I Samuel 3

Review…

- **Overview of the book of I Samuel…**
  - The book of I Samuel picks up at the end of the period of the Judges...
  - About 350 years after Israel first entered the Land under the leadership of Joshua...
  - The book open with the history of the last two Judges of Israel - Eli and Samuel...
  - The book ends with the transition from the Judges – to the Kings of Israel...
- **Chapter 1-2 – The birth of Samuel…**
  - Elkanah had two wives – Peninnah and Hannah – but Hannah could not have children…
    - One year at Passover Hannah went the Temple and asked the Lord for a son…
    - If He granted her requests – she would dedicate him to the Lord his whole life…
    - The Lord heard Hanna – and she gave birth to a baby boy – Samuel!
  - The sons of Priest Eli – Hophni and Phinehas – were evil men…
    - They would take the best of the meat of the sacrifices (*steal*) from the people...
    - The had affairs with the women who came to worship...
    - They were such poor representatives of God - the people hated coming to God…
    - Eli did nothing – so God sent a prophet to tell him both sons would die the same day!

Hearing from the Lord… (*3 things*)

- **1st – Listening to the Lord…vs. 1-3** Read: I Samuel 3:1-3
  - 1st - In those days messages and visions from the Lord were rare... vs. 1
    - God can speak to His people in a number of different ways…
      - God can speak through messages – like He did through Moses…
      - **Exodus 33:11**- "The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to a friend."
      - God can also speak through visions – like He did through the Prophet Daniel…
      - **Daniel 2:19** – "That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision."
      - But in the days of Eli – there were no messages / and no visions from the Lord…
      - Not because God was not speaking – but because they were not listening!
    - When was the last time you heard of God talking to someone – or God giving a vision…
      - The days of Samuel are just like today – a Word from the Lord is rare…
      - God still wants to speak to His people – but the question is who is listening…
      - From the moment we get up – to the moment we go to bed we are busy…
      - We tend to be so busy in life we rarely have a moment to sit and listen to the Lord…
      - And then we wonder why God is silent - He is not silent / we are not listening!
  - 2nd - One night after Eli – who was almost blind – went to bed… vs. 2-3
    - The Lamp of God – the Menorah - had not yet gone out…
      - The Menorah was never to go out at night – **Exodus 27:20-21**
      - It was always to be light leading into the presence of the Lord – Holiest of all…
      - Eli was no longer diligent in keeping the flame alive – he went to bed…
      - He was a 'part time' priest – he only served the Lord when it was convenient…

- God does not want us to be 'part time' Christians - He wants us to be on fire for Him!
  - **Hebrews 12:29** - "For our God is a consuming fire."
  - Imagine if you had a caribou - young and strong - but who would not obey orders...
  - Or if you had a band new tricycle - that would only start when it wanted to...
  - A tool is only effective when it submits itself to the master's commands....
  - If we only follow the Lord when we want to - we are not much use to the Lord...
  - If we want to be used by the Lord - we need to be on fire for the Lord!

o 3rd - Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle – near the Ark of God…
- The Ark held the 10 commandments written on stone…
  - It was meant to keep the most important of all treasures – the Word of God!
  - The cover for the Ark – was called the 'Mercy Seat' – the foot stool of God…
  - It was there – from on top of the Ark – God would speak to His people…
  - **Exodus 25:22** – "I will meet with you… speak with you from above the mercy seat."
- Samuel never left the presence of the Lord – even while sleeping – he was ready…
  - If you only turned on your phone for 5 minutes a day – miss a lot of texts…
  - If you left your cell phone at home – you would not know if someone called…
  - For that reason we like to have our phones always on / always with us…
  - You never know when God is going to speak to us – we need to be ready…
  - We need to keep our Bible close at hand – in case God sends us a message…
  - Keeping in constant prayer – just in case the Lord gives us a call!
  - **I Thessalonians 5:17** - "Pray without ceasing..."

- **2ND – RECOGNIZING THE VOICE OF THE LORD...VS. 4-10** READ: I SAMUEL 3:3-10

o 1st - The Lord called out – 'Samuel – Samuel!'... vs. 4-5
- Samuel immediately jumped up and ran to Eli - assuming He was the one who called…
  - But Eli told him he had not called the boy – he should go back to bed…
  - We see here the character of Samuel – I am sure he was sleeping soundly…
  - If Samuel had stayed asleep – we likely we not be reading about his life today!
  - But he did not hesitate when he was called – he was ready to do anything!
- Too often when God calls us – we ask Him to come back tomorrow…
  - God does not need us – He will get His work accomplished with or without or help…
  - The question is do we decide to be blessed by taking part in the work God is doing…
  - When God comes knocking on our door – are we ready to jump up and go…
  - Or are we too busy to answer – too lazy to care – or too afraid to step out…
  - We never hear the names of those who do not follow – only those who do!

o 2nd - A second time the Lord called – and Samuel ran back to Eli… vs. 6-7
- Eli again told Samuel it was not him – he should go back to bed…
  - This was the first time the Lord has spoken to Samuel…
  - And he did not yet know what the voice of the Lord sounded like…
- What does the voice of God sound like…
  - Elijah was a prophet to the Northern tribes of Israel during the reign of King Ahab…

- The people of Israel had all forsaken God – and begun worshiping false gods…
- Elijah faced off against 400 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel…
- Two sacrifices – two alters – the one whose God lit the alter was the true God…
- God won the contest – and Elijah put to death the 400 prophets of Baal…
- Jezebel – the wife of King Ahab – heard what Elijah had done…
- **I Kings 19:2** – "May the gods also kill me if by this time tomorrow I have failed to take your life like those whom you killed."
- Afraid for his life - Elijah ran to the mountain of God – Mt. Sinai…

▪ The Lord spoke to Elijah there on the mountain…
- There was a mighty wind – but the Lord was not in the wind…
- An earthquake – but the Lord was not in it / a fire – but the Lord was not there…
- Then there was a still small voice – and the Lord spoke to Elijah!
- We often get the idea the voice of God is like Mt. Sinai – thunder and lightening…
- What does God sound like - **II Kings 19:12** - a still small voice - gentile guidance...
- We have to learn to sit - wait - and listen - or we will miss the voice of the Lord!

o 3rd – The Lord called third time – and Samuel ran again to Eli… vs. 8-10
▪ The 3rd time Eli realized it was the Lord who had been calling Samuel…
- He instructed him – next time someone calls say - 'Yes Lord I am listening'…
- So Samuel went back to bed and the Lord called again…
- Samuel did as Eli told him – 'Yes Lord Your servant is listening…'
- I am sure Samuel had his doubts – was he really talking to God / or just the night air
- But Samuel was willing to step out in faith – as a result he heard from the Lord…

▪ There have been many times I wondered if the Lord was speaking to me…
- Was I hearing my own thoughts / or from God – how to tell the difference…
  - If you are wondering if that 'voice in you' is the Lord or just you…
  - Step out and try – if it does not work / no fruit – then it was not from God!
  - To be honest at least half the time I 'step out in faith' – nothing happens…
  - But half the time GREAT things happen – because it is from the Lord…
  - And if we never step out and try – we will never know!
- Also God will never contradict His Word – **I Corinthians 14:32**…
  - If you think God is telling to rob the local store – you are wrong…
  - If you think God told you to live with the guy before getting married – wrong…
  - If 'God says something' to you contrary to His Word - it is not God speaking!

- **3RD – SHARING THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD…VS. 11-21** READ: I SAMUEL 3:11-21
  o 1st - The Lord was going to do something shocking in Israel... vs. 11-14
  ▪ God was going to bring judgment on the house of Eli just as He had promised…
  - Sometimes what God has to say to us – is not that easy for us to hear…
  - God spoke to Ananias – and told him to go and tell Saul about Jesus – **Acts 9**…
  - I am sure Ananias was thrilled to hear from the Lord – but not at what he heard…
  - **Acts 9:13** – "'But Lord,' exclaimed Ananias, 'I have heard about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!'"
  - There is a sweetness to hearing from the Lord – God is speaking to us!
  - But what if God is telling us to confront the sin in the life of a friend/family…

- Along with hearing from the Lord – comes the responsibility sharing His Word!
- Judgment because of the sins of Eli's sons – and because Eli did not punish them…
  - And there was no longer a sacrifice that would cover their sins…
  - Meaning without a change of heart – there was no ceremony that could save them…
  - **Isaiah 1:11-16** – "'I am sick of your sacrifices,' says the LORD… 'Wash yourselves and be clean! Let me no longer see your evil deeds.'"
  - People think if they come to church Sunday – they can live like the devil on Monday
  - Sunday service does wash away Mondays sins – God looks at the heart!

o 2nd – Samuel laid back down (*no more sleeping*)… vs. 15-18
- First thing in the morning he opened the doors of the house of the Lord…
  - Where Eli let the light go out – Samuel opened the door to let the light back in…
  - There are only two options in life – draw people to Jesus / or take them away…
- Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said to him…
  - But Eli called for the boy – and told him to tell him EVERYTHING the Lord has said…
  - If Samuel held anything back – 'let the Lord do to you what He said – and worse'…
  - The suggestion is that Eli knew that the Word from the Lord was not a good one…
  - People know what they are doing is wrong – they know they are sinners…
  - But they do not like to think about it – so God will use us to remind them…
  - We might be hesitant to tell them – afraid of how they will react…
  - But caring for someone means you cannot let them go on in their sin...
  - Sin destroys lives – it is not loving to let someone destroy themselves...
  - **Proverbs 27:6** – "Faithful are the wounds of a friend..."
  - A true friend is one loves you enough to tell you when you are wrong!
- Samuel told Eli everything and Eli said – 'It is the Lord – let him do what seems good…'
  - I have to think that if Eli had repented – disaster could have been avoided…
  - Why else would God tell Samuel – a prophet had already warned Eli…
  - Yet even with this final warning – Eli still did nothing – did not repent…
  - God is patient – longsuffering – giving time to repent and turn back to Him…
  - God waits to punish sin only because He loves the sinner – **II Peter 3:9**
  - God gives time us time so we can choose to repent and be saved…
  - Do not mistake His 'patience' for 'acceptance' – thinking God will not judge…
  - God is not mocked – **Galatians 6:7** – if there is not repentance sin will be judged…

o 3rd – Samuel grew – and the Lord was with him… vs. 19-21
- Everything Samuel said was helpful to the people of Israel - and full of wisdom…
  - So that from Beersheba in the south – to Dan in the far north…
  - All of Israel knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet / man of God…
  - And the Lord gave messages to Samuel – began a revival in Israel…
- It was then that the Lord appeared again at Shiloh / Tabernacle…
  - The suggestion is the Lord had not been there at the Tabernacle…
  - But all it took to bring God close again – was one man willing to listen!
  - We live in a community where the presence of God has been forgotten/lost…
  - But all it takes is for one person being willing to listen – follow God…
  - And God will return and speak to His people - bring revival to our nation!