

## **And God Said: A Conversation**

From the Bible: Genesis 1:3, Luke 7: 40 and Deuteronomy 6:4

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Two weeks ago, as we were recognizing and celebrating high school seniors who were graduating, one of the things I said to them was *"You don't have to read the Bible cover to cover, but know the story. Know enough of the Bible and enough about the Bible so when situations arise in your life you have a touchstone or a reference point around which to make a decision or to help you figure out what now or what next."*

Then, this happened.

It was Monday morning.

I was taking our dog on her morning walk.

I was a bit anxious because Monday is the day I work on the bulletin for the following Sunday. Writing the Opening Sentences and Prayer and selecting the hymns helps me think more about the sermon and overall focus of our worship. On most Mondays I have at least a glimmer of an idea about what I want to be thinking about in terms of worship and sermon.

But, last Monday I had nothing.

No spark of an idea.

No scribbled notes to fall back on.

Nothing.

Only walking the dog.

Then it happened.

A verse from the Bible.

*"And God said..."*

I sure it popped into my mind because I was struggling to make sense of the news of children being separated from their parents and housed in detention centers and what that must feel like for both parents and children. And, what it felt like to me as a citizen of this country. And, because my faith and my understanding of God is often the way I think and try to make sense of my life and world I found myself asking where God might be in all of it.

And so the Bible verse.

What would God say?

Still walking the dog and still not clear about the bulletin or about this morning, as I thought more about what God would say, another similar verse from the Gospels popped into my head. Jesus has been invited to dinner at Simon's house. A woman of questionable integrity bursts in, washes Jesus with her tears and dries his feet with her hair. Simon, the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dinner is aghast. Just as he is about to say something Jesus turns to him and says, *"Simon, I have something to say to you."*

Which added to my pondering.  
What would Jesus say to us, I wondered?

Then back at my desk, a third verse.

*"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*

*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, mind, soul and strength."*

My understanding of the Hebrew is that the word in this verse which is translated 'hear' implies much more than just hearing a sound or a sentence. More than hearing the birds chirping or a door closing. The Hebrew word implies these three things: hearing and understanding and acting. If you have not understood and not acted, you have not heard.

So, there I was.

Three verses.

*And God said...*

*Simon, I have something to say to you.*

*And, Hear, O Israel...*

Then there was the bulletin and the hymns.

Then several days thinking about those three verses.

Thinking about what God is saying and about what Jesus might want to say to me and to us and about whether or not I was really hearing.

Which brings us to this morning.

Now, it is your turn.

Let me invite you or pull you into the conversation.

Believing God still speaks or the Spirit still prompts what do you hear God saying?

To you in terms of your own life?

What you are thinking about and pondering and trying to discern?

Or in terms of who we are as a community of faith with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other and where and how God might be wanting to say something to us?