

The Promised Land



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 12: June 5– 9, 2017

Day 1

June 5



Pray / That God would open the eyes and ears of your heart.

ARE WE LISTENING?

When was the last time you heard from God? The Bible is akin to a letter written to us from a loved one far, far away whom we have little access to—think no WiFi or internet at all! It is also a story—the story of God, an auto-biography of sorts, giving us insight and helping us to understand who he is. Second Timothy says that the Word of God is useful for teaching and training; and 1 Thessalonians says that we are to test everything we hear (including the words of our pastors, speakers and notable books), against it.

With technology from the printing presses to apps, we now have nearly unlimited access to this powerful, multi-faceted book, the written Word of God! And yet, many people don't hear from God. They don't feel connected to or feel they really know this friend and Savior.



Read | 1 Samuel 3:1, 10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:21



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

There is an old song from the 90's by Out of the Grey entitled, "He is Not Silent". Part of the chorus says, "He is not silent, he is not whispering. We are not quiet, we are not listening."

When was the last time you felt you truly heard from God and what were the circumstances surrounding it?

How often would you like to hear from God and why?

We can hear God in various ways including through his Word. Through Jesus we are given access to talk to God in prayer, as though having a conversation with a friend. What is your part in the conversation with God? (We will revisit this question at the end of our week as well.)

Day 2

June 6



Pray | Ask God to show you how to prepare your heart to hear him.

TAKE TIME TO STOP AND LISTEN.

Are you busy? Is your family busy? Do you often wish you had more hours in your 24-hour day? How often do you stop and listen for God? In this week's story, we read about a time in Israel's history in which God has been quiet for quite some time. The people didn't want to hear from him, so he stopped talking. But it is time for them to reconnect!

Samuel is just a boy who had been dedicated to God and to work in the temple with Eli the high priest, by his mother, Hannah. Samuel has never had the experience of hearing from God, but he has been preparing his heart for years now, learning from Eli the High Priest whom God does speak to. It takes Samuel a while to recognize that God is calling him, but when he does his response is simply, "Speak, for your servant hears." Samuel's heart is ready to hear from God; and he is ready for whatever it is God has to say. And tomorrow we will find out the unexpected word from God!



Read | *1 Samuel 3:1-10*



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

The Israelites had gone many years without God's word and they were running in all different directions away from God. What does it look like when God is speaking and we are listening?

Samuel had never actually heard from God but his heart was ready for whatever God had to say. When we ask God to speak to us, we must be ready to submit ourselves to him and his words to us and we can't pick and choose which words we'd like to hear. How willing are you to hear whatever it is God has to say?

How do you prepare your heart and your space to hear from God? How can you better prepare yourself as you would in an important conversation with a loved one or a mentor?

Day 3

June 7



Pray | Ask God to be the loudest voice in your head and heart.

THE GOOD, GOOD FATHER

God's first word to the Israelites in quite some time, as well as his first word to Samuel, was one of judgement. Eli's sons had been blaspheming God and pillaging the temple! And Eli had not managed his household - he did not restrain them. God is patient, and gives us time to repent and change our ways, but when we continue to be stubborn or selfish, there must be consequences. And the High Priest's time for judgement had come, through a simple boy.

Sometimes when God speaks to us, he doesn't speak all encouragement and love. Sometimes he, like a good parent, scolds or reprimands us in order to keep us safe; and sometimes there are consequences for our actions when we are not following him. If we can see these times of discipline as a gift, rather than punishment, we will continue to grow spiritually!



Read | 1 Samuel 3:11-14



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

How have you reacted when you have been expectant in hearing from God and have heard conviction rather than comfort or discipline rather than accolades?

Consider some times in which you've disciplined your child(ren), an employee, or even a pet! Consider the circumstances; the offense; the punishment; their reaction; what you hoped would come from the discipline. Now consider God's discipline of us and of you. How have you responded to God's discipline, and in light of the above consideration, how can you respond differently?

Verse 13 says that Eli was being punished as a direct result of how he managed his household. This is important to God! If you are a parent or mentor to a young person, how are you specifically influencing them to be ready to hear God's voice?

Day 4

June 8



Pray | For the courage to step out in faith and share God's word.

CHOOSE TO FEAR GOD, RATHER THAN MAN

This week's story encompasses Samuel's first of many encounters with God, and it was an unexpected one. God is giving Samuel harsh words of judgement that he is to pass on to Eli. This could not have been an easy task. Samuel, who is unfamiliar with God's voice, has to be sure he is indeed hearing from God. Then, he has to have the courage to share this with Eli who is his elder; the high priest over all of Israel; and in many respects, like an adoptive father to Samuel.

This could not have been an easy task for Samuel, but he had spent years in the temple developing a deep respect for and fear of God. From the Scriptures we read, he did not hesitate to share God's Word with Eli.

Samuel chose to fear God, rather than Eli.



Read | 1 Samuel 3:15-4:1



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

How do you think you may have reacted in a situation like Samuel's and why?

When was the last time you shared a specific word from God to someone; or the story of God with someone?

Samuel walked with God and talked for God. He was God's physical hands, feet, and voice on earth. How are you God's physical hands, feet and voice in your home, workplace, school, neighborhood, community, or church?

Day 5

June 9



Pray / Thank God for always wanting to speak to you.

JESUS- a perfected Samuel

Samuel, the prophet was a new kind of prophet for the Israelites. They hadn't been hearing regularly from God, but in the person of Samuel, who lived among them, God spoke to them often. Proverbs says that not hearing from God results in death and separation from God. When Jesus was tempted in the desert by Satan, he reiterated the words of Deuteronomy 8:3, "...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." We need the word of God like we need food.

As with the Old Testament covenants between God and the Israelites, God had a plan for something better. A better way to relate with his people, whom he loves to relate with! God used Samuel to restart the dialogue between the Israelites and himself, and continued to perfect this hundreds of years later with Jesus, who was "God's Word with us". Now we, who know God, have unlimited access to his Holy Spirit so that we may all talk with our Savior, at any given moment. What we do with this dialogue determines future dialogue with God.



Read | Proverbs 29:18; John 1:1, 10-14



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

With what you know of them both, compare and contrast Samuel and Jesus and the people whom they served. Samuel ushered in an era in which God spoke to his people often, through a man who lived among them, similarly to Jesus. But how was Jesus able to more fully fulfill the duties of the High Priest for the people he came to serve?

How was Jesus “God’s Word with us”? How can you be God’s Word to those around you?

Refer back to your answer to Day 1’s question “What is your part in the conversation with God?” How would you change and tweak that answer in light of this week’s passages and questions? If you would like to start the conversation with God, take this time to stop and reach out to him. Then reach out to someone you know or Five Oaks for guidance in taking the next step. God is always listening!

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