

Listen to Your Messages

I am not a telephone person. I do not like to talk on the phone, call people on the phone, be available by phone 24/7. In fact, it is most likely this last feature of modern mobile devices that has made me feel even more resentful of phones. That and robocalling that led me to discontinue having a landline, since all it ever collected were junk messages.

Most of the time I have the ringer turned off on my phone, which means that I often miss phone calls, even when I have my cell with me. "Oh well," I think, "If it is really important, they will leave a message." On the other hand, when I actually do make a call, only to find myself directed to voicemail, I feel resentful about having to leave a message. "I finally made a call and all I get is a recording. Hoomph," I mutter to myself. I am ashamed when I think of this double standard of mine.

I am also ashamed that all too often I may be treating God in the same way. On any given Sunday there are phrases in the Scripture that move me, generosity of spirit in the members of this congregation that inspire me, needs of the community that cry out to me. In so many ways I hear the message, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" Or, I hear the message but really I just kind of save it. After all, I am busy on Sundays.

At the same time, there I am—there we are—calling on God in our prayers and hearts to help and comfort and heal and strengthen and, and, and . . . Would we be doing this if God was just letting our prayers go to voicemail because Sunday is after all, a busy morning?

The call of God does not need to be huge, mysterious, and terrifying like Isaiah's experience in the Temple. It does not need to be miraculous and dramatic, like Jesus' call of Peter and the fishermen to be followers. In fact, the call of God is always with us, kind of like a cell phone. We might hear it in worship, or more likely in our boat (car) as we go about our daily tasks. It is persistent, insistent, in the ring tone of life. If we do not answer the calls, at the very least we can listen to our messages.

And call back. Just to talk. Or better yet, to say, "Send me."

by Rev Karen Oehl

*And then I heard the
voice of the Master:
"Whom shall I send?
Who will go for us?"*

*I spoke up,
"I'll go. Send me!"*

Isaiah 6:8,
from *The Message*

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