

So, You Want to Grow Up?
Always Be Willing to Say, "LORD, Here I Am!"
1 Samuel 3:1-10

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Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: Our theme verse as a church for this year is Luke 2:52. "And Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men." I trust that you are striving to do that. In this current series of teaching on Sunday morning, I want to help us to take that growth to a new level. I began thinking about some Biblical examples of this kind of growth. Thus far we have considered the example of Daniel and the three other Hebrew youth in the Book of Daniel and discovered that if we want to grow up, we must "Never Compromise our Convictions." We learned secondly that if we want to grow up, we must "Never Believe the Lies of Satan."

Today, we turn our attention to Samuel. Samuel is an important figure in the Old Testament because he is the link between the days of the judges and the kings of Israel. He is considered the last judge of Israel, and God used him to appoint the first king of Israel. Interestingly, we read about Samuel in 1 Samuel 2:26 that "the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men." Well, with a statement like that, there must be something that we can learn from his life to help us to grow in this same way.

Text: ¹ Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; *there was* no widespread revelation. ² And it came to pass at that time, while Eli *was* lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, ³ and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God *was*, and while Samuel was lying down, ⁴ that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" ⁵ So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down.

⁶ Then the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.)

⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me."

Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

Introduction: Again, if we want to grow up, we must...

Never Compromise our Convictions and Never Believe the Lies of Satan. To these two principles, we add a third this morning: If we want to grow up, we must...

Always Be Ready to say, "LORD, Here I Am!"

Now, actually, as we have read this morning in the text, Samuel didn't say these exact words to the LORD; he said these words to Eli, the priest. However, Samuel did say something very similar, if not synonymous. He said, "Speak, for Your servant hears." The NIV says, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

The key to continuing to grow as a disciple of Jesus is found in these words: "Speak, for your Servant hears." In these words much is expressed about what it means to follow Jesus as Lord. In order for us to mean these words, there are two requirements.

We must...

Be Prepared to Hear the Word of God.

Exposure to the Word of God

In this text, I see that we must *put ourselves in the place to hear from God*. Verse 1 tells us that the word of God was rare in those days. Let's stop and ask a question about that. Remember that I told you that Samuel lived in the times of the judges. In truth this was an awful time spiritually speaking for Israel. In fact, these times were so bad that the book of Judges records these words: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6)

Furthermore Judges 2:11-17 offers a good summary of these times.

¹¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; ¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

¹⁶ Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.

So, the question is "Why was there no revelation from God?" Was it because God was unwilling to speak or the people were unwilling to listen?

If we want to hear the word of God, we must have exposure to the Word of God. Samuel is exposed to the hearing the Word of God by being taught by influential people, being in an important place, and his own individual practice.

How do we put ourselves in the right position to hear the Word of God?

1. Priority of Personal time in God's Word.

- Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." (NIV)

- Proverbs 8:34 “Blessed in the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.” (NIV)
2. Priority of Public Gathering for Study in God’s Word.
 - Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching...” (NIV)
 3. Priority of Personal holiness.
God speaks to those who are willing vessels.

Experience with Hearing the Word of God

This is a learning process. This is not the only time Samuel hears from God. He becomes a prophet of God. He continues to understand what it means to hear from God. Don’t grow frustrated that you don’t know how. You will begin to recognize the voice of God as He speaks by the Spirit of God through the Word of God.

I wonder if some of our difficulty in hearing from God is that we are not really listening. We might be like the guests at a Presidential gathering during the administration of President Roosevelt. President Franklin D. Roosevelt got tired of smiling that big smile and saying the usual things at all those White House receptions. So, one evening he decided to find out whether anybody was paying attention to what he was saying. As each person came up to him with extended hand, he flashed that big smile and said, "I murdered my grandmother this morning." People would automatically respond with comments such as "How lovely!" or "Just continue with your great work!" Nobody listened to what he was saying, except one foreign diplomat. When the president said, "I murdered my grandmother this morning," the diplomat responded softly, "I'm sure she had it coming to her."

If God is speaking to you, are you listening?

Be Poised to Do the Word of God.

The second requirement is that we are poised to do the Word of God. There is no point in hearing the Word of God if we are not committed to obeying the Word of God.

Samuel’s oath to God has so many characteristics of what our relationship ought to be.

Personal—“your”

Humility—“your servant”

Courage—We must do whatever is asked. God asked Samuel to do a very difficult thing—to pronounce judgment on Eli’s son. He was afraid to tell Eli the message, but he did.

Resolve—We must be committed to obeying God forever, no matter what He commands us to do.

Application: We cannot wait until we hear God’s Word to decide if we will obey. We must be resolved to obey.