

Rooted in the Spirit

Hearing from God • Message 8

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray for our church to be a people who hear God personally.
- Ask God to help you give your all to Him without holding back.
- Pray for a deeper relationship with Christ day by day.

Scripture Reading:

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did. Then the Lord called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed." Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NLT)

A. Introduction

(1 Samuel 3:1)

My parents got our girls a music machine that does portable karaoke for Christmas. For a couple of days, they would scream at the top of their lungs until my soul couldn't handle it anymore. I know parents are supposed to think their kids are awesome at everything, but the singing was painful. So next, we got them some walkie-talkies so they could talk all around the house. They were amazed. Sometimes when Steph and I were in different cars, they would radio in different commands, thoughts, and ideas. They would tell each other everything on this walkie-talkie...

As I watched them, I thought- this is a picture of prayer. We are to be so in tune with God that we hear his thoughts and commands, that we don't just talk about God, but talk to Him and listen to Him...

Now, one thing I noticed was that after a while, the girls would accidentally hit a button that would change the frequency, and they would get frustrated because they couldn't hear each other. The other person was still there, but they were no longer tuned to the right channel...

This is what I find so difficult for most Christians. Most Christians believe God speaks; they just get frustrated because they can't seem to get on the right frequency. We struggle to hear from God, so we are content to hear from God through other pastors, leaders, or books...

Now that's not bad, but God wants to speak to you directly... but there are some things we must do to be tuned into his frequency!

Starts off saying this...

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

1 Samuel 3:1 (NLT)

Now I love this... notice he works under Eli but before the Lord.

I was talking to a guy years ago who had a terrible boss, and yet he never slacked. He gave it his all, and sometimes his boss got the credit... I asked him how he worked for him... he said... *I might have a bad boss, but I got a great audience... I work for the Lord...*

This is a subject I will preach on later, but the way you work is a witness (Bloom where you are planted). Just be faithful.

But notice these words ... they stuck out to me as I was studying... messages or words from the Lord were rare in those days... I fear that in the American church, words from the Lord are still rare today...

If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of this world, much of what the church is doing would go right on; and nobody would know the difference.

A. W. Tozer

A lot of people come to church, and a lot of people read the Bible... but it's a whole other thing to hear God speak to you... that's why we are doing this series, *Rooted in the Spirit...*

If I could get only one thing in our church... it would be a church filled with people who can hear from God... who are tuned daily into His presence and power!

So, here are three things to help you tune into the frequency of Heaven...

B. Hearing from God

- 1. AVAILABILITY is key to hearing God's voice.**
(1 Samuel 2:12, 35; 3:2-5)

When I was playing youth basketball, I wasn't the best. I wasn't the worst on the team; I just wasn't the best. We were playing in the championship game. I was passed the ball with a few seconds left. During the timeout, our coach was very clear: *Get our star player Miller the ball...* I shot the ball and made it... the winning basket. The team was ecstatic. Later, the coach said to me, *Way to go! But next time, make sure you get Miller the ball...*

See, in life, there are all-stars in our career fields, and then there is the rest of us... the kingdom is different, we already have an all-star, and Jesus is his name. So, God will speak just as much to you as to me... He wants to speak.

That's the good news... the bad news is— God won't speak if you aren't fully available... and what does that mean?

3 ways to be available to God:

- Time
- Heart
- Plans

The story in 1 Samuel can be boiled down to those who are fully available and those who aren't.

See, Eli was giving his time to the Lord. He was a priest. But there was something missing. His heart wasn't completely surrendered...there was something that was competing for His heart and plans. It was his boys...

In 1 Samuel 2, we read about how corrupt Eli's sons were...

Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the Lord
1 Samuel 2:12 (NLT)

They were stealing from the people; they were sleeping with the women; they were taking advantage of others, and they were priests. They weren't available to God.

Eli was the high priest, but there was one area in which he wasn't fully available and surrendered to God. His boys... Is there an area in your life that you have not completely surrendered to God?

The tough truth of this passage is that it isn't always the gross sins that will derail many of us. It's the good things that we make idols of... see, an idol is when you make a good thing an ultimate thing... it's the thing you think on, desire the most... that can be family, success, money, love, your job, and in Eli's case, his kids... it can be anything...

He was more available, more surrendered to his boys than to God.

Compare that with Samuel, who was available... and we see it here...

"Then I will raise up a faithful priest who will serve me and do what I desire. I will establish his family, and they will be priests to my anointed kings forever."

1 Samuel 2:35 (NLT)

Now, is this about David, Jesus? But it's also about Samuel.

And this is where Samuel comes in ... there was nothing exceptional about Samuel. Eli was a well-known priest, and Samuel was around 15 years old, scholars believe... we read in 1 Samuel 2 that his mom would bring him clothes once a year... which means he was an unpaid intern.

Don't just skip past this. Eli was far more talented, far more experienced, and far more qualified for the job, but one thing he wasn't—he wasn't fully available.

Guess who was... a 15-year-old unpaid intern... do you know how encouraging this is?

The number one thing to being Rooted in the Spirit is ... availability.

Samuel hadn't done this before... the hearing from God thing... so he had to learn how to tune into the frequency of God's voice... because when he first hears Him, he doesn't think it's God talking...

One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.

1 Samuel 3:2-5 (NLT)

In Exodus 27, it was a law that the lamp of God, a seven-branched candle (perfection) representing God's light, wasn't supposed to go out, and yet it's starting to flicker—this is a sign of Israel's moral and spiritual decay.

So, Eli is asleep, and then all of a sudden, there's a kid standing over his bed. My daughter did this a little while ago... I woke up, and there were these two little eyes staring at me, saying, *Dad, I'm thirsty*. And so, I did what any good dad would do: I said, *Mom is right over there, sweetie*.

So, this happens a second time... but Samuel doesn't know it's God.

Then it happens a third time, and Samuel says to Eli, *Here I am*... Then Eli says, *You wake me up one more time, kid, I'll send you to meet God.* 😊

Notice Samuel's posture... I love it ... *Here I am*!

Moses said, *Here I am*.

Abraham said, *Here I am*.

Jacob said, *Here I am*.

Isaiah said, *Here I am*.

Ananias said, *Here I am*.

Let me ask you this question again: Are you fully available to God? Are you able to say, *Here I am* this morning? All of me...

3 ways to be available to God:

- Time
- Heart
- Plans

**2. Hearing God is a LIFELONG journey.
(1 Samuel 3:1,7)**

Some of you will love this or dislike it... you don't arrive... we will always be growing closer and discerning God's voice... so don't treat it like a destination, treat it like a journey.

What I love about this story is that it takes Samuel a while before he realizes it's God's voice, which is true of so many of us as Christians.

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli.

1 Samuel 3:1 (NLT)

Notice that Samuel served the Lord.

Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before.

1 Samuel 3:7 (NLT)

But he doesn't know him yet. That doesn't mean I don't think he had real faith, but it does mean he hadn't learned to walk with God, to truly know him personally.

But if you are serving the Lord and don't know him... if your roots don't grow deep, this is what happens...

Show pic...

Isn't this a reality? We hear so many people burning out or spiritually compromising—pastors, leaders, and people who were faithful, completely being uprooted in the faith. Why? Because they didn't really know God. Their roots didn't go deep down in him...

The pattern that is repeated over and over again... God first speaks to you so that he might speak through you!

This is what happens with Samuel. Samuel has never had an experience like this... he is just getting his spiritual feet under him...

Now, I remember when I gave my first sermon. It was terrible. People told me it was good, but it wasn't. Now, my first sermon was a breeze compared to Samuel's first sermon.

Samuel had to tell his mentor that both of his sons would die, and the presence of God would be stripped from his ministry because he wasn't available....

We must be faithful to whatever God speaks to us personally.

Samuel had to be certain it was from God to say that... and how can you know?

How can we know we are hearing from God...

- 1. Does it resonate with the Bible?**
- 2. Does it resonate with your Spirit?**
- 3. Does it resonate with other Godly people?**

As we hear from God, admit we don't see the full picture (God might be saying it perfectly, but we don't always hear it perfectly). Sometimes God speaks, and we don't let him finish... we are running off with the first idea. Or we start adding things to what God has said. Maybe God tells you something for you, and you think it's for someone else. (*simple phrase to say... this is what I believe the Lord is saying*)

While in India, we were praying about our involvement... we were talking about how many slaves were in India and how overwhelming it was... one of the partners was talking about how they found some more slaves to rescue. The truth is that our church is already giving a huge amount to India because of your faithfulness. We give around \$750,000 alone to help build Christ-centered villages that provide clean water and medical attention to communities while allowing us to share the gospel and to help rescue slaves. So, we give a large amount, but that night, I went to sleep, and I had a dream, an awful dream. I was being chased, I was attacked and left for dead in the dream. I woke up dripping in sweat... and then God put it on my heart that's what those slaves feel. Help them. So, I got up and I talked to J.C. about it and said, *Let's just pray into it.* The next day, we found out the total of what it would take... and J.C. and I got the financial report on how our finances are... and that week, the amount that was tithed was the exact amount they needed for this rescue. We couldn't believe it, but God had confirmed it! He is faithful!

As a result of your generosity, we will be rescuing 1,000 more slaves. So, thank you to those of you who give faithfully, and to those of you who don't— take a step... I say this all the time: You can't outgive a generous God.