

I pretty sure all of you have heard about an example like this before, but it just never gets old for me.

True story: a world famous musician takes a dare, and plays a 30 minute musical set in a train station with a small box open beside him for donations.

In that half hour, over 1000 people walk by, and a total of 7 people stop—most just for a moment or two, and he amasses a whopping \$32 in this donation case.

How often do we not recognize a master when we hear one?

How many of those people who walked by this person were musicians? Couldn't they recognize a music master? They must have recognized the beauty and talent of his playing. It must have been clear he was a great musician. But even those devoted to music didn't recognize him.

There could be many reasons why people ignored him.

The man was playing in a subway, in street clothes, asking for donations. No self-respecting artist would do that, right? He must not be skilled at what he does.

He must have been an amateur—perhaps people thought—and so he could be ignored.

Or—to quote Caiphas and Annas, the elders and rulers and scribes: "By what power or by what name did you do this?"

But perhaps the people in the train station were just busy—they had to give an important presentation that morning, they were listening to a great podcast on their phones, they were nervous in a crowd, and so couldn't relax enough to pay attention to what was in front of them.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me."

I hope we do know Jesus' voice as well as he knows ours. because we can hear Jesus everywhere—if we listen.

But if we're too busy, too distracted, too afraid—we will miss what's right in front of us.

Maybe-- we are not hearing God voice easily because we're expecting it to sound a specific way- a bass voice, for example, or a tenor voice—and when it doesn't sound like that we don't recognize it.

All of you know I care deeply about the LGBTQI issues and community-- and I believe God's voice is speaking to me from there.

Many of you love to do one-on-one ministry with the poor, serving others at Loaves and Fishes, or working with the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry -- haven't you heard God speaking to you from there?

God speaks to us through so many things: so many people. We don't all hear the same thing because we are not all identical.

All of us-- are part of a body of wholeness. We are all separate parts of one vast living, breathing organism. One Kingdom—to use Jesus' image. One body of Christ—to use Paul's words.

Each one of us helps the body to function in love. Each one of us hears God's voice speaks to us out of our everyday lives.

Physicist Paul Davies says "The laws [of physics] ... seem to be the product of exceedingly ingenious design... The universe must have a purpose".

God speaks to us through Science! Well, definitely not to me, but to some of you!

"The Laws of nature are but the mathematical thoughts of God." (Euclid)

God even speaks to us through Math! (astonishing to me, but not to some..)

The point is-- God speaks to us though whatever interests us. In our jobs, in our hobbies, in our families, in our lives-- inside and OUTSIDE the church. The Spirit is *all around us*-- waiting for us to pay attention so we can hear it.

But if we decide not to listen because of how someone looks, or where they live or work- we might miss God's voice, speaking to us in an unfamiliar – but spectacular-- way.

But if we are constantly distracted by everything around us, and we are constantly rushing around with blinders on- we won't hear, we won't NOTICE Jesus' voice-- everywhere. Playing intricate and breathtaking melodies. It will be our loss.

So let's all be aware of God speaking all around us. In unexpected ways. In unexpected people. In unexpected places.

And when we hear it—let's stop.

Let's feel the love which is an infallible sign of God's presence.

And then—“*Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*”

Amen.