

Date: 19.04.2020

Time: 11am

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 103 (Sing Psalms)

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3

Outline:

- a) Introduction
 - 1. Ministering to the LORD
 - 2. A prophet of the LORD
 - 3. The message of the LORD

Samuel's call

- **Introduction**

Remembering the context of this passage in the Bible, this was not a happy time in Israel's history. Many were doing what was right in their own eyes, living life their way. There was national and spiritual anarchy. There was so much sin. Even the spiritual leaders often failed. It was a time of spiritual failure and divine discipline.

There was a cycle of God's people sinning → God disciplining them → the people repenting of their sin and turning to God → the people forgetting God's goodness and turning to sin...

There were good people, seeking God despite their failings. Samuel's family were examples of this.

Eli's sons were sinning against God, setting a bad example to the people. God warned people that their sin would not go unpunished.

Samuel was the last of the judges. It was in this time of spiritual famine when God calls Samuel.

1) **Ministering to the LORD**

Samuel was a young man. He wasn't from a special family. He was dedicated to serve God.

Practical service: Samuel's service to God was simple at that time. His job was to serve the High Priest. His duties were practical. His service was practical. He wasn't a spiritual leader yet.

Serving God is not just about being a minister. We are all God's servants with different roles and responsibilities. These duties might be spiritual as a minister who preaches the Bible, or an elder who visits. These responsibilities might be practical, like a deacon or member of the Finance Committee. It might be visiting people, providing food, serving in children's work. As a congregation, we're not a one-man-band. We're a team. We're in a place, called to serve God in different roles where we are.

Willing servant: Samuel's service was very willing. He's not forced. He's not unhappy to serve. He was willing to do what was asked of him.

Three times he went to Eli in the middle of the night when he thought Eli was calling him. He showed a readiness to obey, without being coerced, or having to be convinced. We should be willing and wholehearted in our service. We should be ready to do whatever God calls us to do.

Samuel was ready in obedience. The message he was given to share with Eli was a hard one. Eli was a father figure to Samuel. The message would not have been easy to share, but he did it because he was faithful.

Samuel was zealous to do all that he was called to do. May we be ready by God's grace to do all that's asked of us.

2) A prophet of the LORD

Divine calling: God calls Samuel to be a prophet. This was not Samuel's desire. God calls him. Samuel was in a place he did not choose, but God chose for him. God chose, God called Samuel.

Divine revelation: The message Samuel shared was not his, but from God. He was to obey all that God tells him. The message came directly from God. He received a message from God and had to proclaim it.

Ministers are God's prophets, studying His Word to share His message with people. A minister shouldn't preach what he thinks. He must preach God's Word.

Divine confirmation: God's sign of a true prophet, distinguishing them from a false prophet, was that what the true prophet said would come to pass. God confirms Samuel's ministry, to have him recognised as a man who speaks for God.

How does a man know that he's called to the ministry? God confirms that call. God will establish him in the ministry. When that ministry is established, this is not because the man is good, this is God's calling.

3) The message of the LORD

Not always easy: The message Samuel was given to share with Eli was not easy. He had to speak to his adopted father and share a message of divine displeasure, of wrath, of rebuke.

Sometimes a minister's message will sound unpleasant or unpopular. Sometimes ministers have to share with people bad news that they don't want to hear. Sometimes there are parts of the Bible that are hard to read.

Has to be delivered: Samuel was afraid to share this message. Ministers will at times be fearful to share the Bible and painful news. God's anger and judgement are fearful things, but they have to be shared. A minister must be faithful to his call.

He must share the good and the bad news.

He must preach God's love and judgement.

He must preach God's goodness and wrath.

A minister must preach the whole of scripture and the whole of God, not part of Him.

You need Jesus' forgiveness and to accept Him as Lord.

You need to accept Jesus' salvation and sovereignty.

You need to accept Jesus' forgiveness and that He is Lord.

We might quote good, up building Bible verses on Facebook, but do we quote 1 Samuel 3?

If verses are in the Bible, they're there for our good. Sometimes sermons won't be encouraging, but they'll be needed. Hell has to be preached.

Brings different reaction: The message of God brings different reactions.

We see Eli's reaction in verse 18. His reaction appears at first glance to be godly, and accepting of God's will. But Eli's response is more like, "who cares – you can't change God." There is no repentance. There is no fear. This uncaring answer is a fearful answer.

We see the people of Israel's response in verse 20. They went to hear Samuel. They wanted to know more of what God said. They had a hunger and an appetite to hear more from God.

What is your response to God's Word? Will you take it and believe it, or shrug your shoulders and move on?

Will you believe and obey?