

January 18, 2009  
 Messiah  
 Epiphany 2 – B

I Samuel 3:1-10  
 Speak, for your servant hears

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### Introduction

1. There has been a lot of “calling” lately
    - a. The state road condition hotline has received 118,000 calls in Nov/Dec, compared to 53,000 in 2007
    - b. And those shovels on wheels, invented by the Linton, ND man – people all calling all over for those things – one hardware store in Bismarck alone has already sold 600 of them this year
    - c. And sad to say – with all this snow and cold – there have also been a number of calls to 911 for getting stuck, getting in accidents, family violence, and depression
  2. But we’re going to talk about “a different kind of CALL” today
    - a. We’re going to talk about a “call” from God...
    - b. Like what happened with Samuel, or the disciples, and even us
- I. How does God call us? How do we know He’s calling us? When does He call us?**
- A. Have you received any text messages from God lately, any emails, any instant messages?
    - i. Has God posted anything on your Facebook lately?
    - ii. Perhaps that’s not how God “calls” His people – actually, it’s not
    - iii. In the Old Testament, God called His people in some pretty dramatic ways...
    - iv. Once in a burning bush, another time in a still small voice, and another time through a wrestling match
  - B. But for Samuel, a prophet about 1,000 years before Christ, God calls Him in a very unique way...
    - i. Samuel was the son of Hannah, you might remember Hannah was not able to have children and promised to dedicate her child to the Lord if God would only allow her to have a baby
    - ii. God blessed Hannah with Samuel, and Hannah kept her promise, and gave Samuel to the care of Eli, the temple priest
    - iii. Perhaps around the age 12 (though we’re not quite sure) – God “calls” Samuel to be His prophet
    - iv. Samuel is sleeping in the temple, and God called Samuel, and Samuel ran out to Eli and said, “Here I am” – thinking it was Eli who called him
    - v. The third time this took place, Eli realized it was God “Calling” Samuel, and told Samuel what to say the next time God “called”
    - vi. And sure enough, it happened again – only this time just a little different

1. This time the Lord CAME AND STOOD, calling Samuel, “Samuel, Samuel”
2. And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears”

C. In the case of the disciples in our Gospel reading today – God is once again CALLING

- i. This time – not through voices, or visions...
- ii. This time God takes on the appearance of a man, Jesus Christ, and speaks with His own voice with His own body
- iii. Jesus approached Philip, a fisherman, and said, “Follow me.”
- iv. And then Philip found Nathanael, and after Jesus said He saw Nathanael under the fig tree, Nathanael also heeded His call, and Nathanael followed Jesus
- v. And Peter, and John, and Matthew, all 12 disciples – were called by the voice of Jesus, the voice of God...
- vi. Jesus said, “Follow me” – and they heard His call, and they followed Him

D. How about us?

- i. Have you heard God talk to you lately through a burning bush, or have you heard His actual voice here in the “Temple of the Lord”?
- ii. Has Jesus come to you in the flesh, approached you, and said, “Follow me”?
- iii. These ways are dramatic and extraordinary
- iv. But the way God calls YOU is JUST AS dramatic and extraordinary!
- v. In His Word – as you hear it read and as you read it yourself – God, the Holy Spirit, is calling you unto Himself
  1. When you read of Jesus dying on the cross, or healing the sick, or blessing the children...
  2. When you read “The Lord is My Shepherd” or “I lift up my eyes to the hills”...
  3. When you read “You are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus” or “Come to me, you weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest”
  4. Your soul is being touched, your heart is being moved, the Holy Spirit is calling you and drawing you to Himself
  5. When you were washed with the water of Holy Baptism – God was calling you; not kind-of, not sort-of; but in a very real extraordinary way!
  6. Yes – God calls you to be His own!
  7. God calls EVERYONE to be His own!

## II. **But not everyone wants to answer**

- A. As a matter of fact, if the truth be known, none of us really wants to answer God's call
- i. In our fallen nature, we want to respond to God's call like we do those telemarketers who call our homes – we try to hang up before the computer on the other end connects our call
  - ii. In our fallen state of sin, we want to delete God's call to us, we don't want to accept Him as our "friend" as we would on Facebook
  - iii. and we just wish He would stop calling us – we would like to block His "emails" so we don't have to deal with Him anymore
  - iv. We like our own life, we like our own rules, we like our own fun, we like our own way of doing things; and we don't want to be bothered with a God who is going to set up a standard for our lives, and expect (and command!) faithfulness and obedience to Him
- B. So often –
- i. we want to use Samuel's words, "Here I am" – but we would like to add, "but just leave me alone"
  - ii. we want to use Nathanael's words, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" – and we would like to add "so why would I want to change, direct, and lead my life around "this guy"?"
  - iii. What we'd really like to say to God is this:
    1. Don't speak!
    2. I'm not your servant! and
    3. I'm not listening! ...
    4. ... am I wrong?

## III. **But this is not just "some guy" calling us – this is God calling us... Let me tell you about this God who calls us in Baptism to follow Him**

- A. In our Epistle Reading, St. Paul is responding to a question about "Christian freedom"
- i. There were those in Corinth who believed they had to the right to do whatever they wanted, for they believed it was their body, it was their life – and they could do with it whatever they pleased (sound familiar?)
  - ii. But St. Paul speaks some very moving words at the end of our second reading today when he says, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price."
- B. We don't have a God who calls us to follow Him as though He were the tyrant we are now to be the obedient slaves
- i. We have a God who calls us in order to SAVE US!
  - ii. Apart from God – we are damned, and doomed for all eternity
  - iii. And now St. Paul says, "You were bought at a price"

- iv. God bought us back from our sin, from our rebellion, from our selfishness with HIS OWN BLOOD!
- v. This Jesus calls you not from a castle, not from a CEO's 20<sup>th</sup>-story office, not from Washington DC...
- vi. This Jesus, who is True God and True Man, calls you from the cross! – where He bleeds and dies for you – in order to save you
- vii. This Jesus, God in the flesh, calls you from the Open Tomb, and say, “See I have saved you, I have risen for you, I forgive you, and now you have life eternal”
- viii. This Jesus, The Eternal Judge, calls into your grave on the Last Day, and says, “Rise, Wake Up from Death” and come live with me forever in Heaven”
- ix. This is the God who calls us, apart from Him we are doomed; with Him we are saved forever!

**IV. What does it mean to follow this Holy and Loving God? What does that look like in our lives today?**

- A. It looks like Samuel, who said, “Speak, for your servant hears” –
  - i. and Samuel went on to be a prophet of the Lord
  - ii. Samuel spoke for God, God used Him to call King David, God used Him to proclaim God's Word to His people with the promise of a Messiah
  - iii. And today – as we hear the voice of God, we listen to the Pastor's preached Word – as God speaks and calls to us
- B. It looks like the Disciples, who put down their nets and followed Jesus
  - i. At times it seemed like they were following a loser, but He had proven to be “The Lord”
  - ii. And after His ascension, these disciples went out into the world telling and preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ
  - iii. And their following Jesus even led to their death, as they were all martyred (except for John) – but they had eternal life through Christ Jesus
- C. And us – consider yourself once again called by God through His Word this day
  - i. Today is designated Pro-life Sunday, in remembrance of the day our courts legalized abortion with Roe vs. Wade in 1973
  - ii. Followers of Jesus Christ are pro-life, as God sanctifies life, so do those who hear His call and follow Him
  - iii. On January 20, our nation will inaugurate a new president: followers of Jesus Christ will pray for him and continue to urge our lawmakers to be faithful to the commandments for the good of all people

- iv. Our everyday life demonstrates who we are in Christ, those who have heard His Call, and who follow Him: by the decisions we make, the words we use, the friends we make, the actions we take

**Conclusion**

1. When we truly consider who it is who is calling us...
2. It is no wonder we respond in faith by saying, "Speak, for your servant hears"
3. Because it is our SAVIOR // Who is calling! Amen.