

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

August 18, 2019

How To Get Started

Growing Smaller

1 Samuel 3:1-11

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." ¹¹ 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." **1 Samuel 3:10-11**

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

In this sermon series, we will focus on how to hear the call of God on each of our lives. As we begin this new season, we may feel like we're really busy with a lot of things, exhausted, and not doing any one thing really well. The setting for this text is 600 years before the birth of Jesus, as each of the twelve tribes of Israel are slowly beginning to become individual nations. Eli, the chief priest, is training Samuel, who will eventually become the high priest who will lead Israel through this transitional time.

The text tells us *that the word of the Lord was rare in those days (v. 1)*. It is not surprising then, when Samuel hears God's voice, he initially thinks it is Eli speaking to him. Eli perceives that it is the voice of the Lord, and instructs Samuel to invite God to speak to him. ***The same God who called out to Samuel is the same God who calls out to each of us today. What does this new season look like for you? Will your schedule make it easy for God's voice get drowned out, or will you learn to tune into his voice?***

Listening to God's voice involves engaging evenly into patterns of solitude, community, and service. Like a three-legged stool, none of these rhythms can stand alone, and scripture tells us that each is crucial.

Consider these steps to hearing God's voice through the practice of **SOLITUDE**:

- 1) Embrace a regular pattern of unplugging and praying. ***Do you have a regular practice of communing with God?*** Know that these forms might vary over time. The advent half-day silent retreat in December is a great opportunity to experience solitude.
- 2) God speaks to us through his living word, and our calling needs to align with scripture. ***Do you have a regular practice of reading scripture?*** Covenant's Daily Devotional provides daily scripture passages: covenant.org/dailydevo.
- 3) We need to listen with our ears, heart, mind, and soul. ***Are you able to listen to God with hopeful expectation, paying careful attention to the desires of your heart?***
- 4) Jesus offers us a direction, not a destination. *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* (Psalm 119). ***Can you trust the next step with Jesus though you may not know the destination? How are you experiencing this in your life now?***
- 5) Consider starting where the word of the Lord is rare in your life. ***In what areas of your life are you prepared to ask God, "speak, for your servant is listening?"***

Heavenly Father, thank you for your living word, and may we use it to guide our steps. Help us to trust your direction even when we do not know the destination. Strengthen us through solitude with you, Lord, that our ears may tingle when we hear how you want to work within our lives. **Amen.**