

*“This is my Son, whom I have chosen: Listen to him.” Luke 9:35b NIV*

She was mad. This was nothing new but this time she was mad at me. She had given me an announcement to be read during the “announcements” and I hadn’t read it. I thought I had. I was sure I had. I apologized and told her I would call those involved. When I called they all said there was no need to call, they had heard it when I announced it! Later in the week she called, apologized – I had read it – she hadn’t been listening. (Our worship services were video taped and played over a local broadcast channel each week.). Phew! I wasn’t sure whether she listened to it again just to prove I hadn’t or what – but the second time she listened and heard it!

I think of that incident often. I think of when people fail to show up for things and then say, “I didn’t know.” Or, “No one told me about it.” The event or meeting had been posted in several weekly bulletins, the monthly newsletter and other communications. It was even announced in worship on Sunday — but, they didn’t hear or weren’t listening.

They are on a mountain top with Jesus. Suddenly everything is changed as Jesus prayed. He was not alone. With him are Moses and Elijah. They are talking together. Peter speaks, he wants to do something, build shelters in honor of the occasion. As he speaks a cloud comes and “they are afraid”. From the cloud comes the words highlighted above. The instructions could not be more simple: *“Listen to him.”*

I wonder if there are days when God wonders if anyone is listening? If I am listening? The words seem so plain, so simple. Love one another. Care for those who are hungry. Go the extra mile. Love your enemies. A parable of a Good Samaritan. Forgiving. Grace. If you have two coats give one to someone in need. (Looked in your closet lately?). Still there are some who find a reason not to listen. One said, “This is only for the government, not Christians”. We find ways to get around, explain away what Jesus said. It is for another time, another day that is coming. Not now. Not yet.

Jesus doesn’t seem to say that. His words and God’s words seem quite clear. This is how we are supposed to act. This is what we are supposed to be doing. A recent Facebook rant from a “friend” complained that ... Even though it is the government they are criticizing that makes it possible for them to criticize! I wanted to ask, “If we are living the life Christ has called us to live then what does it matter.” Did not the church gain momentum during days when the world seemed to be the darkest and Christians were literally burned at the stake and fed to lions for entertainment purposes? Why? Because they were speaking and living love, grace and hope. Still revolutionary phrases it seems. Jesus was not crucified because he called for a sword, but because he called for peace. Because he included those others wanted kept out.

The instructions were simple: “Listen to him.” I doubt if God has changed them over the centuries. They are as important today as they were to those on the mountain.

**(I keep a notebook on my desk, in it I jot notes and thoughts from my daily Scripture and other readings — here are a few – in no particular order).**

- From Jonah 1:5 “Sometimes our folly (sin) costs others more than it costs us. The sailors were in danger of losing their lives. The ship’s captain lost his cargo (they threw it overboard). All because Jonah was running away.”

- “Jesus would not have made it in today’s world either. The liberal would not like him because he talked about sin (they would argue over what sin was/is and was it really sin). He would not be accepted by conservative or fundamentalist because he accepted anyone who came to him. And, we can’t have someone upsetting the apple cart and our position in the power scheme. I mean telling the rich to give to poor and the poor that they will inherit a kingdom.”

- Diane’s observation from a Christmas Eve service in CA. People were talking loud, answering cell phones, noise was almost deafening. “People are quieter waiting for a movie to start than they are in a Sanctuary. Shouldn’t we be quieter before God than the media?”