

THE FIRST 15

Monday, January 27, 2025

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Today is Monday, January 27. As we continue our study on the Practice of Prayer, we study what the Bible says about listening to God.

OPENING PRAYER

As a new day dawns, I seek the presence of the God who loves me. I claim a quiet space set apart from the rush of the world. I pause and become still, and breathe deeply and slowly. Quiet my mind to listen. Help me recognize the distinct sound of Your voice speaking to my soul. Reveal the message You have for me through the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

The Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" 1 Samuel 3:4-7, 9a

REFLECTION

God is revealing himself to the world. God manifests Himself to humanity in tangible ways every day. From the beginning of time God has been speaking. By His word, God spoke all things into existence and ever since then, He has been speaking to His Creation. His voice has been heard in many ways, but His ultimate word is the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

God is speaking, the question is, are we listening? In the story of Samuel's call, God reveals Himself through both word and vision. The ability of humans to listen and hear God's communication is how God breaks into the affairs of this world. Our ability to listen and hear God's communication to us is how God breaks into the affairs of our lives.

According to Jewish tradition, Samuel was twelve years old serving in the Temple under Eli the priest. Eli's eyesight was failing and Samuel had the duty of monitoring the lamp that kept burning from evening to morning. Immediately before dawn, God speaks to Samuel with an audible voice.

The Lord calls Samuel's name three times. Samuel does not recognize the voice as God's but is eager to please his mentor Eli and runs to see what the older man might want. I reflect on times when God has spoken to me, perhaps even called my name, but I did not recognize God's voice. Eli is more spiritually mature than Samuel and is able to guide him on how to hear God's

voice. Who do I have in my life who is spiritually more mature and can guide me on listening for God's voice? What tools do I have to discern God's speaking to me?

I consider the times I felt nudged by God. God has called my name or tried to reach me in a variety of ways, a nudge, a whisper, a thought, a dream, or an impression. I did not always recognize God despite His efforts. How have I historically been open and receptive to God's conversation in my life? Conversely, what have I done to prevent myself from hearing God's voice? Have I eagerly approached God, like Samuel, being present and inviting Him to speak? Have I been too preoccupied, drowning out the voice of God with the ever-pressing, swirling voices of the world?

I consider how difficult it is for me to be still, to lie down, to wait, to listen for God. What might God be trying to advise me about my posture of listening? How can I grow to become more receptive to God's voice and obey His instruction? Samuel is instructed to lie down and wait for God to speak and then respond with a posture of listening. I consider Eli's instruction, "If He calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" I make that my prayer today - "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Ask: What can I do in my daily life to adopt a more effective posture of listening for God? What are the obstacles I encounter when listening for God?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord God, I am grateful that You continue to speak into my life and call my name, even though I do not always recognize Your voice. Sanctify me by Your grace in the power of Your Holy Spirit and enable me to position myself so that I can more clearly hear and understand what You are saying on a daily basis. I long to hear Your direction and guidance. I am your loving servant and I am listening. In the busyness of daily life, it is difficult to find quiet and peace, help me to do so and meet me there. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray, Amen.