

## THE PERSISTANT VOICE

I Samuel 3:1-4:1

I Samuel 3:10 “The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, . . .”

Purpose: To thank God for His continuous effort to reach us.

Proposition: God calls us until we respond.

Introduction:

1. We, growing up in church, heard the story of Samuel early on.
    - a. The focus was upon God speaking to a child.
    - b. We dare not forget the importance of ministering to children.
    - c. God appeals to children to keep them from sin; to prepare them for service; to tell others about Him.
  2. The story often brings attention to the lengthy time since God’s voice was last heard.
  3. The priest, Eli, proved unfit as a father and moral leader.
  4. God’s calls to Samuel represent a change of leadership.
  5. The teaching of the story goes back to a praying mother.
  6. The main thrust of the story is not about Samuel or the human aspects of this pleasant heart-warming story.
  7. This is a story of God and His communication with us.
- I. God’s call may be mistaken.
- A. Samuel did not know the Lord.
    1. He was not personally acquainted.
    2. God was merely an idea, but not a person to the boy.
  - B. Visions were uncommon.
    1. Literally “break outs were few”.
    2. The knowledge of God was meager.

C. The boy Samuel ran three times to the priest thinking he called.

D. We hear voices, but remain uncertain.

1. Is God speaking or am I imagining things?
2. Is God talking or am I listening to conventional wisdom?
3. Is the Divine behind this message or am I influenced by my culture?

#Years ago a conscientious homeowner wrote to a manufacturer of cast iron pipe, telling them that she had found that by pouring pure hydrochloric acid down her drain, she immediately opened her grease-clogged pipes. She asked if there was any way in which the acid might be harmful to the pipes.

The plumbing manufacturer wrote back: “Thank you for your letter. The effect of such acid upon ferrous-constructed materials is certain to be deleterious. We therefore strongly urge you to cease such activity in the interest of the future of your plumbing.

She read their letter and responded. Thanking them for their letter, she said that she was relieved that she was doing the right thing in using the acid on the pipes.

Another letter from the manufacturer. “We fear that there may have been some miscommunication in our correspondence. Acid, of that density, applied to cast-iron pipe, is certain to have dubious results. Therefore, please desist from your current practices.”

The homeowner read the letter, then wrote back, thanking the company for its response, telling them once again that she was doing nothing that might harm the pipes.

Finally, an exasperated manufacturer sent telegram: “Don’t use acid. It’ll ruin your pipes!”

Hopefully she got the correct message.

## II. God's call may not be heard.

A. Notice the scripture did not say, "God stopped talking."

1. We must be ready to listen.
2. God is heard when we are available.
3. We recognize even when God seems silent that He is still working.

#At a Men's Fellowship Breakfast at our church, Bob Smith made an interesting observation. On some hills in our country, there are trees that have grown up with a little lean to them. They bend toward the west. You would think, says Bob, that they would bend the other way, because the strongest wind comes from the west. He says, "The strongest gusts of wind do come from the west --but the gentler, steadier winds from the east have been blowing day and night against those trees, and have put a lean to them into that west wind."

B. God is persistent.

1. He called four times to Samuel.
2. God's patience and persistence amazes us.
3. II Peter 3:9 "He [God] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

# "God used you to save me physically and spiritually. I was about to lose my family, too."

Larry Reed, on an Easter Sunday 1985, stopped drinking. He hasn't drunk since. For four months prior to that Easter he started listening to the sermons. God began to open His ears. The faith he once had began to come back

## III. God's conversation continues.

A. God talked with Samuel throughout His life.

1. God is faithful to speak to us.
2. The fact He loves us tells us He wants to keep conversing with us.
3. When God speaks . . .
  - a. New insights dawn upon us.
  - b. Broken hearts heal.
  - c. Pain subsides.
  - d. Peace replaces conflict.
  - e. Assurance displaces fear.

B. God deals consistently with His people.

# Paul Harvey tells of his infilling of the Spirit. He says, "Newsmen are said to have tough hides, cold hearts, and printer's ink in their veins. That's why I'm grateful for what happened to me in Cove Creek, Arizona." Harvey says he had been saved several years past, alone in his room, when he decided he wanted the everlasting life promised in John 3:16.

God had blessed him and given him a wonderful wife, Angel. While vacationing in Arizona, they decided to go to a small rural church. About a dozen people were there. The minister announced he was going to preach on baptism. For some time Paul Harvey had felt the lack of a "quiet heart". The message began to speak to his heart as the preacher spoke on surrender. He said, "Baptism is the symbolic burial of your old self and the resurrection of a new one. There is no magic in the water. It is an act of submission to God." Harvey says he twisted in his chair as new light came. "I realized how much of me I was holding back. Could this be the reason for my inconsistency? The invitation was given. I went into the water and a cleansing inside happened. I felt a fulfilling surge of the Holy Spirit. I cried like baby. Angel cried, for she had had that experience as a girl. The change has

been indescribable.”

Conclusion:

1. Samuel means “asked of God” or “appointed by God”.
2. Samuel, empowered by His encounter with God became a prophet, priest and a leader.
3. From Samuel’s encounter he explained and exclaimed the truth of God to his country.
4. “Samuel . . . then opened the doors of the house of the Lord” (15).