

The Lord Is Calling You

¹ The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if He calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

INTRODUCTION

How many of us read a story in the Bible, like Samuel's story, and wish we could be like Samuel and literally hear God's voice. The problem is that the people in Samuel's day, like today, had little interest in hearing what God had to say. As a result, and as is the case today, hearing God's voice or seeing visions was rare. It says, "**In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions**" (I Samuel 3:1). And actually, if you look at Bible history, even world history, this has been the case: "**The word of the Lord was rare.**" Little interest in hearing what God has to say has been and continues to be an all too common thing.

But that doesn't mean that God doesn't speak to us. We can hear his voice loud and clear through his holy Word. "**All Scripture is God-breathed,**" it says in II Timothy 3:16. Another translation goes like this: "**All Scripture is inspired by God.**" So today, let there be no doubt that you can hear God's voice, and let there be no doubt that he is calling you, just like he called Samuel.

1. It is a gracious call from the Lord.
2. You have every reason to answer the call.
3. There is a specific purpose to your call.

Point #1: IT IS A GRACIOUS CALL FROM THE LORD

Imagine this, according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, Samuel was 12 years old when the Lord called him in 1 Samuel 3. You might wonder, “Why? Why Samuel? Why so young? What was there that was so special about him?” I get the questions. But if the Lord called you or anyone at 12 or 112, would the questions be any different? Whoever the Lord calls, wouldn’t the questions be, “Why? Why him? Why her? Why me? What is there so special about him? What is there so special about her? What is there so special about me?” And wouldn’t those be the questions because each of us knows exactly whom the Lord is calling if he calls us?

Every one of us knows exactly how Moses felt when the Lord called him to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land. We know how unfit and unworthy we are for any task the Lord would call us to do. Every one of us knows exactly how Isaiah felt when the Lord called him to be his prophet. We know we are ruined because we are people of unclean lips, living among people of unclean lips. Every one of us knows exactly how Peter felt, who at first thought it was kind of cool that the Lord would call him, until Peter realized who Jesus really was. We know that we’d fall on our knees, like Peter did, and say, **“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful human being”** (Luke 5:8). And there’s the crux of the matter, it doesn’t make any sense to us that the holy and almighty Lord would call lowly, weak sinful human beings.

But let me ask you this: Does the Lord call ALL people to repent and turn to him for forgiveness? Yes. Why? Because he is a gracious, merciful God and wants all people to be saved. You know this. It’s why you humbly and joyfully sing: **“God loves me dearly, grants me salvation, God loves me dearly, loves even me.”** Then you must also know that those who answer his call to repentance are those he calls to serve.

Think of Peter again, who denied knowing Jesus three times. Listen to the exchange Jesus had with Peter:

Jesus asked, “Peter, do you love me?” (3 times!)
Peter replied, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love You.” (3 times!)
Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” (3 times!)
(John 21:15-17)

Do you hear the call to repent in that exchange? Then, do you also hear the Lord Jesus’ gracious call to serve? Dear friends, do you love Jesus, as your Lord and Savior? I believe you do. Then go, serve the Lord. Yes, he’s calling a sinner. But remember, he’s calling a forgiven sinner. Such grace you have been shown!

Point #2: YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO ANSWER THE CALL

Notice how humble Samuel is, even when he thinks it’s Eli calling him. Notice how ready he is. Notice how willing he is. Notice how obedient he is. Where does a 12-year-old get such an attitude? From knowing specifically the One who is calling him. Samuel grew up in the tabernacle where God’s wrath against sin and mercy to sinners was regularly proclaimed through the daily sacrifices.

Certainly, he knew his Lord. His humility, readiness, willingness, and obedience do not happen without knowing the Lord. But here is the important thing to understand: It is what Samuel knew of his Lord that led to the attitude he had toward the Lord's call.

Samuel knew the Lord was his Creator and Savior. He knew he owed his existence to the Lord. There would be no Samuel without the Lord. And he knew he owed his salvation to the Lord. There would be no forgiveness or the hope of eternal life without the Lord. As a result, Samuel knew that he owed everything (every part of his life) to the Lord because where would he be without his Creator and Savior. Do you understand the same for yourself?

How humble are you, how ready are you, how willing are you, how obedient are you when the Lord calls you? Does he get attitude from you when he calls you to serve him? Does he get, "Why me," not because you know you're a sinner, but because you've convinced yourself that you have more important things to do than to answer his call? Or does he get, "Why should I," because you've convinced yourself that it's your life and you can do what you want. Or does he get, "Not now," simply because you're lazy. You have to answer these questions for yourself. But let me address those questions:

- First, let me address your sinful nature: Why me (said with attitude)? Why should I? Because you are nothing without the Lord. There is no other way of saying it, and there is no other way of seeing it. You are nothing without the Lord. Do all of us understand this?
- But now let me address your life (your faith) in Christ: Why me? Why should I? Because look at what he has done for you. He made you. And just because he wanted to! He saved you by giving his only Son and sacrificing him on the cross for all your sins. And just because he couldn't stand the thought of spending forever in heaven without you. If those aren't reasons to answer the Lord's call, I don't know what are. How can we not serve our Lord and Savior with all our lives, knowing we owe him our lives!

Point #3: THERE IS A SPECIFIC PURPOSE TO YOUR CALL

Samuel would serve the Lord as a prophet. But did you notice in 1 Samuel 3 how he was serving the Lord even before the Lord called him as a prophet. Notice how quick Samuel was to attend to Eli's needs. Notice how ready he was to help an elderly man, who was losing his sight. Notice also where Samuel was serving, in the tabernacle, likely doing custodial work.

The point is this: The specific purpose of your call from the Lord is to serve him wherever he places you and to pour out his love in those places by serving and helping others.

Perhaps the best way to understand this is to think of the different hats you wear in your life. Those hats include spouse, parent, child, student, teacher, worker, citizen, and church member. Not one of those hats is more important than the other hat. You wear each to the glory of the Lord and serve him by serving others, being the most faithful spouse, parent, child, student, teacher, worker,

citizen, and church member you can be. With every hat, it is your humble honor to pour out the Lord's love by giving yourself to others. **"We love because he first loved us"** (I John 4:19). And with every hat, it is your distinct privilege to know that whatever you do for others, you are doing for the Lord. **"Whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God"** (I Corinthians 10:31 paraphrased).

CONCLUSION

As Eli helped Samuel answer the Lord's call, I hope the Lord has used me to help you. Let there be no doubt that the Lord is calling you. I only hope, for all of the right reasons, your answer is the same as Samuel's: **"Speak, for your servant is listening."** Serve the Lord with gladness. Amen.