

Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church

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Jesus Calling

1 Samuel 3:1-9

9/27/26

90% of any job is showing up. Mike Tomlin used to say that a football player's best ability is availability. Are we missing Coach Tomlin yet? God's Word teaches the same message in 1 Samuel 3. God values availability over ability. During September we have discussed how to hear the voice of Jesus. Jesus is calling. Are you making yourself available?

The same is true when consoling someone who is experiencing grief. When tragedy strikes, many times there are few good words. Presence is key. Show up to be with the person.

The story of Samuel begins with his mother Hannah fervently praying for a child. She kept showing up in prayer. One day as Hannah was praying, Eli the priest saw her mouthing words but making no sound, thus Eli thought she was drunk. Hannah defended herself telling Eli that she has been pouring out her soul to the Lord. Eli could have dismissed her, but he listened and offered God's presence. Listening is the best way to build trust. Hannah's prayer was a promise to dedicate the child to God. God answered Hannah's prayer for a child and thus, she named him Samuel or "I asked God for him" in Hebrew.

How will you hear God's voice? Ask the Lord to use you!

Even though Eli was a trained priest, he stopped hearing God. "Why?" You might ask.

Let's continue to hear God's Word in 1 Samuel 3:10-20.

Noise. How do we hear God's Word through all the noise. Much goes on in our lives that can blind us from seeing clearly. Today is no different from 3000 years ago when Eli and Samuel were trying to go to sleep that night. Two things to point out when trying to hear Jesus' voice. One, Samuel is called to have a difficult conversation with his adopted father, his mentor. Two, Eli is not hearing God's Word because he is blinded by his family, his two sons.

Eli's sons are stealing the people's offerings, and they are acting inappropriately with the women who volunteer. In our terms, their stealing from the church and abusing their position of power.

Samuel, as a young boy, is called by God to a difficult conversation with someone who has power over him. No one like conversations where we need folks to drastically change. Samuel was called by God to inform Eli the consequence of his sons' sin. But we can learn many ways of wisdom from Eli, notice that Eli doesn't become defensive. He certainly could have. Does Samuel have evidence of Eli's sons' behavior? Instead of becoming defensive, Eli listens. Secondly, Eli doesn't make excuses. He could have said, "They are just growing up. They are just boys being boys." No excuses. Eli makes himself available by listening to God through Samuel.

As an old priest, Eli finally hears God's Word again through youth! We need both the wisdom of the older generation and the vision of the younger generation. Eli teaches us both. He is wise in not being defensive when hearing challenging news and he doesn't make excuses. Eli is willing to listen to his younger colleague. This is a good lesson for the Church in any age. Sometimes we can get stuck in our ways even if they are bad, and we need to hear from a different perspective.

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Here is the last but the most significant way we can hear Jesus' voice taught to us by this story: it's all about relationship. Eli and Samuel have a strong relationship through mutual listening. Listening builds trust. Listening will build trust in all our relationships. If you want all your relationships to improve, slow down and listen. Prayer helps us to be mindful of listening. If we are going to a dinner party, instead of trying to be one of the most interesting people, try being the most interested person in the room. Eli and Samuel have a good relationship because they listen to each other. Eli does not hear God's Word because he is blinded by family drama, but that doesn't stop him from encouraging Samuel to listen for God's Word. If you are not hearing Jesus' voice, that shouldn't stop you from encouraging others to listen! By encouraging others to listen for Jesus' voice, you might hear God's Word through those you encourage!

Jesus emphasizes making yourself available in Luke 11 by saying it this way, "Who here has a friend and when they need something, doesn't get up and get it for them even if it is inconvenient?" It's like when a friend knocks on your door at midnight to try to help another friend. You're already tucked in bed and might have to wake the whole house to help. So you say, "No." But what if your friend shamelessly begs? You certainly get up and help your friend! "Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened."

If you want to hear Jesus' voice, make your heart available.

For the glory of God and the betterment of humanity,
Pastor Curtis

Theme: God speaks to hearts that are available.

Sermon Notes:

1. God values availability over ability. Christ's Holy Spirit equips the called, the Lord doesn't need to call the equipped.
2. Many of us ask, "What can I accomplish next?" Try instead to listen for what Jesus is calling you to do. Speak Lord, your servant is listening.
3. Sometimes God calls us to difficult situations/conversations with those who have power over us. Sometimes the wizened need to listen to the young.
4. Develop a posture of listening before acting. Instead of being the most interesting person in the room, try being the most interested. Practice asking: Lord, what are you trying to teach me? Whom are you inviting me to encourage? Where are you already at work?
5. Listening is one of the highest expressions of trust.

