



Monday January 11, 2021

Prepared for you by

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FIRST READING: 1 SAMUEL 3:1-10

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the 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. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

This coming Sunday we have "call" stories. That means a call to ministry, a call to respond to God. First the calling of Samuel and then in the Gospel the calling of the first disciples. What strikes me as obvious in a call story is that someone needs to call someone else. In Samuel's case the LORD was calling, but Samuel didn't know that at first. The second feature of this story that strikes me as intriguing is the statement, "the word of the LORD was rare in those days." Was it? Or did it just seem so? As the story moves, we discover that the word of the LORD was very present, but it was obvious that Eli had not been tuned into it, and that Samuel had not yet been introduced to it. In a way the word of the LORD may have been all over the place in plain sight but hidden from those who didn't know what to look for. Finally, in the story Eli begins to understand that Samuel has been hearing the word of the LORD. And then Eli gives perhaps the best advice of his career as he tells Samuel, whose name means "God has heard," to go and listen. Among the things I take away from this passage is the serious reminder that we must listen to God. Moreover, God is speaking to us through the Word; the word of the LORD is not rare these days either. The question is are we listening, and are we responding in faith, love and hope? Speak LORD, for your servants are listening.