

October 17 ,2021

The call of Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Young people's message: Why do you think God wanted to speak to Samuel even though he was just a young boy?

When you think about this question you may start to realize that I could be Samuel. God speaks to all of us and our age does not matter to God. Sometimes what God says to us when we are eleven is very different from what He says to us when we are sixty. Only the message and our age changes. The constant factor is that God is continually speaking to us.

I think God chose to speak to Samuel because of his age. Samuel was innocent and pure at the age of eleven. He was not corrupted by the politic of the temple at that time. Samuel was not in too deep with the corruption of Eli and his sons. Samuel was the silver lining of another wise dark cloud that was over the temple. God calls him with the hope that Samuel could make things better and more respectful and holy. Samuel is being called to a greater holiness than Eli and his sons. That is a heavy responsibility for an eleven year old. Yet if God did not think Samuel could do it, He would not have called him to it. Eli and his sons were not interested in serving God and his people. They were only interested in their personal gains. Due to Samuel's age he might listen to God's direction and instructions better.

Remember that when God calls you to serve Him, it is to serve Him and His people. Eli and his sons are a great example of what not to do when God gives you a responsibility. There are so many lessons in this passage that we could be talking about them for days to come.

Adult's message: Samuel's mother was Hannah. She was barren and wanted a child. She vowed that if she had a child, she would dedicate it to serve God. Not as uncommon as you might think. Samuel was born in Ramathaim-zophin in the hill country of Ephraim. Samuel was brought to the Temple at Shiloh. God would call him three times while he was the High Priest Eli's attendant. Samuel was about eleven when God called him. Interestingly enough, the Virgin Mary was brought to the temple when she was about eight and she was about sixteen when the Archangel Gabriel visited her with the news of her pregnancy.

Samuel would be the last judge of Israel and the first prophet after Moses. Samuel would be a great man. Some scholars have said that he was larger than life and almost a Joshua type character.

God calls Samuel because Eli's sons were worthless. A very harsh way to describe anyone. Worthless is meant to mean that they were corrupt and could not be trusted. The two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, did not know the Lord. It had been said that they took the choice cuts of meat from the sacrifice for themselves. That they also committed adultery with the women who served at the sanctuary entrance. Eli's big sin was that he did not disciple his sons and let them do whatever they wished. Eli's sons had no respect for their father's position in the community. Unfortunately Eli thought too much of his sons to punish them.

Now we can better understand why God chose to call Samuel. Eli's sons were not a great option to be the High Priest. God calls Samuel to be the High Priest and so much more. Samuel would also go on to lead the Israelite armies into battle with the surrounding tribes. He would also anoint Israel's first king. Out of a horrible situation, God seems to bring forth something good. Hannah was barren and then has Samuel. The temple at Shiloh seemed to be corrupt but God calls Samuel to be the High Priest and to lead Israel.

When God calls Samuel He tells him that He is going to do something great. "I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears it tingle." People will be talking about what God has done by calling Samuel. We are still talking about it today. It was important enough that the Jews wrote it down and recorded those actions of Samuel in two books. The calling of Samuel will mark a fresh start. The corruption of Eli and his sons is over. Most importantly it reminds us that God is faithful to us even when we fail. That is a fantastic grace. There are so many lessons in this great story. God can call us at any time in our life. He called John the Baptist while he was in his mother's womb. He called Moses and Noah in their senior years. Eli teaches us about fulfilling our responsibilities to God and His people. Sometimes we need to discipline our children. My mind goes to those horrible examples of Preacher's Kids. My advice is to keep your minds, ears and hearts open to when the call comes. God Bless and stay safe, please be kind and understanding with one another. These things seem to be lacking at this time in society. Pastor D