

SUNDAY, June 2, 2024 “ Getting called to Serve”

I Samuel 3:1-9 2 Corinthians 4:5-12 Mark 2:23 to 3:6

What was the last phone call or text message you received? Do you remember when it occurred? Who was it from? What was the message? Today's communication devices are many- landline, cell phone, Voice Over Internet, discord, connecting through zoom, teams and many other options. But for one moment I would ask you to think about the last phone/ text message you received. Was it a significant message? Or was it about what you are to have for lunch? Was it about a person's surgery and recovery or about where to meet for coffee?

Messages through communication devices are innumerable today and it seems like almost everyone has their own phone and number. Hence the changes coming to the school system about who can have them in class or not. For many people the phone is a needed tool to do business but for others it is a distraction. The first hand held mobile phone came out in 1973 and since then the number of calls increased exponentially per person per day. But what are the implications of this? One is often distracted as to the purpose of the call and why it was made, other tasks are not being completed either. But the benefits are many- speaking to a person from places where one could not with a landline; emergency calls are made from many remote places and often the message is made clear by text to several people at once. But about your calls, which are the most important?

In the reading from I Samuel 3 there was a young boy who was ministering to God under Eli the priest. He was young and learning about God and was not understanding what occurred while he was sleeping. God had called out, “Samuel, Samuel” to the boy. But the boy thought it was his mentor, Eli calling to him, and so he ran and asked what he wanted and needed him to do. This occurred three times. But then Eli instructed him clearly stating what to do. When the boy was back in bed after the third time, again the Lord called, Samuel, Samuel. It is then that the boy answers, “Here I am; Speak, for your servant is listening.” And when the Lord called to him, Samuel answered and received the message that God was going to do something in Israel which would tingle the ears of all who heard the message. He shared what was to occur with Eli. Samuel grew up and became a trustworthy prophet of God.

In those days the word of the Lord was rare and visions were not widespread. The only means God had and has today is direct- in dreams, in experiences and in hearing a message like this that one day God will call you, if he hasn't already done so!

But what are we to do with this responsibility of being called? First of all we need to open your hearts to receive the message and to know that our task is to tell the Good News of Jesus. We need to listen to what God is trying to tell us. And then we do what we are called/ trained/ willing and able to do.

Today we have experienced the waters of baptism through this sacrament and by doing this, we are assured that Glen has been received into God's family. He is just beginning his life as a child of God. But for many of us, by feeling the waters of baptism again, we are assured once again that God is still calling us to serve him. Prayerfully the message of God's call is lost or dropped. As a cell phone requires you to hit a yes or no to answer the call, many people are not responding at all or letting the call be dropped. But God doesn't give up.

God wants you to serve him. IT may be difficult at times, and even go against some matters or rules, but the important thing is to do what God wants you to do.

Jesus and his disciples were going through the grainfields and began to pluck the heads of grain. The Pharisees saw them do this which is not lawful on the Sabbath. But what did Jesus say? He recounted the story from the Old Testament when David and his companions were hungry and in need of food. David went into the house of God, and obtained the bread set aside for the Presence, the stranger, who would be recognized at a special supper and later eaten only by the priests. But the priest gave it to David to eat. Jesus then said, The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath, so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.

Jesus and the disciples then went into the synagogue and there was a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees watched to see what he would do. Jesus asked the man, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save or to kill? He looked around as no one answered. He saw their hardness of heart—turned to the man and asked him to stretch out his hand. He restored it. The Pharisees went out and conspired with the Herodians to destroy him.

Sometimes we are called to make tough decisions- Jesus asked those present whether it was lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath. They said nothing. But they also knew they were afraid to go against the teaching for the sake of good. Sometimes we may be put into situations where you have to swim against the current of the crowd and do what it right. Jesus did a good thing by restoring the man's hand on the Sabbath. He was present in the same room same place and same time. But was he ready to see this man continue to struggle physically?

No, He knew he could change his life. And he did. We need to act when the time is right and often it is now.

As followers of Jesus we proclaim that Jesus is Lord and serve him. By experiencing the waters of baptism, by professing and reaffirming our faith we come to experience God's glory through Jesus the Son of Man. What we know comes from God and we treasure it. We may be afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed by not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken struck down but not destroyed and always remembering Jesus' death so that we may share and show new life in Christ in what we say and do. Jesus is alive in us if we so believe. If we believe this then we want to do this- tell others of this treasure we hold in clay, within our hearts and minds.

We have treasure in our hearts. We understand Jesus' reasons to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath and yet we are not always known for who we are and what we say and believe. Why is this? The message is dropped, the call is not answered or forwarded on, and simply we don't tell it to others.

This is what we are called to do when we get called to serve. Get excited and tell someone else. Get excited and know that others care and tell others that Jesus makes a difference in your life. Tell others of the waters of baptism and how your life is changed and new life begins!

Let us pray

God of grace and love, we praise you and thank you for the story of Samuel's call to serve. We praise you that you still call us no matter how old we are- we can still do so many things. We pray O God that in this moment of silence you will break open again our hearts of stone so that we will feel your presence and hear your word for us today. Speak to us O God for your servants are listening (SILENCE) Amen