

A note from a recent college graduate:

"Back in college, I worked part-time at a call center. It was an interesting experience, not in the least because I got the most random comments on my voice. People would try to guess which region of the country I was from (apparently I had no discernible accent) or ask if I did radio or sang.

When I replied that I didn't, the response was almost always, "Well you should!"

Once, a kind old lady was about to hang up when she asked me, "Sweetie, do you sing?"

"No, but you're not the first customer who's asked," I said. "Maybe I should."

"You definitely should. You have a lovely voice," she said.

She paused, then laughed to herself.

"You know, when you hear the same thing from strangers twice, I like to think that's God trying to tell you a little something."

Years later, I still don't sing (or at least not yet). But what that old woman said stuck with me.

So if you need a stranger to tell you this today, here it is: don't give up hope for goodness in the world. Protect the kindness in your heart. Stay firm in your desire for truth and justice. Rest well so that when the time comes, you can stand up for your principles with integrity and compassion. And when you look back on your life, you can have a clear conscience knowing that you did all you could to live with honor and righteousness.

Yes, it would be easier to just hole up and avoid the news. It would be easier to forget the reality that we're living in. It would be easier to give up hope. It would be easier to quit my job and find another one where I don't have to deal with such heavy issues. On some days, despair can look pretty tempting.

But on those days, I remember that I could be someone's second stranger. I remember that if I can hold onto the goodness in my own heart and not be afraid to live it out, I could perhaps be that message from God for someone else.

I hope that I'm the second stranger to tell you this. If I'm not, if this is the first time you've heard this from a stranger, then I hope that a second stranger will be coming your way soon with the same message. "