

Sermon

Here I Am, Send Me

A Sermon for Cary Presbyterian Church

Sunday, October 9, 2022

18th Sunday After Pentecost

Guatemala Commissioning

Savannah Arceneaux Baptism

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, we gather before your Word today mindful of the psalmist who wrote, “I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.” For all the times you instruct and for all the times we hear you calling in the night we give thanks.

Help us, Lord, to hear our voice being called. May we be of courage and curiosity like Samuel and rise to inquire what you are asking of us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Luke 17:11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, 13 they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” 14 When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? 18 Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

1Sam. 3:1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

1Sam. 3:2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 3 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. 4 Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" 5 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. 6 The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up 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." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

1Sam. 3:10 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. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told 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. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

1Sam. 3:15 Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I

am.” 17 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.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.”

1Sam. 3:19 As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD. 21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

- I. Today’s story about the early calling of Samuel**
 - A. It is *supposed* to make us chuckle**
 - 1. Comedy of little boy waking the elderly Eli
“Here I am for you called me.”**
 - 2. Third time is the charm and Eli finally gets it.**
 - B. But I’m ahead of myself.**
 - C. The Lord spoke rarely in those days; Visions were not common...**
 - 1. We should not read over that too quickly**
 - 2. The work of the prophet/priest is to bring messages across the chasm which separates God and the people and deliver those messages to God’s people.**
 - 3. But of what use is a prophet/priest if the Lord remains silent?**
 - D. The book of First Samuel takes note early on that there is something wrong in this covenantal relationship between God and God’s people.**
 - E. First chapter and a half are about the birth and**

consecration of Samuel to the temple.

[briefly remind them of the story]

- F. The second half of chapter two tells about how Eli's sons were "scoundrels" and how they had no regard for the Lord and how they exploited Eli's position as priest to their own personal gain.**
- G. Then chapter three begins with its ominous observation**
 - 1. that the Lord was rarely speaking and**
 - 2. seldom providing vision to the people any more.**

II. After the comedy of misunderstanding the call

- A. Samuel is given a Word from the Lord**
 - 1. Surely he must have been concerned**
 - 2. Every indication was that he loved Eli**
 - 3. He had been Eli's pupil/apprentice since the age of two or three.**
- B. The word of the Lord was a word of condemnation:**

"See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told 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.

C. This is a *harsh* judgement!

D. No possibility of parole either . . .

... Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

E. We can only guess about the restless and probably

sleepless night Samuel had after that.

F. In the morning, he simply returns to his duties.

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

III. This story marks the effective transition from the season in which Eli is the priest & judge of the people to the season in which Samuel becomes the priest and judge for the people.

A. Chapter four just a verse after the close of today's lesson and by the end of chapter four

- 1. Israel has suffered a major defeat at the hands of the Philistines**
- 2. Eli's sons have been killed in battle**
- 3. The Ark of the Covenant has been taken as spoils of war**
- 4. Eli has fallen and broken his neck & died**
- 5. Eli's newly born grandson is named "Ichabod" - meaning "The glory has departed from Israel."**

IV. And yet, the story of God with God's people is extended past Eli and his scoundrel-sons to a new generation.

A. Samuel is there and ready to hear the voice of the Lord because Hannah had made good on her promise to present Samuel to God when he was of weaning age.

B. We must not lose sight of that aspect of the story — a tale of enormous trust and self-sacrifice from parents who entrust their long-hoped-for child to the Lord.

