

Bridgeway Community Church
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Series: Next Gen Faith
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Next Gen Faith: LISTENING

Question: When was the first time you heard from God?

Psalm 56:3 NIV
When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.

“Life gets anxious and chaotic. There’s hardly any space in your brain to hold anything anymore let alone listen to a still small voice of Jesus. There’s so much chaos around us that tries to distract us from what we are supposed to be focusing on.”

“There has to be a way for us in those chaotic moments when everything is so loud around us, for us to listen to God...What I hope that we can do is listen in the midst of chaos.”

1 Samuel 3:1-10 NIV

The boy Samuel was serving God under Eli’s direction. This was at a time when the revelation of God was rarely heard or seen. One night Eli was sound asleep (his eyesight was very bad—he could hardly see). It was well before dawn; the sanctuary lamp was still burning. Samuel was still in bed in the Temple of God, where the Chest of God rested.

Then God called out, “Samuel, Samuel!” Samuel answered, “Yes? I’m here.” Then he ran to Eli saying, “I heard you call. Here I am.” Eli said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to bed.” And so he did.

God called again, “Samuel, Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, “I heard you call. Here I am.” Again Eli said, “Son, I didn’t call you. Go back to bed.” (This all happened before Samuel knew God for himself. It was before the revelation of God had been given to him personally.)

God called again, “Samuel!”—the third time! Yet again Samuel got up and went to Eli, “Yes? I heard you call me. Here I am.” That’s when it dawned on Eli that God was calling the boy. So Eli directed Samuel, “Go back and

lie down. If the voice calls again, say, 'Speak, God. I'm your servant, ready to listen.'" Samuel returned to his bed.

Then God came and stood before him exactly as before, calling out, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak. I'm your servant, ready to listen."

"Before he could even respond, Samuel needed to acknowledge that God was speaking to him...Bridgeway, God is speaking to you...right now he is calling out your name...his voice is beckoning you to listen to his specific, unique message to you."

"Before we can even talk about listening we need to acknowledge that...God wanted to speak to you so badly that he wrote a 66 book long love letter to you! You have it in your smartphones or you have a book the Bible, it's right in front of you."

"We don't have a hope of listening to him if we don't believe that he is individually speaking to us...say 'God is speaking to me!'"

"Take a cue from Samuel and say 'Lord, your servant is listening.'"

The 3 D's

I see three principles in Samuel's story that can help us listen to God. Three principles that I think can help us hear the special message he has for each and every one of us.
Dialogue, Discern, and Decide.

Dialogue - with God

"God called Samuel four times - four times!...God didn't speak his message until Samuel engaged in the conversation."

Question: How often is God trying to speak to us but we are too afraid or distracted to answer?

"Keeping up a regular prayer life is so important because when he has these message for us, if we're praying regularly, then we tune our ears so that we can hear his voice...the more you talk to God, the more you understand his voice."

John 10:27 NIV

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Rachel's Mentor: "God wants to talk to you exactly as you are."

"You don't have to change. He wants to talk to you exactly how he created you! Your personality, your quirks, he loves you, you are his child. Your unique conversation and dialogue with him will be different."

He spoke to Moses through a burning bush
He spoke to Elijah with a still small voice
He spoke to Joseph in a dream

"Embrace the dialogue that he's offering to you, don't judge it and don't reject it just because it's unique - that makes it special."

Dialogue - with Community

John 10:27 NIV

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

"If we're sheep...hangout with other sheep! The flock is where the shepherd is! If you steer yourself back into the flock, the other sheep they'll help you...lead you back to where you're suppose to be. It's when we go off on our own and start wandering in isolation, that's dangerous."

"Community can help us listen to God and to recognize his voice, to even interpret what he's saying."

"We need one another to affirm God's voice in our lives and to teach us how to respond to him. I need those who have gone before me to tell me, how do I speak to God? How do I listen to God? And they need me just the same to say what God is saying."

Discern to Dismiss Distractions

“...sometimes I am not quite sure what God is trying to tell me and what the world is trying to tell me. It’s competing voices and I don’t know what I want to believe vs. what I should actually believe.”

Discern: Sift through Scripture

“There’s so many voices and opinions, we need to discern to dismiss the distractions - get the noise out of the way. God has given us such a special blessing to do this and that’s Scripture. Anything that is contrary to Scripture is not from God.”

Discern: Serving

“Samuel heard God’s voice when he was serving in the Tabernacle...his job, it wasn’t terribly important...his job was to relight the candle once it went out in the middle of the night.”

Decide

“The original words used in the Bible for “listen” mean to hear AND to do - together. It is both the effort of hearing and the action of doing.”

Hear me out, I’ll give you an example - A mother asks her son to take out the garbage before he gets on the bus because it’s trash pick up day. The son responds, “I hear you,” but then runs to the bus stop to hang out with his friends. Do you think the mother would say her son listened to her?

James 1:23-24 NIV

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

“We have a choice to listen to this wonderful, forgiving God who is merciful. If we make a mistake trying to following him, he says ‘child just come back to me, I’ll show you the way.’”

“You don't have to get it right. You don't have to be a perfect Christian. But when you're listening, the more practice you have, the more you attune your ear to his voice, the more you'll be able to follow in his way.”

Romans 2:13 NIV

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

“Bridgeway, let's listen to God together.”