

**“God is Calling”  
by Cathy Love  
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**Matthew 22:37-40**

Christmas has come and gone – a magical time in the Church. A reminder of God’s immense love for us as He gifted us with his Son, who would grow up to save us all. And a busy time for people in general.

I thought today, we would explore His love and His call to us.

Earlier we sang the song *The Same Love* and I asked you to pay attention to the lyrics. As many of you know, I enjoy exploring the lyrics and the history of songs. This one intrigued me in many ways. First, I thought we would consider the song from the perspective on the songwriter.

When I speak of Paul this morning, I am referring to the singer/songwriter Paul Baloche. The singer, Paul Baloche explains his thoughts. “God is not this impersonal force. The truth is that from creation to crucifixion, God has been calling us – by name.

He’s giving us a challenge, calling us to the cross, asking “Are you ready to give up your way of doing things? Come as you are, pick up your cross daily and I will transform your life.” If you do something long enough you uncover life lessons along the way. You aspire to be faithful to God’s calling in your life, pressing through even when you fall short.

And when you hit a certain age, as you grow in your faith, you recognize the potential and the burden of being a leader, realizing ‘I’ve got to step up and be more intentional toward the people God has put in my life.’ And your prayer becomes, ‘Lord, give me grace to finish well.’”

What a powerful thought that is – Lord, give me the grace to finish well. Because we all worry about falling short of God’s expectations of us if we dare to answer His call.

You may have noted the themes of God's faithfulness and mercy through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross as we sang *The Same Love* earlier.

Paul expresses his passion for the Church. "From project to project, I try to wipe the slate clean," he says, "to consider what's happening right now in my church, in my own soul and in the church at large. And I ask, 'What do I sense in the heart of the next generation, how do they perceive God, the church, fellowship and community?'"

Paul acknowledges "Life is hard, people are looking for hope, and there's not much to be found outside of the hope we have in Christ," says Baloché. "My intent is for these songs to be honest prayers for the Church to sing, songs that give people a means of expression, songs that facilitate a conversation with God." We all have times of need and prayers that we send forth to God.

Having heard Paul, the singer's thoughts on his responsibility to God and others and his reasons for singing these words, I want to ask you to watch the video of the same song and pay attention to the actions of the people in the video. What do you see? How are the words and the actions of the people connected? Watch for the passion of the singer compared to the people in the streets.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAK3t6uG58Q>

I have watched this video so many times and am struck by the number of times people miss God's calling and it causes me to ponder how many times I have missed God's voice in my life.

Think for a minute of the times you might have either missed God calling you, ignored God calling you or were just too overwhelmed to respond.

Now, don't spend too long on that because now, I want you to think of all the times you responded to God's call. What did that look like? Those are the times I want you to focus on.

If we look at some pictures of some of the people in the video, what do we notice? The first picture is the beginning of the video. There is a red solo cup beside a person with headphones on.

Everyone is focused on their own lives and what is happening. As in real life, many people are focused on their phones and are distracted in a variety of ways. Many of them have headphones on which blocks their ability to hear God's word being shouted from the rooftop by the singer.

He leaves the cups by busy walkways, a playground, a construction site, a stairway, a doorway, where people ride and lock their bikes. Not only do they not hear the music, but they also don't pay attention to the cup which is an unusual thing to see in these locations.

I read a quote that I feel offers an important lesson "Listen in silence because if your heart is full of other things, you cannot hear the voice of God."

Paul sings with passion and volume. He knows the love of His God. And as hard as he tries, he is unable to get the attention of the people in the streets.

Frances shared some quotes from some podcasts which reflects this message. "Many people have room for God in their hearts, but they don't make room for God in their schedules." That is so evident in this video.

Another quote she shared with me was "Love is willing the good of another. To know what the good of the other is, we have to be attentive to them. Love requires attentiveness." So many people in the video and dare I say some of us – myself included are not as attentive as we could be – especially to God's calling.

We miss so many opportunities to follow God's wishes for our lives, but it is never too late. God is calling us all by name, He is loving and forgiving, and persistent.

The other message we need to hear is God loves each and every one of us, the captives and the free. He tells the faithless “you are mine” and He calls us all to the cross.

In our responsive psalm, Psalm 136, your response was “His love endures forever.” That is, to me, comforting.

There are so many references to God’s love in the Bible, but I also selected Isaiah 54:10 “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

Did you notice that the promise God makes says His love is more permanent than the mountains and the hills, than anything in the world, even in chaos. Even when we miss His messages. God is always lovingly waiting for us.

At the end of the video, the young girl takes off her headphones and lifts the solo cup to her ear just as the music fades – what message did you take from this? Is it too late? Will she hear the message again? Will she respond to it, or will she dismiss it because she tried to listen once but there was nothing there? Will she cross paths with someone who will share the message with her? What message did you hear? I firmly believe it is never too late to heed God’s call.

I would like to leave you with one thought. If you hear God’s voice calling you, don’t be afraid, He will equip you to do his bidding and He will be with you throughout your attempts to follow his call. You might not believe you are the right one for the job, but God knows things about us that we don’t know about ourselves.

If you know my story, I am living proof of this. If you don’t know my story of how I came to be up here, we’ll chat sometime because that was a message all in its own.

**Thanks be to God.**