Complete the tasks of a “diligent” student
Be a “loving” father
Perform, perform, perform

The noise of desire echoes from within
The desire to be loved and wanted
The passion to be touched and affirmed
The wanting – that wanting to be needed
The noise echoes so loudly at times
The heart flinches at the sound

The noise of the past surprises at unexpected moments
A blast of memories and the screech of lived experiences
Bombard the spirit and soul
The yelling of guilt and shame over deeds done
The pelting of accusing voices and angry faces
The broken relationships lost

The noise of the past blasts again
The pounding of experiences of pain
Of the sound of medical machines turned off,
Of diagnoses rendered
Losses endured, grief shared and unshared

The noise of broken dreams
Permeate the mind like the tinkling of shattered glass
Not only the breaking of the glass but the
Tinkling as the pieces hit the ground
Constant reminders, constant noises of
Dreams that have died, hopes that have faded.

The nagging whispers of unguarded moments
Where the heart hears its own accusations:
You could have done more
You should have responded better

You might have done this or that
The accusation that you did not do enough
And the whispers give rise to the shouts of guilt.

And finally the cavernous reverberation
Of an exhausted life
A life weary of the load
Tired of the weight
Struggling to find the strength to persevere

The noise of exhaustion is uproar of the body
Arms tired, legs weak
Mind numb, heart weary
Eyes blurred, lips that mumble
The body cries out for rest,
For peace, for replenishment
For strength

The cacophony of sounds
That assault the soul, the spirit
Above all of this how
How can I hear the one sound
The one voice
That really matters
The still small voice that
Softly beckons me to come to Him.

I can still hear it
Underneath the unfinished,
Beyond the performance and duty demands
Just below the past and its accusations
Beneath the broken expectations and dreams
Instilled in the tones of exhaustion
I still hear it

The voice of the Shepherd
I've heard Him before
When my heart was quiet
And now underneath it all
He whispers to me again.

“Come you who are weary and
I will give you rest.”

“Be still and know,
Know that I am God”

The voice that simply uttered
"Quiet, Be Still"
And the wind and the waves calmed
And quiet reigned in that moment.

The voice beckons me to come to Him
And retreat in a moment of silence
His stillness...his silence
Breaks through the noises like
A dawning of a new day
The hope of a new morning.

His whispered voice reassures
That the noises are not in charge
Regardless the bellowing and blasting
The voice that is in control
Belongs to the one who gave himself for me
The Shepherd, the Savior

In the stillness and quietness
I can feel the breeze of his Spirit
Flow over my heart
Quieting, calming, instilling peace
Comfort, courage, strength

In this silence, this stillness
Gives to me what the noises cannot
It imparts a sense satisfaction among the unfinished.
It gives grace in response to performance
It endows forgiveness and mercy to the past
And promise and hope to the future

This silence, this still small voice
Transforms dreams
Mends my heart
Infuses my body with strength
This voice, this still small voice
Quiets the noise

And I know God
And I have found rest in my soul
And all is calm.

The noises are still there
But because I hear the voice of the Shepherd

They are not as loud, demanding, penetrating
The voice of my Savior
Puts all of them in right perspective.

And I am at peace.