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Homecoming
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This really isn't my home. It was for 10 months or so, but the truth is that we all have other homes to go to. We all have places of birth, parents guardians, some we remember fondly, some not at all, some who were present or not, some – we miss, some we might not give a care about whether we ever saw them again or not.

There is much in those few words to unpack, truth for me is that if I think of my relationship with religions, God, higher powers, different denominations, interpretations of Scriptures, welcoming communities or not – forget my family of origin – all these things apply to my broad church family.

Like a favorite uncle or aunt, grandma or grandpa – I have some churches, denomination, leaders – that I like or appreciate more than others. So I find a spot, enter it, a place where I can be who I am with others who are being who they are. Accepting that there will always be some tension. But, as I once was told, out of tension comes creativity. It's just a little tricky to navigate some of its unpredictable rip tides.

In all of this truth-telling, I acknowledge – sadly, sometimes, sometimes frustratingly so – that there are many places where family biological, religious, or otherwise – make things way too difficult. I imagine, with the addition of the politics of the time – it was not much different when John wrote these words.

Sometimes, it is a bit overwhelming...all of this, all of the wasted angst and time arguing. And sometimes, it is downright difficult...

What makes it easier for me, what seems to connect me back to the eternity I believe in -- are a couple of things.

People...for sure. God speaks to me mostly through others. That means I have to listen. Sometimes that's not so easy because I am often involved in getting things done, guiding others, being guided by them...listening too much to me.

And then I get reminded...

I went to a Memorial Service for a friend I had known in the Presbytery of Hudson River on Friday. She died suddenly at 58, early in the week. She got sick and within a day was gone. In her memorial...I heard so many things about her I never knew. I wished we had talked and I had listened more to her about her life. I missed a lot.

Then yesterday, in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, I buried the husband of a friend, long-suffering from Parkinson's. I stood with his widow, the children, and tried to listen to what God would have me say. I read one of Rilke's sonnets from Ode to Orpheus, an author he loved, in which Rilke talked about finding one among the gods who would hear us so we could hear the god.

It seemed right...

The longing for God is a longing for home, for me. Even when I acknowledge that I have no idea what is next, I can tell you that I have heard God in my life – right here, even this morning, now – and I know God is, really is. And I know the return home is to one of those rooms, Jesus talks about. And, I believe Jesus. He would never lie to us...I believe Jesus and I believe in him.

And, as you know, all paths are honored and welcomed here, all leading to the One beyond any of our thoughts or words...it's just that Jesus is, really is, for me.

So, here, the long history and present, the manifold paths that have travel through this intersection, are all paths through the homes we know...to the one we cannot even imagine. The home that is the fulfillment of all there is.

So, I come here to listen, to be directed on how to be, to lead, and to be led on this path home through this home....

This – you – is the closest to home I can be right now...which is why I come hear to listen and be filled with joy by you and the presence of God in you.

So, now, I would like for us to listen to each other...