

Samuel's Calling

“Ordinary Object, Extraordinary Meanings”



“The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.’” Matthew 8:8

This story starts with an older woman named Hannah who had not been able to have a child. She wanted one desperately and so she began to pray about having a child and promised that if God would give her a child she would dedicate him to God's work.

Eli, a priest, was nearby. He didn't hear her exact prayer, but he knew she was praying in earnest and said to her "Go in peace and may God answer your prayer." This was nice of him to say, but he had no idea of her commitment to God through that prayer. The Lord blessed Hannah. She and Elkanah, her husband, had a child. They named him Samuel. When he was old enough to leave home, she did as she had promised and took him to the tabernacle at Shiloh, in the care of Eli the high priest. He took Samuel in and raised him as his own. God blessed Hannah again and gave her and her husband even more sons and daughters.

One night Samuel heard someone calling him. He thought it was Eli so he answered "Yes? I'm here" and ran to Eli. He told Eli "I heard you call. Here I am." Eli told him he had not called him and he should go back to bed. God called a second and a third time. Each time Samuel thought it was Eli calling and he went to him. The third time, Eli realized that it was the Lord calling Samuel and he told him "Go back and lie down. If the voice calls again, say, 'Speak, God. I'm Your servant, ready to listen.'" 1 Samuel 3

THE MESSAGE

The next time the Lord called Samuel answered "Speak. I'm your servant, ready to listen." God blessed Samuel and he grew up to be a great prophet and spokesperson of the Lord.

God calls us to do His work every day. We may not have the dramatic calling that Samuel had, but we are called. It may not be an audible voice. We don't know for sure that Samuel's was, but we know that he heard God. Eli didn't hear Him, but Samuel did. We often hear of people saying they are called by God to do a particular thing. Sometimes God is getting blamed for something wrong; sometimes it is something good. God would never call us for anything bad, but we can attribute all kinds of things to God. I don't think the answer "Here am I, Lord. I'm ready to serve You" given by Samuel was really understood by him at the time. But he was dedicating his life to serving his God. Sometimes God only speaks to one individual. It may be only a small quiet voice, but it is from God.

Then important thing is not how God speaks to us but what we do when we hear His word. When God spoke to Elijah on Mount Horeb, He could have done so in the wind, earthquake, or fire. But He didn't. He spoke with a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). When we listen, we can be blessed just as Samuel was blessed. Hearing and doing are two different things. Often we can hear, but we don't always heed.

If the disciples and the other apostles had not acted when they heard God's work through the teachings of Christ, we would not have the church we know today. We would not know the wonderful blessings that are in store for us. It is less important how God speaks to us than what we do with what He says. God speaks most clearly to us in this day through His Word.

We need to be able to recognize God's calling. Through listening and acting we can not only change our lives, but the lives of others.

The more we learn it, the more ready we will be to recognize His voice when He speaks, and the more likely we are to obey what we hear. In the 1700's a man named Hans Ernst Hess wrote "Keep listening for that still small voice if you are weary on life's road; the Lord will make your heart rejoice if you will let Him take your load."

A beautiful old hymn "I'll God Where You Want Me to Go"* written by Mary Brown speaks to listening and the promise to follow.

1. It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front,
My Lord will have need of me;
But if by a still, small voice He calls,
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
I'll go where You want me to go.
2. *Refrain:*
I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,
O'er mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what You want me to be.
3. Perhaps today there are loving words
Which Jesus would have me speak;
There may be now in the paths of sin,
Some wand'rer whom I should seek;
O Savior, if Thou wilt be my guide,
Though dark and rugged the way,
My voice shall echo Thy message sweet,
I'll say what You want me to say.

4. There's surely somewhere a lowly place,
In earth's harvest fields so white,
Where I may labor through life's short day,
For Jesus the Crucified;
So trusting my all to Thy tender care,
And knowing Thou lovest me,
I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere,
I'll be what You want me to be.

5. Prayer: Almighty God, You have given us many blessings and You talk with us daily but we don't always listen until we make the wrong choice and then we call on You for help. Help us to listen and thus receive Your blessings every day so that we may show Your love by the way we live and the words we speak. Amen.

1. Have you been called by God?
2. How do we know when truth is talking?
3. How can we show that God has spoken to us?