

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 3

“Hearing the Voice of God”

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25:29

All right. Well, I wanna also invite you, church, to grab your Bibles and make your way to First Samuel chapter three.

25:41

First Samuel chapter three this morning. As you're making your way there, I know there's many who are in the room this morning that perhaps aren't a part of our week-in and week-out services. So you might be jumping in in the middle of the story here this week, so let me just catch you up briefly on where we're at in First Samuel chapter three.

26:01

So so far in our study of this book of First Samuel, we have seen a woman who was unable to have children who pours her heart out before God, pleads with God and asks God to provide this child to her.

26:15

And God does. God blesses this woman, Hannah, and her husband with a son whose name is Samuel. And Samuel is dedicated to the Lord. Samuel is given to the Lord and to his service there at the temple in Shiloh.

26:31

And so now we're picking up the story as Samuel is growing up in the temple, as Samuel is learning what it looks like to hear from God and to follow God and to be obedient to his instructions. And it brings us to where we're at this morning in 1 Samuel chapter three.

26:45

So I want to ask you this morning, how many of you have ever thought to yourself, I wish God would speak to me. I wish God would give me some sort of a sign of what he wants for me in my life. Well, this morning what we're going to look at in 1 Samuel chapter three, we have this incredible passage where we see God speak directly to Samuel, effectively calling him to be God's next priest and next prophet for the nation of Israel.

27:12

And this is a beautiful passage for us to consider today as we have witnessed God calling deacons to lead and to serve in our church this morning. As we're going to witness in this passage where God calls Samuel to the special role that God has prepared for him.

27:30

So this morning we're going to see how this passage is going to model for us what it looks like to hear from God and to respond to God properly. So we're going to study 1 Samuel chapter three, we're going to look at the whole big chapter together this morning.

27:45

So I want to invite you to follow along if you've got your copy or you can follow along on the screens as well. But we're going to start in 1 Samuel chapter three, verse one. It says in verse one, Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli, and the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

28:02

There was no frequent vision. But at that time Eli whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see was lying down in his own place. 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.

28:17

And then the Lord called Samuel and he said here I am and he ran to Eli and said here I am for you called me. But he said I did not call or lie down again and so he went and lay down. And the Lord called again Samuel and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said here I am for you called me.

28:36

But Eli said I did not call my son, lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again a third time and he arose and went to Eli and said here I am for you called me.

28:52

Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. So therefore Eli said to Samuel go lie down and if he calls you you shall say speak Lord for your servant hears. And so Samuel went and laid down in his place.

29:05

And the Lord came and stood calling as at the other time Samuel Samuel and Samuel said speak for your servant hears. Then the Lord said to Samuel behold I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

29:22

On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from beginning to end. And I declared to 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.

29:38

Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever. And Samuel lay until morning and then he opened the doors to the house of the Lord.

29:52

And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli but Eli called Samuel and said Samuel my son and he said here I am and 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.

30:10

And so Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him and he said it is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

30:23

And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

30:36

These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me together this morning, church? Father, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you that you are a God who has revealed yourself to us, God, that throughout human history that you have been reaching in, that you have been touching in at different moments in history, and God, you have revealed yourself to a sinful people like us.

30:55

God, we pray this morning that as we consider this message of how you spoke to Samuel, God, how you called Samuel to be obedient to you and doing what you told him to do, God, we pray that we would live with the same response to your word.

31:10

God, that when you speak to us, that we would hear what you have to say, and that we would respond in the same way Samuel does. Father, we pray that you would use this time for your glory and for our benefit this morning.

31:22

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. All right, well, as we look at this passage, the first thing that we see in these first nine verses is Samuel learning to discern the voice of God.

31:36

We're just gonna proceed and kind of plug our way through and stop in a few different spots and kind of note things as we work our way through the passage, but starting in verse one, what we see is that Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli, but the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

31:55

You know, we live in a world where we are surrounded by religion, by spiritual beliefs on all sides, but it seems to be that there's an absence of certainty. There's an absence of conviction about what truly is reality when it comes to spiritual beliefs, when it comes to people figuring out how they should live and what they should believe.

32:19

Samuel is living in a time that's very similar to the time that we live in. Samuel's world was a world that was full of religion. It was a world that was full of different practices, different things that they would do as they were offering their sacrifices.

32:34

They were coming in and out of the temple and worshiping and doing these different things, but all of this religion that Samuel lived in the midst of was living side by side with

widespread idolatry by this wicked living that kind of had come to categorize the people of Israel if you go back and read the time of the judges that preceded this moment where Samuel comes onto the scene.

32:59

So how can this religious world, this religious system and all of this immorality so comfortably coexist? How do these things fit together? Well, I think the answer is given to us in 1 Samuel chapter three in verse one.

33:13

It tells us that the word of the Lord was rare in those days. God may have been with them, they may have been doing lots of interesting things, but they weren't listening to what God had to say. As we continue down through this passage, verse two tells us that at that time, Eli, the priest whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own bed, in his own place.

33:35

The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and while Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the Ark of God was, it's simply put, we're painting the picture, it's bedtime at the temple. So Eli goes to his room, Samuel is there saying in his place they've proceeded to their separate sleeping quarters and then we continue as we see God call out to Samuel in verses four through six.

33:58

It tells us that the Lord called Samuel, and Samuel jumps up and responds, he says, here I am, and he runs to Eli and says, here I am for you, you called me. Eli goes, I didn't call you, I don't know what you heard, but it wasn't me, so he tells him to go lay down, and he goes and lays down, and the Lord calls again.

34:15

Samuel. Samuel gets up, runs back to Eli, this happens several times as he runs and hears this voice and thinks, oh, Eli needs something, and off he goes. Samuel hears

what he believes to be Eli calling to him, so he rushes into Eli's room time and time and time again to respond, but when Samuel reaches Eli, the priest tells him it wasn't me.

34:38

I don't know what you're hearing, but it wasn't me, maybe you left the TV on, I don't know. that he should go back, he should lie down in his bed. So this happens multiple times. And it seems like Eli and Samuel together are unable to discern what's going on.

34:52

What is this voice? Where is it coming from? And verse seven explains to us why Samuel is unable to figure out what's going on as God is speaking. Verse seven tells us, now Samuel did not yet know the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

35:08

This verse is making this simple point that Samuel had never heard God speak in this way before. He didn't recognize the voice of God because he hadn't ever heard the voice of God in this way. I suspect many of us in this room would probably be guilty of the same response.

35:21

If we were laying in bed one night and God spoke to us audibly, we would hear it and we would think of anything other than the fact God is speaking to me. If you heard your name, call it out. Firearms are coming out, right?

35:33

You're walking around the house, all the lights are going on, what is going on? But I don't think many of us are gonna go, all right God, I'm listening. Verses eight and nine, it tells us that the Lord called Samuel again a third time.

35:51

He arises and goes to Eli, here I am. Eli's putting the pieces together at this point. Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy, therefore Eli tells him what to do. He says, go lay down and if he calls you again, you shall say speak Lord for your servant hears.

36:06

So Samuel goes and lays down in his bed one more time. As he tells Samuel to go back to bed for this third time, he tells him how to respond, how he should approach God as God comes and speaks to him.

36:19

And Samuel is supposed to indicate a willingness to listen and to respond to anything further that might be said as God is coming to him and seemingly has something to say to Samuel. This interesting process that Samuel and Eli went through, it took them nine verses to figure out that God was speaking to them.

36:37

God was speaking to Samuel, they had to discern what was the voice of God in the midst of all the other thoughts that they had, what it could be. But now we see in verses 10 through 14, Samuel is learning to listen to the voice of God.

36:51

Verse 10, the story continues and it tells us that the Lord came and stood calling as at the other time, Samuel, Samuel, and Samuel said, speak for your servant hears. God addresses Samuel a fourth time, gracious and patient to come time and time and time and time again.

37:12

It tells us that the Lord came and stood. That implies that there's this visible manifestation that comes and stands by Eli's beds as Samuel, listen up. Now God speaks in verses 11 through 14. It tells us that the Lord said to Samuel, behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

37:35

On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from beginning to end. And I declared to 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.

37:52

Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by the sacrifice or offering forever. God gives a message to Samuel and he does so in pretty clear terms, doesn't he?

38:07

There's not a lot of confusion about what God is saying here in this passage. God is telling Samuel that he is going to intervene in what's happening there in Israel. We talked about this last week, but we saw that Eli was doing a pretty poor job of leading his family.

38:25

His family was responsible for overseeing the temple, overseeing the worship of God there, the sacrifices and the offerings and the different things. Eli had handed off the family business to his sons and his sons were just wicked men.

38:39

They were guilty of all kinds of terrible things, abusing the sacrificial system to feed their own bellies and their own wallets, as we talked about last week. They were guilty of turning the house of God into a really brothel of sorts, as it says that they were laying with the women who were serving there at the temple.

38:56

These men had corrupted the house of God and Eli had sat there as the man who was responsible for overseeing all that happened there in the temple and he just kind of passively sat back and allowed it all to take place.

39:11

But God tells Samuel now that it's time he's going to step in. Things are going to be corrected. He's going to intervene in the affairs of Israel and the primary effect will be on Eli and his house. It tells us that God is going to deal with Eli and his house, but this impact is not just going to stay in the house of Eli.

39:31

It's not just going to affect that family. In fact, it's going to affect all of Israel. All of Israel is going to be impacted by this. We're going to see it in the coming chapters in the next few weeks.

39:41

We're going to see that Israel is going to be defeated in battle. They're going to suffer some losses because they had brought upon themselves judgment from God. We're going to see the death of Eli and his sons as God has so clearly promised here in this passage and in the passage last week.

40:01

And we're also going to see the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of God, is going to be taken from the people of Israel, that the presence of God is going to leave them for this time. And God's telling Samuel, this is happening.

40:13

He's telling Samuel, this is going to happen. There is no sacrifice. There is no, I'm sorry, God, nothing is going to atone for their sinfulness, for their iniquity. God tells them. But as we see this prophecy come and take place in this passage, as we're considering how God is speaking to Samuel and how Samuel is receiving this word of God and how he is living it out and being obedient to do what God is telling him to do, I think we need to turn our attention away from the immediate of this context for just a minute and simply focus a little bit more broadly on this topic of prophecy in the Bible.

40:55

Because what we see in this passage proves to be a common pattern for God's revelation through the prophets. That God spoke through these men in the Old Testament. He spoke through prophets. That God would speak to the prophet and then the prophet would speak to the people, the people of God, the people of Israel.

41:12

And so Samuel is not speaking on behalf of God out of his own opinions, out of his own thoughts, out of his own looking around and saying, you know, Eli's really blown it over here so I'm going to call Eli out for that.

41:24

And these sons over here are really just causing all kinds of trouble so I'm going to fuss at them for that. That's, this isn't Samuel looking around and determining what he thinks needs to be stated.

41:36

Samuel is not speaking on behalf of God from his own crafted thoughts. He is simply relaying what God has told him. And this is, this is the common practice for the prophets. In fact, Peter and Paul in the New Testament state that this is fundamentally true of all scripture, of all prophecy that is spoken to God's people through his word.

41:59

And second Peter chapter one tells us that no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. That's good news for us. This isn't just some guy's opinion about what should be done because if that guy, whoever that guy would have been, if that guy is anywhere near as flawed as I am, we're going to have some errors in there, right?

42:22

And anybody in here going to write that down absolutely perfectly that you have never had a bad opinion or a bad take on something before? Well, the good news for us is that

we're not dependent on Peter or Paul to never have a bad take or never to miss the mark, but rather God carried them along as they were carried by the Holy Spirit.

42:41

Paul also tells us in 2 Timothy chapter three, all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching and for reproof and for correction and for training and righteousness. Now, admittedly, there is kind of a different flavor to this in the Old Testament as God would speak through the prophets versus how God speaks today.

43:02

But the reality is that there's a very similar vein that runs through both the way that God spoke in the Old Testament and the way that he speaks to us now in the church age. Because God's messengers do not speak of their own opinion.

43:15

If someone is going to speak on behalf of God, this isn't something that we just come up with or that we conjure our own thoughts and put it together. So, you know, let me tell you what I think. If you ever hear someone in a church say, let me tell you what I think, you should probably stick your fingers in your ears.

43:31

God's messenger spoke what God had spoken to him. Samuel is told to go and to take the message that God had brought, and he was to be God's messenger, not to be the one who figures out what God needs to say and saying it for himself.

43:48

They were not the creator of the message. They were a mouthpiece for what God had to say on the topic. And the expectation should be the same for anyone who speaks on God's behalf today as well. We don't come up with our own opinions.

44:01

We don't come up with what we think. And if you've got some cool pastor, some person that's just up here walking around saying, you know, let me tell you what I'm noticing in the world these days. Run.

44:14

Run. Because the pastor's job, the mouthpiece of God as the prophet here, Samuel, is showing us, and as we should remember today as well, this isn't something that we get to come up with. This isn't something that we get to just decide what we think God wants to say.

44:33

The pastor's job is not to tell you what he thinks. It's to tell you what God has said. It's the same process that we see here with Samuel. It's a little different, but it's the same as Alvin just read a few minutes ago when we were worshiping in between our songs together this morning.

44:55

Hebrews chapter one tells us that the method for God speaking to us has changed a little bit throughout the years. Hebrews one one tells us long ago, many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

45:09

That includes Samuel. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom he also created the worlds. Now there are not prophets today who speak in the same way that Samuel would here in our passage that we're looking at this morning, but we do know that God still speaks.

45:29

We do know that God still speaks. And just as God spoke to Samuel to give his words to Eli to relay the message, God spoke through the prophets. God spoke through the apostles so that his revealed word might be provided to us.

45:45

We have the words of God. I'm going to give you a little secret. It's sitting in your lap or it's projected up here on the screen behind me. We no longer see prophets in the mold of Samuel, but the Bible is the inspired word of God that is without error.

46:00

That we have what Samuel didn't have because we have the words that God gave to Samuel, but we also have all the rest of them. We get to look back and say, oh, this is how that ties here. Oh, this is how, oh, oh, God, I see what you were doing.

46:15

We get to look back over thousands of years of how God has redeemed his people, how God has been at work, how God has spoken. The Bible is God's inspired word that is without error. It is sufficient to provide everything that we need for life and for godliness.

46:33

We don't need to go searching for a special word this morning. Now, if God puts something on your heart, there's a process for what do we do with that, because as we just talked about a minute ago, we don't come up with our own thoughts, do we?

46:49

We need to know what God says and we need to say that, not what I think. So for me to figure out was this what I think or what God thinks, there's a process for that, right? You know what we do? We go look at his word.

47:04

We don't need to go searching for some special word. God has already given us the word, the word of God. So what we need to do is not go looking for some magical, supernatural, you know, I got a word from the Lord moment.

47:18

What we need to do is read the word of God and do what it says. I found a quote as I was studying this week from Charles Spurgeon. It's a good quote. It's a firm quote that I want to read for you. I think this is just wonderful though, because it addresses this desire that we have that pops up in us sometimes.

47:43

Because we look at the Bible that's sitting on our bookshelf or sitting in the back of our car or wherever, and we go, well, yeah, I've got that, but I want a special word from God. I need God to tell me what He wants me to know and give me some special revelation.

47:58

But Charles Spurgeon warns us about that. So let me read this quote for you. We'll stick it on the screens as well. He said, I have little confidence in those persons who speak of having received direct revelations from the Lord, as though He appeared otherwise than by and through the gospel.

48:16

His word is so full, so perfect, that for God to make any fresh revelation to you or to me is quite needless. To do so would be to put a dishonor upon the perfection of that word. Have you ever considered what we do when we say, God, I know what your word says, but I want a special word.

48:38

I need a little bit more. Do you hear that? Do you hear, God, I need a little bit more than what your word has to say. We're not content with what God has given us. What we're saying is that the word of God is not sufficient, that it doesn't have everything that I need.

48:55

It just gives me a little bit, and then I gotta go find the secret words with my decoder ring and the special revelation, right? That's not biblical. I don't know where we come up with

that, but I think it's probably from our own hearts, more than it is from anything that God has told us or revealed to us.

49:14

Revival in Israel began with Samuel, hearing the word of God, and the same pattern holds true for us today. God's people are revived when they listen to what God's word has to say. With the coming of Jesus Christ, with the completion of the canon of Scripture, with us being able to sit here with the word of God, put together and complete for us, sitting in our lap, God's revelation is complete.

49:40

Yet people can experience silence from God in the same way that Israel did. You ever thought, you know, I just don't feel like God's speaking to me. I don't know what God wants from me. I feel like God's not giving me anything.

49:54

I don't know what God wants. We experience silence from God. We have the Bible, but we don't hear from God. You know, in my experience, what's usually going on in those moments, we're not listening. Because we say, no, no, I believe the word of God.

50:15

Yeah, the Bible is the word of God, and then we set it down and we never pick it up, and we never read it, and we never do what it says. I have an idea why you feel like you're not hearing from God. It's because you're not hearing what God has to say, because you're not considering what he has told you, very clearly, black and white on the words of the page.

50:36

Revival and Reformation in the church, we pray and we plead and we sing songs, we say, God, bring revival. But Samuel's sitting here going, you know how revival came in Israel? Samuel heard the word of God, and then we're gonna notice in just a few minutes, he actually does what it says as well.

50:56

But revival and Reformation in our church can only come in the same way that it came to Israel back in Samuel's day, by proclaiming the word of God to God's people. You know, this whole topic reminds me of one of my absolute favorite quotes.

51:11

I think you're probably gonna chuckle at this, but it speaks some truth as well. Justin Peters one time said, if you wanna hear God speak, read your Bible. And if you wanna hear God speak audibly, read your Bible out loud.

51:27

But I need a voice, no, there is a voice. You can press the play button on your phone and your Bible will give you a voice of what God wants you to say or do or think. All right, we have that, right?

51:41

Samuel needed to discern the voice of God. He needed to listen to the voice of God, but now in the last six verses of our passage, he needs to obey the voice of God. You know, essential as it is for God's people to hear God's word.

51:57

The Bible doesn't just tell us to hear what God has to say. It's also necessary for us to not only be hearers of the word, but to be doers of the word. We need to obey what God's word tells us to do.

52:10

Hearing God's word created this problem for Samuel, this conflict that we see in these last few verses. He receives this message of judgment for Eli, and now he has to figure out how he's going to proceed.

52:24

What do I do with this now? verses 15 through 17, we pick up the story. It tells us that Samuel laid there in bed until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli, tell the vision to Eli.

52:42

But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son," and he said, "Here I am." Eli said, "What was it that he told you?" "What did God say?" "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." These verses tell us that Samuel laid in bed until morning, probably not able to sleep after God wakes you up four times and speaks to you directly.

53:09

He had this message from God, but it was going to be a difficult one, both to deliver and even for him to receive. It seems to me like he's stalling. He got up and he did every chore that he possibly could do before he went and told Eli what was going on.

53:25

Kids don't wake up and do chores in the morning. He gets up and he opens up the doors and he's taking care of everything because he's avoiding Eli, I think, my opinion, right? Like I just told you guys, listen to the pastor when he talks about his opinion.

53:41

This can be familiar to many of us. As many of us today, we can get this sense of awkwardness that we feel when we read the word of God, when we see something and we go, oh no, I need to apologize for that one.

53:54

I need to soften what the Bible has to say here. The Bible doesn't understand the world that we're living in, so that's not gonna go over very well. So I need to modify that one a little bit and straighten that one out for God.

54:07

If we feel the need to apologize for the word of God, if we feel the need to change something that the word of God says because it doesn't sit right with us or it doesn't sit right with our culture that we live in, you know where the problem is?

54:21

It's not with the word of God. It's not the word of God that needs to change. It's me, it's you. The gospel message is clear, perhaps not popular in our culture today, but certainly clear. You and I are sinners.

54:38

We are deserving of punishment. We are deserving of the wrath of God, that a perfect holy God who hates sin looks at us as sinners, and we are deserving of a pretty firm butt weapon. We are helpless to save ourselves apart from the work of Jesus who died on the cross as our substitute.

54:58

What the Bible has to teach about hell, what the Bible has to teach about God's hatred of sin and how helpless we are to approach God or to somehow come to God out of our own merits. Those aren't exactly a popular message in our culture today.

55:14

We live in a world where everybody gets to do everything that they want. There's nothing that you can't do. There's nothing bad about you. You just be you and you is enough. That's not the message the Bible communicates.

55:27

So what do we do with that? Well, just like Samuel, we have to be careful to communicate the word of God faithfully. We have to be careful to say what God says. The spiritual health of others depends on us faithfully proclaiming the word of God accurately.

55:46

First to ourselves and then to the people that we come into contact with. If we change what God has spoken and try to pass along some drood up version of what God has said, that's not doing anybody any good.

56:03

Verse 18, it continues. It tells us, so Samuel told Eli everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, Eli said, it is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him. Samuel does his job. Samuel faithfully relays everything that he has heard.

56:26

He passes it along to Eli. Strangely enough, Eli is not angry. Eli is not shocked. It doesn't even particularly seem like Eli is upset. And he simply accepts the Lord's verdict with humble submission.

56:42

Eli knew who God was. Eli knew his own sinfulness and that he hadn't done what he was supposed to do. And Eli accepted the judgment of God as right. We continue to our last few verses, verses 19 through 21.

57:04

It tells us that Samuel grew. The Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established as the prophet of the Lord.

57:16

And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh. For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. Samuel was obedient to do what God had commanded him to do. He received the word of God, and he relayed the word of God.

57:32

He passed it along as he clearly obeyed God's instructions and Eli's desire to hear what God would say. The statement that none of Samuel's words fell to the ground, it means that God caused his prophetic messages to be absolutely true.

57:48

The first rule of being a prophet in the Old Testament was that you couldn't miss. If you were a prophet 95% of the time and then you got a few wrong, you weren't a prophet. People who spoke on God's behalf, they spoke with absolute clarity, with absolute perfection.

58:05

They spoke and relayed what God had said clearly and accurately. Samuel never missed. His prophetic messages came true. Samuel as a prophet was able to speak truth to people in a way that was valid and credible.

58:20

He spoke on God's behalf and tells us that from Dan to Beersheba that he was accepted as the prophet of God. Dan to Beersheba, those are kind of cities that are on each end of the nation of Israel, on the land that God had given to his people.

58:37

One at the northern limit of the land, one at the southern limit of the land. These two towns kind of marked the traditional boundaries of what was the Promised Land. Essentially what this is saying is that the whole nation accepted Samuel as the spokesman of the Lord.

58:52

Samuel spoke and people listened because when Samuel spoke, God spoke. And the reality is that while none of us will be used in the same role that Samuel was used in, every believer who is devoted to knowing and speaking God's word will experience God at work through him or her.

59:12

That if we will not communicate our own opinions, we will not communicate our own thoughts, but if we will faithfully communicate what God's word says that we would know and speak God's word in our lives, God's gonna use that.

59:27

In fact, God promises that he's going to use that in Isaiah 55. Isaiah 55:11 tells us, "My word, so shall my word be. "It goes out from my mouth. "It shall not return to me empty, "but it shall accomplish that which I purpose "and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." God is able to use his word.

59:49

God is going to change things. When the word of God steps into a situation, any situation, things change. It may not always change for the better. People stick their fingers in their ears and run off to do what they want.

01:00:07

It may not go well for them, but when the word of God comes into the picture, it always changes things. This is not because of some superpower that we possess, that we might be a prophet like Samuel.

01:00:18

Please don't hear what I'm not saying. This is not because of some superpower that we possess, but because the word of God will accomplish its work when it shows up. The word of God will not return void.

01:00:32

It will accomplish its purposes. So when we consider this whole chapter, the goal of this whole message, we kind of set out at the beginning of this for us to solve this question, how do we hear from God?

01:00:48

What do I do when I... I wanna hear from God. I wish God would tell me what I'm supposed to do in these moments. Well, to answer the question, how do I hear from God, the method's pretty simple. So we're not in a state of not hearing from God because God is being silent.

01:01:05

We don't hear from God because we don't listen. We don't hear from God because we don't consider what he has to say. If we sit here and we say, no, no, I've got the word of God. In fact, I've got about 12 copies of it in different places and different bookshelves and different things in my office or my car.

01:01:22

We don't hear from God because he's being silent. We don't hear from God because we don't listen to what he has to say. We don't consider his word. We don't study what his word has to say. And we certainly don't apply what God has told us in his word.

01:01:40

Maybe you're sitting here this morning and going, what do I do with all this? Well, I feel like I can safely say, you may not be called to a prophetic ministry like Samuel was. You may not be able to relay direct revelation from God like Samuel does in these pages that we're considering.

01:02:03

But the role that the word of God played in Samuel's life is the one that we should still be chasing after. The role of the word of God, that when God speaks, that it changes things, that it changes us, that it changes our circumstances, that we respond differently.

01:02:17

When God speaks, we should respond like Samuel did. my favorite verses in all of scripture. God calls to Samuel and you remember, Samuel was a little thick-headed. He didn't hear and understand that it was God the first few times that God called out to him.

01:02:40

But as Eli and Samuel finally put the pieces together, Samuel responds with profound words, given to him by Eli, tells us in verse 10, that the Lord came and stood by Samuel, calling as at the other time, Samuel, Samuel, and Samuel said, speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

01:03:03

Speak for your servant hears. When God speaks and he does still speak, it looks different, but God still speaks today. He does so through his word. He does so when we consider what his word has to say, when we mine the depths of the riches of the word of God, when we consider what God has to say, we, just like Samuel, need to respond in the same way.

01:03:31

We need to come to God's word, simply asking God, speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. So here's our application for today. When you find yourself longing for some special word, some special revelation from God, let me remind you, God has already spoken.

01:03:49

So you have two applications. First one, if God has spoken, go read it. Go read what he has said. Listen to the words of God, just like Samuel did. And the second thing that we have to do is the same thing that Samuel did.

01:04:03

We have to go and do what God says. Samuel didn't just keep the word to himself, he shared it with those who needed to hear. He did what God told him to do. And so our plight, our reality, the thing that's most necessary for us as we hear and consider what God has to say is not to just be hearers of the word, but to be doers of the word, to do what God says.

01:04:29

Perhaps maybe to pass it along to somebody else who needs to hear it. When we consider what God's word says, it changes us. And it has the power to change other people as well. So what needs to change in your life?

01:04:45

And what might not God need to change in someone else's life that perhaps you should say, hey, I was reading the other day, go read first Samuel three. Hey, God speaks to us. Check this out. Go read his word and go do what he says.

01:05:06

Our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service, right here at the front. They would love to pray with you about anything that you've got going on, anything in life. They would love to pray with you.

01:05:15

Perhaps you don't have time or can't make it down front. We also have a prayer wall out in our back hallway. So if you go out the back doors and look to your right, we've got a wall there that you can write your prayer requests down.

01:05:26

And our prayer team checks those weekly. They pray for those regularly. They would love to pray for you, work with you in whatever it is and labor with you in prayer. But this time I wanna invite you.

01:05:37

Church, would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your love for us. God, we thank you for speaking to us. God that at times and generations past, you spoke through prophets like Samuel. You spoke through the apostles.

01:05:53

But God, we have all those words now that you have revealed yourself to us through your son. You have revealed yourself to us through your word. God, we pray that you would give us ears to hear what you have to say to us.

01:06:06

God that you would help us not to just apathetically leave our Bible laying in different places and have to find it on Sunday morning because it's time to go back to church. God, help us to be people who would love your word.

01:06:18

God, who would live in your word. God, help us to be Bible people. God, we need to hear from you because the voices in our own heads, in our own hearts, they lie to us far more than we should allow. God, help us to silence our doubts.

01:06:37

Help us to silence our temptations. God, help us to silence those thoughts that grow up in us, that the flesh that so easily entangles us. God, help us to fight temptation, not with willpower, but like Jesus did in the wilderness with the word of God.

01:07:04

God, we pray that you would help us to love your word and to live in your word, to live in what you have spoken to us. And God, to be content. Perhaps it's not as flashy as some supernatural sign that someone may believe that they've heard. But God, your word is sufficient.

01:07:25

Help us to love your word. Help us to consider your word. Help us to live as people of your word. We humble ourselves before you, and in the same way that Samuel did, we ask, speak to us as your servants listen. Father, we love you. Thank you for loving us. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.