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Keep Listening, God is Still Speaking

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By Rev. Jessie Waddell Teegarden

General Conference Clergy Delegate

Growing up in the church, Scripture has been an important voice in my life from my earliest memories. It first began with listening to stories from my storybook Bible, singing the words of songs, and exploring the Bible in Sunday school. These experiences ingrained important messages in my heart about God, the one who made me and loves me. As a baby in the nursery, I was taught through the songs of E.C.A. (Early Christian Awareness) that the Bible is God's book and it says that God loves me. In Sunday school, I heard stories of people who were called by God to do amazing things, times God helped people who

were suffering, and words of guidance for how to live as a disciple of Christ. The Biblical truths I was hearing and singing were an important foundation for my love of God, Scripture, and the Church.

The knowledge of these Biblical truths about the love of God and God's presence with us came alive through experiences in my life. One time I remember God speaking through Scripture was my senior year of high school. I was struggling with friendships and dreaded going to school each day. It was during this difficult time that the words on the pages of the Bible came alive. The words of Matthew 28:20, "And remember, I am with you always," and the Romans 8:39 reminder that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God," provided strength and comfort in a powerful way. I found myself more invested in the messages I heard at church and wanting to spend more time there. In youth choir, I was introduced to the anthem "Psalm 139" by Allen Pote which became a source of healing as I sang these words. "Where can I flee from your spirit, where can I go to run away? If I go to heaven or live in hell, you are there." I heard God speaking these words over me in a new way. The words became ingrained in my mind and heart providing me with the strength and comfort to carry on amidst a dark time.

While that time in my life was difficult, it awakened my soul to the power of God's word and the Biblical truths I had heard as a child. This awakening to God's voice led me to continue to explore God's word in a new way. I was able to better live into my identity as a child of God and a few years later hear a call to ordained ministry. Through these sacred words, I found that God was speaking to me then and continues to speak through the words of Scripture. At times Scripture provides comfort and strength. At other times we hear words of instruction and guidance and, yes, at times they are a wake-up call. The important thing to remember is that we must keep listening because God is still speaking.

I have reflected on the importance of scripture a lot lately in this difficult time in our church and world. I've also been listening to God's voice as a new mother. I'm considering what rituals I want to begin with Georgia to help her discover the power of God's word in her life. Will we read from a storybook Bible each night? What songs and prayers will we teach her? As I embark on this new journey, I am reminded of God's voice throughout my life and have found that the words of Scripture have been at the forefront of my mind as I rock my sweet baby. I sing the words of the anthem "God you are there, you are there" and remember to listen and follow where God leads.

God, you are speaking. May we open our minds and hearts to hear your Word.

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