

Voices

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Two weeks ago, our pastor addressed the topic of guns, of gun violence. I left that worship noting that I had heard many voices during worship and in Paul's message.

There was the voice of the statistician. There was the voice of a suicide victim.

There was Paul's own voice speaking of his childhood, his teen years, his adulthood, as a member of an extended family. There was also his confessional voice speaking as one whose impulses were shaped in significant and troubling ways by family and social experience. And then there was his testimonial voice that spoke of the converting power of the love of Jesus in his own heart.

There was the voice of the preacher who named the sin of violence as the personification of evil.

There was the voice of the prophet who sternly rebuked the cultural myth that claims violence can be redemptive.

There were the words of the country's constitution that holds arms to be a right, even a duty.

There were the words of the 1st and 2nd commandments of Yahweh: "You shall have no other gods before me." "You shall not make for yourself an idol."

There was the account of a voice on the phone asking if Shalom gives "equal time?"

There are many voices: loud, insistent, contradictory, perplexed, angry, fearful, timid, silent, and—alas—many that have been 'silenced.'

What voices do we listen to?

Perhaps we may address that question by 'listening'—for understanding—to many voices, but choosing carefully the voices we heed. And first of all, let us listen carefully for and give heed to voice of God.

The place and power and impact of guns in our society comprise a highly-charged and very current topic. We might hope, we might pray, that at long last “the times they are a-changin’!”