

February 12, 2012

“Here I Am”

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

2 One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed.

3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. **4** Suddenly the LORD called out, "Samuel!"

"Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" **5** He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.

6 Then the LORD called out again, "Samuel!"

Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."

7 Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before. **8** So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy. **9** So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

10 And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

How sad and what a commentary of the times that ...(v1b) in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. But there was hope for as the first part of v1 indicates that while messages from the Lord were very rare and visions uncommon... (v1a)
Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli.

You may remember Samuel's mother Hannah. She could not have children, yet prayed earnestly for God to give her a child, revealing her great faith. When the Lord did give her a son she named him Samuel because it means "Heard by God." Hannah dedicated

or consecrated her son Samuel to the Lord. And so, at a young age Samuel went to live with Eli the priest and served in the Tabernacle. And Samuel (1 Samuel 2:26) ...

Grew in favor with the LORD and with the people.

Eli's son's were very wicked, they disobeyed their father, they had no respect for the Lord, and abused their position as priests. No doubt this corrupted the whole nation and perhaps is why ... (v1) in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. But Samuel was not influenced by their bad example. He had been faithful in small matters and God would entrust him with much more.

1 Samuel 3:4 (NIV)

Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am."

The Lord called out to Samuel, who thought it was Eli, and he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." Eli says, "I didn't call you, go back to bed." The Lord calls Samuel a second time and again Samuel goes to Eli and says, "Here I am." A third time the same thing happens, again Samuel responding with, "Here I am." Then Eli realized it was the Lord, and so the fourth time the Lord calls out to Samuel to speak to him, Samuel responds with, "speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

What does Samuel's response show?

1. First it shows that **Samuel had a hearing ear.**

Do you have a hearing ear? Not every one does. Some have terrible ear conditions that prevent them from hearing the voice of God. Let me mention a few of these conditions:

Itching Ears:

Some have hearing ears and some have itching ears? Paul warned about itching ears in... 2 Timothy 4:3-4

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

Itching ears will only listen to what they want to hear. We must pray for the Lord to cure itching ears and open them to the truth. A cause of itching ear is sin. Some cannot hear the voice of God because sin is in the way. Many times it is a pet sin that they hold dear and wouldn't give up. This was the problem of Eli's sons and why they could not hear the voice of God. Itching ears are more common than hearing ears. You are blessed if you have a hearing ear. Some have another condition...

Dull Ears:

Hebrews 5:11

There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen.

Samuel was sleeping, yet heard the Lord's voice, I know people who are awake and can't hear Him. The Lord doesn't penetrate their souls, because their heart is dull of hearing! They hear the voice of preachers, and teachers, and those who care about them, but as of yet the voice of God has not reached their heart.

This was the first time God had spoken to Samuel, yet he heard Him; but I know people who God has spoken to many times, yet they have not heard Him. Some people don't stay put long enough, or quiet long enough to hear God. Some have heard many, many sermons, and Bible teachings, but still have not heard God's voice. Too often we listen to a sermon or a teaching to critique it, or criticize it, to judge it, or to find fault, or to compare the speaker to others we've heard, rather than listen to what God is saying to us and benefit from that. I pray that God may give each one of you / us a hearing ear.

A Deaf Ear:

Matthew 13:15

For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear

The Lord came to Samuel in the night and perhaps spoke his name softly, "Samuel, Samuel." Yet Samuel heard Him at once; but the voice of the Lord has been loud to some of you. He has spoken with loving conviction yet you have not heard Him or obeyed Him, you turn a deaf ear to Him. God has spoken to you through your conscience, through a friend, even through a child; He has spoken to you through a trial or affliction, or a sorrow. He has spoken to you again and again, and perhaps there was a faint hearing, a tingling in your ears, but that is as far as it went. There is still something blocking the way from your ear to your heart. Again it may be sin blocking the way, but as of yet you have not answered the voice of God and said, "Here I am." You have ears and yet don't hear. You could hear the Lord if you wanted to, but you are not willing; the problem lies in your will.

Samuel had a hearing ear, and I pray you will too.

The next thing that Samuel's response shows is that

2. Samuel had a responsive heart and a submissive spirit.

The Lord spoke to Samuel and he not only heard, but he said, "Here I am... your servant is listening." He was not just a hearer, but he was ready to obey the voice of the Lord. Many hear God's Word, but don't do what it says: James wrote...

James 1:22-25

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

Reading God's Word, even studying it is not enough if we don't do what it says. Samuel had a teachable spirit. That's what I see in his words, "Here I am...your servant is listening." He was saying, "Here I am, teach me, Lord, I am ready to hear and obey what you have to say." There is nothing better than sitting at the feet of the Master Jesus and saying, "I love you, Lord, and I know something of your truth, but you have more to teach me and I want to learn more of you." God's Word can only grow in the soil of obedience. For something to make a difference in your life it must go from your mind, to your heart, and then affect your life. It is important to hear God's Word, but it is much more important to obey it. Jesus Himself said... Luke 11:28
"But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."

Samuel's response also shows that

3. Samuel was in the right place.

(v3) Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God.

Samuel was where he ought to have been, and because of that when the Lord called out to him, he was not ashamed to answer, "Here I am." Are you always ready and willing to say, "Lord, here I am?" Sometimes we are in certain places and conditions when we are ashamed when the Lord speaks. I pray that you and I may always live in such a position that, whenever the Lord calls us, we may be able to answer without shame, "Here I am Lord." We should never be where we should be ashamed to meet our Lord. We are told that we are in the world, but must not to be of the world. We are to be transformed, not conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. We must not copy the behavior and customs of this world. The place we are located, the condition of our heart, and the things we are engaged in should not make us ashamed to meet our Lord.

We are also told that we must not neglect meeting together as believers in Christ. When the church meets, and wherever the church meets, in the sanctuary for worship, or in another part of the building or in a home for Bible Study and prayer, or out in the world serving other in the name of Christ together, if God takes attendance be able to say, "Here I am."

4. Finally, Samuel's response shows that there would be further communication with God.

Those who answer God's call will hear His voice again. If you are faithful to do what you do know, you will know more. If you can say, "Here I am... Speak, Lord for our servant is listening" God will call you again, and keep calling. And if you can say now, "Here I am, Lord," then one day as you stand before His throne and see the face of the One who took away your sins, you will say, "Here I am Lord, by your grace to worship you forever ever." May it be so for all of you, Amen.