

Opening Prayer

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit that, as the Scriptures are read and discussed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

1 Samuel 3:1-10, 11-20

^{3:1} Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. ² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ 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. ⁴ Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and 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. ⁶ The 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." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The 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. ⁹ Therefore 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. ¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹² On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ For I have told 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. ¹⁴ Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever." ¹⁵ Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶ But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." ¹⁷ 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." ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him." ¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

Commentary

This story is both fascinating and frightening, for it conjures up thoughts of God speaking to us in the middle of the night. What would we do? What would we say? It also contains a memorable response to God's call: "Speak, for your servant is listening." What better words for voicing one's commitment to faithful discipleship? While we tend to think of this story as Samuel's "call," it is more accurately a theophany (a report about God appearing in the world). The story identifies Samuel as the only source of God's word in a time of upheaval: "The word of the Lord was rare in those days." (3:1)

Reflection

How would we know if God were speaking to us? How can we discern the voice of God from among the clamor of voices demanding our attention?

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

^{6:12} "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." ¹⁷ But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Commentary

Apparently the saying "All things are lawful for me" was often used by the Corinthians. Behind the saying was a pagan worldview. That worldview assumed that physical acts do not affect the inner person. What we do with our bodies has no affect on who we really are, it suggests. We read that statement with a sense of disbelief, since we know that our actions do, in fact, help define who we are. This worldview was called neo-Platonism. Some neo-Platonists held that the real person was spiritual and was confined in a body only for a time. What happened to the body did not really affect the spirit. Paul had to deal with this philosophy.

Reflection

What ethical standards does Christ require that make us uncomfortable?

John 1:43-51

^{1:43} The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."
⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Commentary

Phillip opened the conversation by saying, "We have found him. The one for whom we have been looking is the fulfillment of all scripture." We often think of fulfillment in terms of proof (that is, "here is a verse that proves..."). What the Gospel means by fulfillment is more complex and wonderful than this. Fulfillment means that all of our hopes and dreams and longings for God came true in Jesus. A specific verse may be an expression of those hopes and dreams, so we quote it as an example; but the real fulfillment is in the person.

Reflection

How has the promise of God been fulfilled for you in recent days?

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

^{139:1} O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

² **You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.**

³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ **Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD,
you know it completely.**

⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

that I know very well.

¹⁵ **My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

**In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.**

¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ **I try to count them -- they are more than the sand;
I come to the end -- I am still with you.**

Closing Prayer

**Grant, O Lord, that what we have said with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts we may practice in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**