

Sermon Outline - Sun, Sep 20th, 2020 – Discerning Our Path
(1 Samuel 3:1-14; Esther 4:12-16)

Overview – This month we have been focusing on discernment. We have been using the formula LLC – Love, Listen & Confirm. Last week we talked about the importance of grounding ourselves in a spirit of love, and focusing on the story of Esther who found courage because of her love for her people. This week we lean into the practice of listening and focus on the story of Samuel.

Exegesis

- Hannah didn't have children (a position of shame for women in that time) – She prays for a son and agrees to give him to God. So when Samuel is old enough he moves into the temple to be Eli's apprentice.
- The temple has been defiled by Eli's sons who are doing a lot of hot mess stuff that everyone knows about and Eli curses them out but won't remove them
- God needed someone who was not tied into the sin and corruption and who was really open to hearing the shift that was about to come
- Samuel has just started his apprenticeship and is just learning
- At first Samuel thinks Eli is calling him because that is the voice he is listening to
- The message – God is going to clean house and reset the relationship with Israel

Key Points – Samuel almost missed the message but in the end this marks the beginning of him having a lifelong conversation with God. How do we really hear from God?

1. **Make the time** – We learn to recognize a person's voice when we really know them and spend time with them. The same is true for recognizing God's voice. Consistent listening makes it easier to hear God
2. **Quiet the other voices** – Far too often we can't hear from God or don't make time to listen to God because we are concerned about other's opinions. We also live in a time when media is bombarding us at every level. God will rarely yell so we have to turn down those voices to make space for God to speak.
3. **Be open to the tough messages** – Sometimes we want God to say something specific and when we don't hear what we want we say we can't hear from God. If we are not really open then we will intentionally miss God's voice.

Core Questions –

1. What voices are you paying attention to that drown out the voice of God?
2. What is your consistent time to be conversation from God?
3. Is there a tough message that you have been avoiding? Who can you share it with to help you lean into accepting what God is saying?
4. Are there any messages that are coming to you to share with others? This community?