

1 Samuel 3:1-20  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
John 1:43-51

## Sermon January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### *Is That Really You?*

In our Old Testament reading, we hear about a boy named Samuel who keeps hearing a voice calling out his name. The first two times he hears this voice he is unable to recognize whose voice this is (**Image One**: someone standing at a crossroads looking confused). Finally, the third time Samuel hears this voice, he is able to recognize that this is God's voice calling him to be a prophet (**Image Two**: someone following Jesus).

In our gospel reading, we hear about a person named Philip who for some reason or another hears Jesus' invitation to follow him, and right away sees that Jesus is the Messiah (**Image Two**). In fact, Philip is so excited about this revelation that he races off to his friend Nathanael to tell him about Jesus.

In response to this news from Philip, Nathanael doesn't react with the same exuberance as Philip does. Instead, Nathanael has some questions he needs to sort through before coming to a similar conclusion as Philip does (**Image One**).

Like Samuel, Philip, and Nathanael, when God calls us to something whether it is becoming a pastor or moving on to another church or volunteering for a ministry in the church or choosing a career, or entering into a new relationship with someone or taking the next step in a relationship or deciding to start a family.

Sometimes we need to experience several signs before we recognize that it is God's voice that we are hearing call us to become a pastor. Or call us to move on to another congregation. Or call us to volunteer for a particular ministry in the church. Or call us down a certain career path. Or call us into a new relationship with someone we just met. Or call us into taking the next step in a relationship like marriage. Or call us to start a family, to have a child (**Image One**).

Like Samuel, in all four of my call experiences in the church (becoming a Pastor, serving in Radisson/Langham Parish, serving here at All Saints, and now taking the call to serve Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church) it took me sometime before I started to see the signs. Before I recognized that the voice, I was hearing, was God's voice (**Image One**).

And like Nathanael, I needed to sort some things out before answering these calls. I needed to ask some questions, and listen for the answers (**Image One**).

Sometimes we need to get some clarification about what is expected. Sometimes we need some questions answered before we are ready to listen to God's voice, and accept the call to become a pastor. Or to accept the call to go to another congregation to serve as their pastor. Or to accept the call to become the Sunday School Coordinator or the Chair of the board or the team lead of the discipleship team. Or to accept the call to become a doctor or engineer or teacher or nurse or manager or grocery clerk or chef. Or to accept the call to invite that person out for coffee. Or to accept the call to propose to the person you love. Or to accept the call to start a family, to have a child.

Sometimes we need to experience several signs before we recognize that it is God's voice that we hear calling us. Sometimes we need to wrestle through some questions before answering the call (**Image One**). Sometimes we have to get our minds around the change that is about to happen to us. Because part of our hesitation is knowing that by accepting this call, things are going to change in our lives and in our community. We can feel anxious and scared. This change isn't always easy to reconcile with.

But then like Philip, sometimes we recognize God's voice right away (**Image Two**). Sometimes we like what we hear, and we get up and follow. Without hesitation. Sometimes something just feels right, and we trust in God through this process as we leap right into these changing times. Sometimes we can feel at peace and ready to walk in this new direction. Maybe because we are ready for a change.

When God comes calling us it impacts us in many different ways. It is not surprising that Samuel, Nathanael, and Philip all have different ways of reflecting on, and answering God's call. It wouldn't be surprising if every time we face a call in our lives that we have a different response to each of these calls. Sometimes we react like Samuel. Sometimes we react like Philip. Sometimes we react like Nathanael.

When God comes calling us it can be hard for us to listen, because it impacts us. It changes us. But what we see when we answer the call is also many possibilities. Many opportunities to experience God in new and exciting ways. Breathing new life on us. Breathing new energy into us. Empowering us to continue to share the gospel with the world (**Image Two**).

Let us pray, gracious God, help us listen for your voice, for your calls for our lives. Help us trust in you when we walk through the transition that comes with accepting Your call.  
**Amen.**