

Growth Group Study for 26 July 2020

Theme: God's Calling

Bible: 1 Samuel 3:1-21

Preached by Rev. Je Cheol Cook, PhD

At the start of the meeting, pray to God about the meaning of the message and its application into our lives.

At the beginning of his sermon, Je Cheol presented a story, with music, about the importance of God's calling. What did you feel about this?

Many people here might have heard about Symphony No. 96, which was completed by Joseph Haydn in 1791. It has been called the Miracle symphony because of the following story. (Music plays.) After its first performance, many people crowded to the front for the post-performance applause. Right at that time, the chandelier fell from the ceiling of the concert hall. No one was injured because all of crowd were at the front. This is has been called a miracle. We believe that God's calling is higher than the sound of music. All people in this world were supposed to die because of our sins, but we now know that we have been saved through our Lord Jesus Christ. We come to God, because we are called by God. This is a miracle. This is grace.

Read the whole of 1 Samuel 3:1-21. Share with each other what God's calling means. (Answers are at the back)

- 1) Read 1 Samuel 3:1. Discuss the meanings of 'word' and 'vision' in this verse.
- 2) Read 1 Samuel 3:2. Discuss what this verse means?
- 3) Read 1 Samuel 3:3. Discuss the significance of this passage?

Read these two stories. What did you learn from them? Consider how God has called you?

Story one from William Wilberforce

During the 18th Century, William Wilberforce was not quite sure of God's calling. Yet he committed himself to the abolition of the slavery. In 1785, at the age of 25, he worked for the British Parliament and thought about being a clergyman after studying theology. Later he met John Newton, who had been a slaver, but became a Christian and who also composed the hymn 'Amazing Grace' and became a minister.

John Newton told him, "I believe that God has called you to work for the British Parliament." He encouraged William to be a politician rather than a minister, so that he could do mighty works for the kingdom of God. However, William left the government and fought for the freedom of slavery in England. After this, William could have much confidence as a politician. He made his own efforts to fight for the freedom of slavery in England. We can see from this that each person has different kinds of gifts and talents. We just need to listen to God to find out what they are

Story two from Rev. Je Cheol Cook

About 14 years ago, I served as a pastor at a Kiwi church here in Auckland. At that time, I struggled with speaking God's word in English, not Korean. One night, I had an opportunity to attend a big Christian conference. The host invited some world famous Korean ministers. Among those, there was an American missionary. He spoke in Korean not English. His message touched my heart. His Korean was not fluent and he had unusual funny accent. I thought that many people were impressed with his message. Then I thought to myself, "he can do it. I can do it." This encouraged me continue

to speak God's word in English as well as in Korean. Our God called me to deliver his word in his church. In the similar way, Our God has called each one of you to be his people. He called you to share his love and grace with our family, friends, and neighbours.

Answer 1)

The word in this verse is called 'dabar (דָּבָר)' in Hebrew. It simply means 'word or speak'. The word means 'lead flocks or herd to pasture or direct people.' The word 'dabar' leads us from chaos to truth. It also leads us from the world to God.

Here the word of the Lord includes God's word coming from prophets to God. And vision is called 'hazon (חֲזוֹן) in Hebrew' meaning originally coming from God. A vision helps his people to see God and thus this message originally comes from God's prophets in visions or/and in revelations.' In this verse, we are told that the word of the Lord was rare and there were not many visions. So it came about that many people were ungodly and disobeyed God.

Answer 2)

Eli was 98 years old and his eyesight was very poor. Also Eli could no longer hear God's voice. Instead, he relied upon Samuel his assistant. Eli was the priest and he should have delivered God's word to his people. However we are told that Eli did not obey God and thus he was unable to understand God's will and plan. On the other hand, Samuel was known to be a man of God, because he was obedient to God and gave his life to God in that evil world.

Answer 3)

Samuel was brought up to serve God in the temple. Inside the temple, there was the lamp of God. This lamp was used to shine a light in the darkness. It was used between sunset and sunrise. This passage tells us that Samuel received a call from God at night. Samuel was a young boy, but he was grown to become the servant of God.

As children of God, we still need to listen to the word of God and to shine in our world. We know there are good things and bad things happening in our world. How can believers of Christ work in this world?

I believe that believers must ask God at all times. We need to keep focusing on God, not our world. Because when we only focus on our world, we might go astray.

Close with prayers to God to ask for his help so that you can listen and understand his calling.