

Break Through (I'm Ready to Listen) (1 Samuel 3)

This year has been filled with noise. So many voices coming at us. Will 2021 be the year of slowing down to hear God's voice? Of listening, without moving on too quickly? How do we even do that? Where do we start? How do we know what to listen for? 1 Samuel 3 is the ancient story of God's patient voice breaking through the noise of that day and finding someone with the humility to say "*I'm ready to listen.*"

1. Why is God so quiet? (1 Samuel 3:1)

Without God's Word Israel was lost - and so are we.

The story begins with some sad but very important news – a statement that everything else needs to be read in light of: V1 *In those days the word of The Lord was rare (precious; highly valued; scarce), there were not many visions (prophetic experience; guidance).*

BUT it ends with some great news – a monumental shift for both Samuel and the nation of Israel: V21 *The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through His Word. And Samuel's word came to all Israel.*

The Word of God is the main character.

2. OK, I'm ready to listen! (1 Samuel 3:2-18)

"call" occurs 11xs in VV4-10

V10 *"Speak, for your servant is listening!"*

= The patient perseverance of God

Samuel learns right away that God's word will not always be easy to speak or easy for others to hear / receive BUT he must deliver it without fear of the consequences.

God's Word comes with a COMMAND to obey, a TESTIMONY to uphold or a PROMISE to embrace.

Jl Packer: *"God speaks to us: not only to move us to do what He wants, but to enable us to know him so that we may love him."*

3. What happens next? (1 Samuel 3:19-4:1)

With God's Word Israel could see God for who he is - and so can we.

V21 *God continues to speak* clearly through His Word to anyone who will listen.

The One who spoke in 1 Sam 3 has come to us in the person of His Son Jesus – the Word made flesh!
John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-3

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Who is the main character of this story? How does the structure of the story help point that out?
2. What is Samuel's posture towards The Lord's voice?
3. Even though we are not Samuel, this story is here to teach us something about *how* God works. Even though we aren't called to do exactly what Samuel did, God will often times work in a similar way in relation to our own calling. What do we learn *about God* from this story? Why is it so important to first ask what a passage has to say about God? What do we learn about our own calling?
4. Describe the patient perseverance of God in this story. Have you experienced His patient perseverance in your own life? If so, how?
5. How have you been personally challenged or encouraged from this story?
6. WHY does God speak? HOW has and how does God continue to speak to us?
7. Is your desire for God's Word growing? Do you read it alone? Share it with others? Do you still obey it? If you're struggling in this area where is a good place to start again?
8. How does this story point us to (anticipate) the gospel? = the good news of *Jesus' life, death and resurrection and the fact that he died for our sins that we might live under his loving rule.*