



Unfinished: Discovering God's Call in the Not Yet

Lent 3

Called by God

Warm-up Question

Have you heard the voice of Jesus lately? Where?



Photo by [Jon Tyson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

"Near and Now" is a resource provided by the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College. This edition is written by Linnea Peterson. They are in their mid-twenties and live in Minneapolis. They work for 1517 Media, the Publishing House of the ELCA. In their spare time, they enjoy reading, writing, and going on long walks.

I am he, the one speaking to you

Read [John 4:5-42](#)

Bible Story Reflection

In this passage from John, Jesus has a conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well. For the Samaritan woman, being spoken to by a Jewish man is just one of several surprises in this conversation. Jesus offers the woman “living water” that will quench her thirst forever, he is able to tell her facts about her past that he has no apparent way of knowing, and he proclaims himself the Messiah.

To me, the most interesting part of the interaction is the tug-of-war within the woman between belief and doubt. She readily states that Jesus is a prophet immediately after he reveals his knowledge of the details of her life. Yet, although she says she believes the Messiah is coming, she does not seem to realize that Jesus is the one she is waiting for, in spite of his show of prophetic insight. The tug-of-war continues after Jesus announces that he is the Messiah. The woman is so eager to introduce her community to Jesus that she leaves her water jar behind at the well when she goes to the city to fetch her neighbors. Yet despite that eagerness, she is still not completely convinced, asking, “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

I recognize this tug-of-war within myself, as well. Just as the woman at the well could say without hesitation that she was waiting for the Messiah, so I can say that I am waiting for the second coming. But when I hear of “wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6), I don’t go all-in preparing for the end times. In the hundreds of years between predictions of the Messiah and this woman’s lifetime, there had been plenty of false prophets; likewise, in the two thousand or so years since Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension, there have been many false announcements of the second coming.

It’s good to have some skepticism when people claim to be prophets carrying divine messages. Sometimes so-called “divine messages” are really just scams. But at what point do we become so skeptical that we miss God’s call in our lives? God has a call for each of us. For the Samaritan woman, it was to introduce Jesus to her community. For us, who knows? But our best chance at finding out is to be open to the voice of God in ourselves and in those around us.

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Discussion Questions

1. When have you felt a tug-of-war within yourself between faith and doubt?
2. Have there been any times in your life when skepticism has served you well, or when you wish you had been more skeptical? What have those been like?
3. Have there been any times in your life when openness has served you well, or when you wish you had been more open? What have those been like?
4. How do you discern God's voice among the many voices trying to get your attention?
5. Is there anyone in your life who frequently speaks to you with the voice of God?
6. Has there ever been a time when you have done something because you believed God was calling you to do it? Do you still believe that was what God wanted you to do?
7. Has there ever been a time when you did something and realized later that it felt like a "God thing"? What about it convinced you of that?
8. What role do you think certainty plays in the life of faith? Do you feel like there is anything you are "supposed" to be certain about?
9. Aside from certainty, what other attitudes is it possible to have to a tenet of your faith? Are there options besides certainty and doubt?

Activity Suggestions

Look up information about scams and make a poster, pamphlet, or other informative material to help older adults in your congregation stay safe from scammers.

Raise money for an organization that helps people access water, or bring water bottles directly to unhoused people in your area.

Start writing down, either on paper or in a note on your phone, things that people say to you that seem to be the voice of God.

Vocare Practice

Reflect upon the **voices that call** to you

- How do I typically decide which voices I listen to?
- What voices called to me today?
- Which ones did I listen to?
- Which ones did I not listen to?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

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Prayer Concerns

Those without access to clean water, those who have been scammed, and those struggling to hear God's voice

Closing Prayer

Inspire me, O God, to trust in your call upon my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

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