

1 Samuel 3 – The Call Of Samuel

February 6, 2022

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.” Amos 8:11–12 (ESV)

1. God revealed Himself to Samuel.

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 1 Samuel 3:1–3 (ESV)

- The imagery of these verses carries meaning.
 - Eli’s physical condition was a picture of the spiritual condition of the people.
 - Eli’s lying outside of the tabernacle and not getting out of bed is contrasted with Samuel’s sleeping next to the ark and energetically responding to God’s voice.
 - The lamp of God that had not yet gone out was a picture of the spiritual condition of the nation.

“You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel. Exodus 27:20–21 (ESV)

Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. 1 Samuel 3:4–5 (ESV)

- The health of a church is determined by the presence of God's word in the church. In Samuel's day, there was no shortage of religion. There was a shortage of God's Words.

And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 1 Samuel 3:6–7 (ESV)

- "Samuel did not yet know the Lord" does not mean he was an unbeliever. It means that until this point, God had not spoken directly to him.

And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. 1 Samuel 3:8 (ESV)

Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 1 Samuel 3:9 (ESV)

And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." 1 Samuel 3:10 (ESV)

2. God spoke His words through Samuel.

Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 1 Samuel 3:11 (ESV)

On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 1 Samuel 3:12–13 (ESV)

- Sins of commission are choosing to do what is wrong. Sins of omission are neglecting to do what is right. Eli was guilty of sins of omission.

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.
James 4:17 (ESV)

Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." 1 Samuel 3:14 (ESV)

- Despising the very way God made to forgive our sin a dead-end road. In Samuel's day, that was the sacrificial system. In our day, that is Jesus.

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:28–29 (ESV)

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 1 Samuel 3:15 (ESV)

But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him." 1 Samuel 3:16–18 (ESV)

- Eli was a passive man. He failed to lead his family and the nation.
- Samuel needed courage to speak God's words because they were hard for Eli to hear. In a similar way, we need courage to speak God's words because sometimes they are hard to hear.
- Remember the gospel message must include the truth of God's just judgment, not just the good news of God's love through Jesus.

3. Samuel was recognized as a prophet.

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 1 Samuel 3:19 (ESV)

...when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. Deuteronomy 18:22 (ESV)

And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. 1 Samuel 3:20 (ESV)

And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. 1 Samuel 3:21-4:1a (ESV)

Applications

- God's answer to the leadership crisis of His people was not to raise up a powerful leader. It was to raise up a man who would speak God's words to the people.
- God's people desperately need God's words. They create and sustain our life.
...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God... 1 Peter 1:23 (ESV)

But he answered, "It is written, " 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " Matthew 4:4 (ESV)

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; Psalm 19:7 (ESV)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. What did you learn in this week's lesson that you did not know? What questions do you have?
2. God spoke to Samuel. Do you believe God still speaks today? If so, how does He speak?
3. Why do you think Eli was no longer hearing God's voice? What can we learn from this to be more attentive to God's speaking to us?
4. In 1 Samuel 3:15, Samuel was afraid to speak God's words to Eli. Do you find yourself afraid to speak God's words to others? How does this passage encourage you to greater boldness?
5. What about Eli led to his life turning out the way it did? What lessons can we learn from his choices?
6. **Read Luke 10:30-37, Romans 7:14-20, and James 4:17.** What do these verses teach us about sins of omission and commission?