

“When God Calls Your Name”

Guest Speaker: Rand Burden

Sermon Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-21

Family Activity for the Week: God called Samuel by his name, yet Samuel didn't know it was Him. Once Eli (Samuel's mentor) realized who it was, Eli taught Samuel to say, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.” What a crucial lesson to learn as a child! Together with your family, sit down to create some “Big ear headbands”. On one sheet of paper, draw big ears and cut them out. Make sure to leave a tab towards the inside of the ear as that is where you will connect your ears to your headband. Cut another piece of paper into strips to connect into a headband; fit to your head. Once assembled, write “*Your name's* listening ears” on the front and 1 Samuel 3:10 on the back. Talk about what God's voice would sound like if He spoke to you today. How would you discern His voice? What might He say to you? How can you prepare yourself to hear God calling your name? Read Psalm 43:3.

Monday, July 15 – Read 1 Samuel 1:1-11

The one thing Hannah desired more than anything else (children) she couldn't have. Hannah was humiliated and ridiculed by Elkanah's other wife Peninnah because of this. Hannah was broken, despairing and depressed- filled with sadness to the point where she wept and could not eat.

Hannah goes to the house of the Lord at Shiloh where she prays and cries “bitterly” to the Lord. In her trial, Hannah has come to the point where she is willing to pray that if God would give her a son, she would give him, this desire of her heart, back to God. In giving this desire to God, Hannah sets the stage for Samuel's life by making a vow- committing him to God before he is even conceived.

God's prevenient grace is working in the life of Hannah to draw her into a place where she can trust Him and eventually know him. This grace is also working in her life to plant the seeds of his work of grace in the life of her son Samuel, one of the greatest prophets of Israel.

Prayer: *Father by your grace draw me to you. Let me commit my desires and my way to follow you and trust you in all things.*

Tuesday, July 16 – Read 1 Samuel 1:12-18.

At this point of the story, Hannah's fervent prayer for a child caught the attention of the priest Eli. As she was speaking from her heart, her lips were moving in silent prayer. Eli accused her of being drunk. Hannah responds by saying, “no my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord”.

Eli sees the truth and tells her to go in peace (Hebrew- shalom). Eli's word to Hannah implies for her to go with assurance and comfort and also with restoration - wholeness or wellness of the entire person. As such, he imparted the word of healing. He agrees with and supports her prayer. He speaks with confidence that God would hear and grant her petition. Through this experience at Shiloh, Hannah goes her way encouraged and restored- the sadness is gone and she is able to eat again.

God pours out his grace as He uses others in our lives to bring words of health, hope and healing to us in the midst of our greatest trials. It is important not to pull away from others when the need is overwhelming. We must share our burdens and let God use others in our lives to minister to us to help bring wellness and a balance back to our person.

Prayer: *God I pray for and thank you for your healing touch. Restore my soul, my mind, my body and my spirit. Let me go now and serve you in shalom and bring forth fruit in my life.*

Wednesday, July 17 – Read 1 Samuel 1:19-28 and 2:11.

Hannah worshipped in Shiloh, then returned home to Ramah and had relations with her husband and she became pregnant. She had a son and called him Samuel (asked of God). She dedicated him to the Lord. As she vowed, she kept Samuel with her until he was weaned then took him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. From that point on Samuel lived in Shiloh and worked with Eli the priest, “ministering to the Lord”.

This story underscores the impact that parents have in dedicating their children to the Lord and also exposing them to the things in the church that would someday bring them into a fuller understanding and relationship with Jesus. The church also takes responsibility for the upbringing of the child in the Lord. So even if we don't have biological children, we can become involved in the lives of the children in the church and community thus planting seeds for God's kingdom.

Prayer: *God show me how I can plant the seeds in the lives of the little ones you put in my path. Let me commit them to you and speak into their lives with good works and loving words so that they may someday come to hear your voice.*

Thursday, July 18 – Read 1 Samuel 3:1-9.

Samuel continues in his ministry to the Lord with Eli's oversight. He works ministering to God but "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor had the word of the Lord yet been revealed to him." But that was about to change. One day Samuel went to bed and God called Samuel's name. Samuel thought it was Eli so he went to him and he sent him back to bed. This happened twice. Eli discerned what was happening and sent Samuel back to bed the third time with instructions as to what he should do and say if God spoke to him again. He was to say "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Jesus is calling us by our name. He knocks at the door and waits for us to open and let him into our hearts and into our lives. He waits for us to hear his voice, embrace him and follow after him. He gives us justifying grace to start our lives in a forgiven and new life in him.

Prayer: *Lord, when you call my name, when you speak to me, let me know your voice, let me desire to listen and give me the grace to hear and cherish your words and obey them.*

Friday, July 19 - Read 1 Samuel 3:10-18.

God speaks to Samuel and Samuel listens. God says he is about to judge the house of Eli for the indiscretions of his sons. This would be Samuel's first prophetic word from God. Samuel is fearful of sharing this revelation - Eli has to pry it out of him. Once Samuel tells Eli what is to come, Eli confirms that it was God talking to Samuel.

When God speaks to us, His words are not always something we are excited about sharing with others. Sometimes, we need others to confirm that what we are hearing is truly the word of God. The Holy Spirit is the revealer of these things and leads us through the word to enable us to walk in paths of sanctification - God's way. So with God's sanctifying grace, we learn to hear God's voice and walk in his ways.

Prayer: *Lord let me hear your voice today. Don't let me be afraid, but let me speak the truth with love and confidence that you are filling my lips with your words of life. Let me walk in the light as you are in the light.*

Saturday, July 20 – Read 1 Samuel 3:19-21.

Through the guidance of Eli and the presence of God's Spirit and his word, the scripture says that Samuel grew. This implies physical growth, but in all likelihood it also alludes to the fact that he is growing spiritually because God "was with him". He is learning to trust in the voice of God. Before men and God the gift of prophecy was evident and confirmed in his life. The result of this was that Samuel's words were God's words and God let none of his words "fail" (literally "fall to the ground").

Samuel's life began by a commitment by his mother to give him to God. He was dedicated by his mother and eventually God revealed himself to Samuel by and through "the word of the Lord". Samuel was then equipped and empowered by the word and the Spirit and given spiritual gifts to encourage and lead Israel. The bible teaches that when Jesus reveals himself to you and you accept him into your life, he fills you with his Spirit and gives you gifts. The church affirms those gifts in you - to be used as you grow in God's Spirit and word, through his sanctifying grace.

Prayer: *Lord let me see you. Reveal yourself to me, I invite you to come into me and fill me with your Spirit. Show me what my gifts are. Empower me with your Spirit and Word to use those gifts for your purpose, to glorify you in the church and the world beyond. Lord let none of the words that you give me fall to the ground. May they be blessed and bring forth fruit. Amen*