

Calling

1 Samuel 3:1-11

Life Group Discussion – April 22nd, 2018

Today's passage is when God calls Samuel to be his servant.

It was rare to hear God during those days; therefore Samuel did not know it was the Lord who was calling him. But it was the High Priest Eli, Samuel's spiritual father, who confirmed it was the Lord's voice. In the beginning, Samuel believed it was Eli's voice calling him.

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. (1 Samuel 3:1)

The reason why the word of the Lord was rare in those days was not unusual considering the circumstances. We learned of the lesson the High Priest Eli had to learn through his sons, therefore how much weaker in faith must the people have been? But even in this culture, God was preparing Samuel.

When God works, He works through the words and actions of His people. And if there is no one ready, God will simply wait until someone is ready. In Exodus, God waited until Moses was 80 years old to send him to Pharaoh. And it was through Moses that God performed great miracles.

Then what are the characteristics of people who are ready?

First, we must get rid of our own pride.

We need to step away from our thoughts, our ambitions, and our desires in order to fully hear and understand what God wants from us.

Second, trust only in the power of God's Word.

In order to be used by God we must believe that God is alive today. If we don't fully believe in the Bible then it is impossible to trust or rely on Him.

Third, we cannot be complacent.

If God entrusts His work to us and we become prideful and arrogant, that quickly leads to complacency. It is this complacency that will destroy what He has entrusted us. We must always be humble and continue to pray in all circumstances.

At this time Samuel was just a young boy who had no official role in the Temple. He was probably just serving Eli in various small tasks. But it was this errand boy that came face to face with the Word of God.

The greatest blessing for God's people is to hear His word. Samuel heard his calling from God.

Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. (1 Samuel 3:4-5)

Samuel thought it was Eli who was calling him. The reason was because Samuel had never experienced God's calling before.

Eli realized it was the Lord calling Samuel, so he teaches Samuel what to say.

"Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."

This is the attitude of someone who is called by God.

On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. (1 Samuel 2:12-13)

The first words that God spoke to Samuel was to tell him that Eli, his spiritual father, would have his entire household punished.

How difficult must it have been for Samuel to deliver this message of tragedy to the man who had cared and loved him for all these years?

In order to begin Israel's revival, God was holding the leaders of the land responsible for their sins.

Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." (1 Samuel 3:14)

God told Eli that his sins would never be forgiven.

People do not realize how scary the Lord really is. Eli was a man who received and knew God's words. He was with the Lord in the land of Israel for over 40 years. But Eli loved his children more than he loved God and it was this sin that led Israel down a dark path for many years.

What was Eli's mistake?

He forgot who was Lord over his heart.

The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. (1 Samuel 2:6-7)

The only master in our lives is God. But Eli knew that God was real and He knew the power of the Lord, and yet he still did not care. We must never forget that God is our master and our Lord.

That is why the Bible makes it very clear what our priority should be.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. (3 John 1:2)

Your health, and everything else, comes after your soul, and it is never the other way around.

If we ever get the order mixed up and have anything come before our souls, we must immediately change our priorities. It doesn't matter how much time it takes to reorganize and reprioritize, if you continue to live with the wrong priorities it is already wasted time.

I hope that we can truly become men and women that know who the master of our lives are, and He is the Lord.

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." (1 Samuel 3:15-17)

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli his vision. But Eli called Samuel and told him to tell his vision, and to not hold anything back. So Samuel tells Eli everything, but what was surprising was that Eli was not surprised by this message.

So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him." (1 Samuel 3:18)

If you learned that your entire household was to be punished forever, it would make sense to cry out to the Lord, but Eli simply goes, "Let him do what seems good to him."

What is the reason for this response?

Because his heart was already hardened, this warning from the Lord was not taken as seriously as it should have been.

When people become dull to what God is saying, they become careless in how they act and in what they say. We must always be sensitive to what God is saying and act immediately.

Eli recognized that Samuel was with the Lord. Eli's ministry had finished and Samuel's had begun.

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. (1 Samuel 3:19-20)

Samuel became known through all of the land. This was because every word that he said and every prophecy that he spoke was true. God established Samuel and it was through this servant that the Israelites came back to the Lord. If God sets you up as His servant, He will also give you the ability to do what He asks.

Just like Samuel, I hope that we can be people who hear God's calling and understand it to be precious. That we would not rely on our own thinking and our own desires but simply do what God wants us to do and understand that it will bring us true happiness. This is what we hope and pray for the members of Shining Star.

SHARING-----

1. Eli took God's warning lightly. Have you ever treated God's word lightly in your life? Has there been a time when a warning from God was not taken seriously and ignored because you were spiritually insensitive or in a place in your life where you were preoccupied? Please share.
2. When you purchase or sell something, if you get the order wrong you must start all over again. Please read 3 John 1:2 again and discuss what your priorities should be and what is taking the spot above God in your life.