

Here I am Lord (1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a & Hebrews 4:1-4) 24-Jun-2018

We're continuing our series on the OT book of 1 Samuel.

Please have your Bibles turned to 1 Samuel chapter 3 - we're looking at the whole of chapter 3 and the first verse of chapter 4.

You can take notes on the outline in your bulletin.

Let's pray before we take a look at this passage

### Recap

Before we look at today's passage - let's have a quick recap of the story so far.

[PowerPoint 1-Recap]

### Recap

- Hannah prays to the Lord for a son and promises to dedicate him to the Lord
- The Lord graciously answers her prayer
- Samuel is born, Samuel means "asked of God"
- After Samuel is weaned – He is presented to the Lord at Shiloh
- Eli is the Priest of the tabernacle at Shiloh
- Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas are corrupt
- Eli honours his sons more than God!
- What will God do?

### God Calls (1 Samuel 3:1-4)

What will God do?

Why are we being told about the boy Samuel?

Because God comes calling

[PowerPoint 2-God Calls]

Could Samuel be the answer to the spiritual decline of the nation?

Samuel is just a boy in v1 - Jewish historian - Josephus - reckons Samuel is 11 or 12 years old [Bar-mitzvah and manhood is usually at age 13]

[PowerPoint 2a-Samuel]

V1 of chapter 3 says Samuel *ministered* before the Lord under Eli

Ministered here means *served* the Lord - he is the Lord's servant

Under the supervision of the ageing priest, Eli

To get some idea of the spiritual decline of the nation

[PowerPoint 2b-Decline]

V1 says the "word of the Lord was rare" in those days

In other words God is not speaking through Godly prophets and priests because there aren't any!

The only word of the Lord we've heard in Samuel so far was in chapter 2 - from the 'man of God' - bringing God's judgement against Eli and his sons

The phrases "*word of the Lord was rare*" and "*there were not many visions*" - in v1 - are because of the hardness of heart towards God - among the people of Israel and the corruption of the priesthood.

God will only speak and guide when His people seek Him, and when His ministers seek to serve Him diligently

Even though Samuel is just a young boy - he's been ministering to and serving the Lord faithfully and dilligently

So God comes calling...

[PowerPoint 2c-God comes calling]

Is it surprising that God comes calling to such a young fellow?

Jesus had something to say about God's kingdom and young people in Mark 10:13-16 - it says:

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."<sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." <sup>16</sup> And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

So it shouldn't be surprising that God calls young Samuel

He's the future of God's Kingdom

And young people are often more trusting and accepting than grown-ups - who become suspicious, unbelieving and cynical as they grow older

[PowerPoint 3-Challenge]

**Challenge for us:** what children do we have contact with amongst our families, friends or church family? Are we hindering or enabling them to come to know God and His Son - and to become followers of Jesus? Are we investing time in these young people? Have we taken a young person under our wing as Eli had - and are we training them up in the Lord?

Just like Israel at the time of Samuel - Our nation is also in spiritual decline - where many don't know the Lord

We need to be looking out for "Samuels" that God is raising up and invest time in training, teaching, encouraging and guiding them.

As Christians - we never retire

(pause)

### **Called to Listen (1 Samuel 3:2-8)**

So God comes calling in verses 2 to 8

It's night-time - Eli's old and his eyesight is failing - [not just physical blindness - but symbolic of his spiritual blindness] he's lying down and young Samuel was lying down in the tabernacle - close to the Ark of the Covenant. The lamp of God in the tabernacle hasn't gone out which suggests it's not far off dawn - when the lamps that burn all night are put out at dawn (Ex 27:21)

God calls Samuel 3 times

God chooses the quiet of night to call Samuel

[PowerPoint 4-Called to Listen]

He's calling Samuel **to listen**

*There's the story of a busy minister who found himself with too many commitments and with very few days to get them all done. He got nervous and tense about it. He was snapping at his wife and his children, gobbling down his food at mealtimes, and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions throughout the day.*

*Before long, things around the home started reflecting the pattern of his hurry-up style. It was becoming unbearable.*

*After supper one evening, the words of his younger daughter brought him back to reality. She wanted to tell him something important that had happened to her at school that day. She said, 'Daddy, I want to tell you something and I'll tell you really fast.'*

*Suddenly the minister realized her frustration, and he said, "Sweetheart, you can tell me -- and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly."*

*The minister will never forget her answer*

*She said "Then you listen slowly - Daddy"*

[PowerPoint 4a-listen slowly]

Perhaps God's calling us - and he has something for us to do

But we have to be listening - and listening slowly

We can't listen if we're preoccupied

[PowerPoint 4b-still and quiet]

In Psalm 46:10 God says - *be still and know that I am God* -

Quiet times are essential for listening to God

Good listening is like tuning in a radio station. For good results, you can listen to only one radio station at a time. Trying to listen to God while looking at our phone or TV or attending to our family - is like trying to receive two radio stations at the same time. We end up with distortion and frustration. Listening requires a choice of where we place our attention. To tune into God, we must first choose to put away all that will divide our attention.

### **Called to Learn (1 Samuel 3:7-14)**

When Samuel is called

Look at his obedience - each time Samuel is called - he says "Here, I am"

This is a beautiful way to respond to God's Word. It's not that God does not know where we are, but it tells God and it reminds us we are simply before Him as servants, asking what He wants us to do. Samuel is among several others in the Bible, who also said, "**Here I am**" when the Lord spoke to them: Abraham (Genesis 22:1), Jacob (Genesis 46:2), Moses (Exodus 3:4), Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8), and Ananias (Acts 9:10).

But Samuel is not just called to listen

He needs to *learn* too

[PowerPoint 5-Called to Learn]

Samuel thinks its Eli calling him - not realizing it is God speaking

Look at his obedience though - he heard the call and he ran to Eli (v5)

Samuel thinks it's Eli calling because as it says in v7 - Samuel doesn't know the Lord yet

[PowerPoint 5a-personal revelation]

He's not had personal revelation from the Lord yet

So Samuel needs advice from Eli - to understand and learn that it is not Eli calling him but God Himself - and to learn that God speaks personally to His people - through His Holy Spirit

[PowerPoint 6-Challenge]

**The Challenge for us** - God speaks to us in many different ways

An audible voice - or an inner voice - or a strong urging from the Holy Spirit - or a revelation from His Word - or a word from one of His faithful people - or through the way He acts in our lives

We need to learn these different ways

And then respond in obedience?

Are we doing that?

(pause)

Samuel learns that God speaks and then gets the message from God in verses 11 to 14

And what a message!

A strong message of judgment - judgment that will make *the ears of everyone in Israel tingle* - *ears tingling* is a sign from the OT that the judgment of God is especially severe [2 Kings 21:12 and Jeremiah 19:3] - in this case - a severe judgment from God - on Eli's family

### **Called to speak what we hear (1 Samuel 3:15-18)**

Not only does Samuel have to *listen* to this message and *learn* it is from God - He is called to *speak what he hears*

[PowerPoint 7-Speak]

Samuel had to be brave - it's especially hard for a young bloke with his first personal revelation from God - to have to speak the judgment he has just heard from God

[PowerPoint 7b-brave]

He has to tell his mentor - Eli - that the judgment of God will be against his mentor and his family

How tough is that?

(pause)

And look what Samuel has to report - that there is no atonement - no making amends for what Eli's sons have done! They had made a mockery of the sacrifices made to God - and the sons didn't listen to Eli - and now it's all too late!

### [PowerPoint 8-Challenge]

**Challenge for us** - We are called to speak a similar message - aren't we?

We are called to tell everyone that - sin and rebellion against God - needs to be repented off - and people need to come with a heartfelt sorry to God and confess that sin and rebellion - and ask Jesus to be their Lord and believe that Jesus died for their sins to be forgiven and rose again so that they can have eternal life

If people don't choose to accept the sacrifice of Jesus for their sin - and reject it - then as Hebrews 10:26 - **If people deliberately keep on sinning after they have received the knowledge of the truth [just like Eli's sons did], [then] no sacrifice for sins is left,**

Like Samuel we are called to speak what we hear from God

No matter how hard it is too tell those close to us that they need to repent - and to accept and believe that Jesus is the only way that they can be saved of their sin and rebellion against God - to receive forgiveness and gain eternal life

It would have been tough for Samuel to tell God's message to Eli

And it will be tough for us to tell those close to us - who don't know Jesus

But we are called to *speak what we hear from God*

It's difficult to tell if Eli is fatalistic or godly in his response to Samuel's message from God in v18 - Eli simply says: *He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.*

But the lesson for us is that we should *always submit to God's will* - and join Eli in saying - *He is the Lord - let Him do what is good in His eyes*

### **Called to grow (1 Samuel 3:19-4:1a)**

After Samuel told Eli, God's message

The Lord was with Samuel

And Samuel was called to grow

[PowerPoint 9-Grow]

And he **grew** - not only physically - but he **grew spiritually** - growing in his love and knowledge of the Lord

And because Samuel was obedient and faithful to the Lord

[PowerPoint 9a-Prophet]

None of Samuel words that he shared were a waste of time

He became a prophet of great reputation - known from Dan to Beersheba

The phrase 'Dan to Beersheba' means the whole occupied areas of the 12 tribes of Israel - it would be like us saying 'from Hobart to Darwin' - to mean all of Australia

Samuel was a faithful prophet of God - he travelled all over the occupied land - teaching God's truth and passing on God's message

And so Samuel grew not just in godly reputation but grew in His love and knowledge of the Lord - as the Lord continued to reveal His plans to Samuel

We began the chapter - with Samuel as a boy who did not know the Lord - and now Samuel is a man - who knows the Lord personally and follows God's word - applies it to his life - and finishes the chapter as God's priest and prophet

### [PowerPoint 10-Challenge]

**Challenge for us:** Samuel's spiritual growth is a great picture of how we must mature and grow spiritually in our lives too

It requires spending time in God's word - faithfulness to God's word - following and applying God's word to our lives - and sharing God's word to the occupied land we live in

(pause)

### Conclusion

So to conclude then

### [PowerPoint 11-Conclusion]

In our NT reading from Hebrews chapter 1 - we read that

God now speaks through Jesus in these last days (Hebrews 1:1) - **these last days** - are the days between Jesus first coming (when he came, died and rose again and ascended to Heaven) and Jesus second coming - which we wait for  
These last days - include the period of time we are living in right now

So the writer of Hebrews says God speaks to us today through Jesus

[PowerPoint 11a-Listen]

And Jesus calls us -**To Listen** - <sup>27</sup>“My sheep **listen** to my voice; I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27)

[PowerPoint 11b-Learn]

Jesus calls us -**To Learn** - <sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and **learn from me**, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

[PowerPoint 11c-speak]

Jesus calls us - **To Speak what we hear** - <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) - with the help of HS

[PowerPoint 11d-grow]

And Jesus calls us -**To grow** - <sup>18</sup>But **grow in the** grace and knowledge of our **LORD** and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen (2 Peter 3:18)

So this morning [this evening]

Will we respond to Jesus' call as Samuel responded?

And say, like Samuel...

[PowerPoint 11e-respond]

Here I am, you called me! (3:5, 6, 8)

Speak, for your servant is listening (3:10)

Let's pray