

Speak Lord, for your servant hears
1 Samuel 3-4:1a

1 Samuel 3-4:1a [3:1] Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

[2] At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. [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, 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] And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose 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] And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose 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 hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

[10] And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." [11] Then the LORD said to Samuel, **"Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. [12] On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. [13] And I declare to 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 atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."**

[15] Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. [16] But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." [17] And 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. And he said, **"It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."**

[19] And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. [20] **And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD.** [21] And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, **for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.**

[4:1a] And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

There was no frequent vision.

There are dry times in our lives and in the life of God's Church.

Samuel slept near the Ark of the Covenant. Can you imagine?

Sometimes we just need to be in God's presence. Be still and know that I am God.

The Lord called to Samuel. Samuel thought it was Eli.

Have you ever mistaken God's calling for something else? Someone else? Your own thoughts?

God uses everything to call us. He uses everything to teach us and lead us. Sometimes, when someone tells us "no, not right now", that's not necessarily an attack or a diversion. It's God calling us to slow down.

Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

In the life of the believer, we are many times called by God before we are equipped -- and sometimes even before we truly know who God is and what He requires. When I was eleven years old and felt called to ministry did I know what that meant? No. did I know God... No. I was given a picture of something, but it would take years of life before I would be ready for what God had for me. Did it mean that He was not leading me or that He was not with me through that time? Of course not. He was preparing me and everyone around me for what was to come.

God will not be deterred in His purposes. We must learn, like Samuel, that it is never about our abilities or our lack thereof. It is never about our perceived opportunities or the lack of them. It is only ever about our submission to the one who has called us. If we submit, if we surrender, we will always be in His will.

Eli perceived that the Lord was calling Samuel. Sometimes we need someone to point us in the right direction.

Eli was sinful. Everyone is sinful. God will always use sinful people to lead us. God will use the most unlikely people to confirm His purposes or even rebuke us in our sin.

Finally Samuel realizes it is the Lord. It takes time and effort to hear from God.

I waited on for the Lord on high. I waited and he heard my cry. Waiting is critical. Patience is mandatory. Gratification is slow in coming. Fulfillment always takes time. Our hearts must be prepared to go with God. Our trust and loyalty will be tested. Who will we serve, God? Ourselves? Others? The timetable we have established?

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli. God always asks us to do things outside our comfort zone. He always gives us what we need to fulfill His will. He is shown strongest in us when we are at our weakest.

The only way that God's calling fits in our comfort zone is when we know and trust the one that is calling us.

And even sinful Eli confirms God's leading in Samuel. "It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him."

God's purposes will always stand. Eli submits to the Lord. Wise people submit to God's leading. We will all have opinions about what we believe God to be doing in another person. We'll talk about them and suggest that maybe they aren't hearing "correctly" from God. Or that they have issues they need to clear up before they can serve God. Eli very easily could have rebelled against God's word to Samuel. But Eli was smart enough to know that God uses the most unlikely people to further His kingdom.

Samuel grew and the Lord was with him. God grew Samuel and Samuel was promoted by God.

True promotion and advancement is not about a person, it is about God's purposes. The person can "feel" important while being used for God's purpose, but the importance and promotion is not of the person, it is of God's will and purpose.

It takes time. We want it now don't we...When we don't get our perceived desire in our timetable, we resort to replacing God's purpose with our plan. Paul Tripp lists some ways that we do this.

We attach our identity to the respect of others

We get our sense of well being from our physical appearance.

We think material things have the power to make us happy.

We attach our meaning and purpose to our achievements

We ask our jobs to make us content.

We base our identity on our children

We attach our sense of spiritual well being to the "perfect" church or group.

We base our identity on our education

We ask our spouses to make us happy

We look to food and drink to satisfy and calm us

We continually say "If only I had _____, the my life would be _____"

We attach our identity to the luxury of our cars or neighborhood.

The list is endless. There is nothing in creation that we can't try to turn into our personal messiah... but it never, ever works. The creation can never give you what the Creator can. We already have our happy ending.

All created things are signs that point us to what can be found in Christ. You know how this works from driving around or from taking a trip: a sign points you to a thing, but the sign is not the thing. All creation points us to a creator, but it can never give us what the Creator can give.

It takes time for God's purposes to be established. But we want it all... and we want it now.

If it's a job and a paycheck, we want it now. A house, a car, children... a family. We want it now. A relationship, an experience, a meal... we want it now.

Look at how long it will take for Samuel. He's a boy. We get to read ahead and he grows up over the course of a few verses. It only takes a page or two. Yet we must see past our timetable and rest in the knowledge that God has us in his hand.

On one hand it takes too long. On the other hand... we don't have enough time. Our life is too short to accomplish what WE think we should be able to accomplish.

But God's timing is always perfect. And while this doesn't mean that we should do nothing, it does mean that our plans are not always God's plans.

We can all look back and see how God made everything work out to His plan according to His purposes in our lives. Yet we still want to jump ahead and "make things happen".

Many times, when we feel called by God, we see that calling as an immediate thing. As if the vision we have been given should come to fruition "right now".

We somehow think that everything should happen too sweet. If we are given a vision or God reveals a portion of His plan to us... we want it now. But what about guys like Moses... who were able to be "a part" of the fulfillment, but not see the complete fulfillment. Moses was shown the promised land, and yet he never entered.

The truth is, we are all like Moses in this regard. We only play a part. And it takes time.

The Schleppey's

Be with God. Be with His people. Serve God and people. Do what you know to do now. God is working even when it seems like the things that are happening do not match your perception for the fulfilled vision. Wait. Be patient.

Not In Charge by Paul Tripp

The reason you and I hate to wait is because a delay immediately announces that **we're not in charge**. If we could control the situations, locations, and relationships of our everyday life, **we wouldn't have to wait**. There would be no such thing as a delay.

Instead of frustrating us, waiting should actually encourage us. Why? Waiting doesn't only announce that you're not in charge; **waiting announces that Another is in charge**, and that's the best news imaginable.

The timing of God is always right, and the ways of the Lord are always good and true. His plan is as perfect as it could be. Don't get discouraged; **the King hasn't abandoned you**. His plans are marching on, even if it seems like it's taking forever.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.