

“Is that you calling God?”

I Samuel 3:1-14

OT: Psalm 8, NT: Acts 9:3-6

The sermon Text is from I Samuel 3:1-14. Ask three question as we read the text: What does this say about God, what is God trying to tell me and how will I respond

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. ... whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see. He was lying down in his room;... and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ and he said, ‘Here I am!’ and ran to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Eli said, ‘I did not call; lie down again.’ ...The Lord called again, ‘Samuel!’ Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Eli said, ‘I did not call, my son; lie down again.’ The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he again went to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” ’

Now the Lord came and called again, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Samuel replied, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’ Then the Lord said to Samuel, ‘See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.

Have you ever seen this happen? You notice a person who may be running, walking fast, sitting on a bench, shopping etc. going about normal daily activities and suddenly their cell phone rings. In a split second they do a 180 and grab that cell phone. At the first ring the immediate question probably is: Who is calling? From a distant we can look at their facial expression and usually tell if it is friend or foe and what the receiver is feeling. It is either excitement and I sure want to talk with them, OR oh no I dread this call, and should I answer it or not. We call that screening our calls.

Samuel is lying on the floor in the temple, the candles were still lit, maybe it is about 2 or 3 in the morning and he can’t get to sleep. His mind was probably reviewing everything he learned that day. You remember that when Samuel was a baby his mother, Hannah, had dedicated him to the Lord. Now he was living in the temple and learning about being a priest under the tutelage of Eli. Before he goes to sleep he gets a call, Samuel, Samuel! His pulse increases and he thinks, What has happened to Eli? has he fallen and broken his hip - what has happened? He runs to Eli, “What do you need Eli, are you alright?”. Samuel, go back to bed and go to sleep. I did not call you. The call comes two more

times and the third time Eli says to Samuel, “I know who called you. The next time it happens say this, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’ ”.

A Native American and his friend were in downtown New York City, walking near Times Square in Manhattan. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing, and the sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, the Native American said, I hear a cricket. His friend said, What? You must be crazy. You couldn’t possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise! No, I’m sure of it, the Native American said. I heard a cricket. That is crazy, said the friend. You must have different ears than I have. No, said the Native American. My ears are no different from yours. You see, it all depends on what you are listening for.

WHO IS THIS GOD THAT IS CALLING SAMUEL?

One of the many things unique about our faith is that the one we worship always makes the first move and comes to us. We don’t have to go thru different gyrations, secret passage ways, or self inflicted physical abuse to get His attention. God comes to us: i.e. Remember: God met Adam and Eve in the garden, He came to Noah, Abraham, Job, the disciples, Saul and the list goes on from the days of creation , throughout history even till today. We look at the screen on our cell phone and it says the call is from God. Who is this God? What is the picture that flashes into our mind when you think about God.

During some of my Sunday school days I remember singing this chorus, “Be careful little hands what you do, be careful little feet where you walk, be careful little eyes what you see, etc. Each one of those phrases ended with: ‘for the Father up above is looking down in love’. I never did visualize this as a God of love.

Who is this God? Scripture tells us: He is the one who ‘so loved the world that he gave his only son’ -- the one that created everything and then ‘... looked over all that he had made, including people, and it was excellent in every way.’ (Genesis 1:31) He did not create junk. And who Paul writes about when he says “*For I am convinced that...nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

This is the God that led the children of Israel to the land of milk and honey, the God that is the Alpha and Omega; the God who is preparing a place for us; the God that ‘walks with us ‘thru’ the valley of the shadow of death and the God we can ‘cast all our care on him for he cares for us. This God is NOT somewhere up there ready to zap us if we step

out of line. He is the one that sent His son to tell us “I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly” (i.e. all that I need to make life worth living). and the one who, when he calls, says, in the words from the song made popular by Stevie Wonder, *I just called to say I love you, I just called to say how much I care.*

Those words from God are really “the sounds of security”, Security is not heard in the sound of gold coins striking each other. And based on God’s history, “He definitely is the only one person that is too big to fail.”

A little boy was given Psalm 23 to learn and recite from memory for a program at church. Before the time for the program anxious parents would ask him, “why don’t you practice by reciting the Psalm to us.” His response was, ‘not yet.’” It was time for the program and the anxious parents arrived. It was their son’s time to recite the 23rd Psalm. He stood up and with confidence said, “The Lord is my shepherd and that is all I need.” and he sat down. Do we live and operate with that kind of a mindset?

WHAT DOES THIS SAY TO ME ABOUT GOD The person who calls you because you are very important and He wants to have a conversation with you. *As with Samuel, the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’* From Psalm 8 read to us earlier

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;.....I.E -He made us and we are special in his eyes.

Then the Lord said to Samuel, ‘I want you to be a part of what I am about to do. ‘Samuel I need your help!’ Samuel, you have the skill and ability I need for this task.

You only have to take a quick look around within our own church family to see considerable diversity, skill and talent that contributes to the mission of our Church, just look at our Senior High Mission Team we commissioned this morning. Each of us have a nitch to fill. The young people who will carry on promoting the “Faith of their Fathers and Mothers” and at the other end of the age spectrum are those who have given so much over the years and now spend time praying for the people and life of this faith community. Praying that its ministry of Gods love and forgiveness will continue to touch

and change lives in our community and around the world. Praying that the next generation will be willing to get their hands dirty, walk the extra mile, communicate with uplifting words and dig into their pockets to make ministry happen by building on the past and preparing people for the future.

"God has no hands but our hands with which to give His people bread. God has no feet but our feet with which to walk among the almost dead. We say that we are His, and He is ours. Deeds are the proof of this, not words, And these are the proving hours."

In our New Testament lesson we heard read: "Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,... was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. Heheard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' Saul answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' Later on in the chapter we read about Ananias' response when God asked him to host Saul for a couple of days. Ananias said to the Lord "You want me to do what????..., 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' You really want me to host him? But the Lord said to him, *'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen.*

Our question then is WHAT IS GOD CALLING ME FOR?

Two weeks ago I visited an assisted living facility to have a cup of coffee with a friend. While waiting I saw two people at one table and asked if I could join them while I waited for my friend. They offered me a cup of coffee while I waited. It was a good visit with total strangers. When I indicated that it was time for me to move on, this person said, "Prior to talking with you, this had been a terrible morning. I spilled water all over my room and soaked a book that I was reading. I just want you to know that you made my day and I feel so much better now."

There is something special about making people you don't know feel special and important and all you did was listen. I know sometimes we may feel like Paul "breathing threats and murder against the disciples" or feel like destroying reputations or getting even or just enjoy stirring the pot. Then the call comes from God. If we answer we hear "Oh child of mine don't do that or say that. I need you to speak and act in a way that will reveal my love thru you and 'make their ears tingle."

God says to us, I want you to do something very important in the life of that clerk at Wal-Mart, Bilo, the post office etc. and I need your help.

God may also call us because He sees our mind that is under the tremendous pressure of guilt, and emotional stress. Then he reminds us of the words from the song "He" "Though it makes him sad to see the way we live, He'll always say, "I forgive."

Every moment of every day we are walking epistles of our faith. When speaking about our faith we need to use as few words as possible and remember what God said to Samuel, "I am about to do something that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle." These words may be for you, a friend or total stranger. But it may be the very word or action that changes a life.

The Native American in New York city listened and could hear the cricket among all the noise of the big city. Among all the noise we live in, listen, the call is for you. Will you answer the call and say "Here I am, Lord"?