

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 3. 1 Samuel 3. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 3.

INTRODUCTION: THE 80s

So, I confessed a couple weeks ago that I am a millennial.

- And man, wouldn't you know...
- out of the woodworks came the millennial slammers...
- all the millennial hate...wow!

But I do want you to know that I am an early millennial. Ok?

- There's no real formula,
- but the range for the millennial generation
- is those born in the early 1980s...
- all the way to those born in the late 1990s.
- So, essentially, those two decades.

Now, I'm an early 80s kid, ok? And the 80s were legit:

- the Ghostbusters,
- Hammer pants,
- Sweet Child O' Mine. Ok?
- So, lay off your millennial bashing!

But one thing that's interesting for me as an early millennial, is I can remember a time before the cell phone.

- My only lifeline
- to the outside world of my friends,
- up-until high school,
- was the home phone.
- The land line.

You remember this thing?

- I remember our first phone was actually a rotary phone.
 - Now, I think that's just cause dad was cheap,
 - and wouldn't buy us a touch-tone,
 - cause listen, that was vintage in the 80s, yo!
- But then I remember when we got a wall mounted phone
 - with a cord that would stretch
 - around our whole house.
 - Napoleon Dynamite style.
- And it had this shoulder rest on it
 - so my mom could hold the phone with her shoulder
 - and still do things with both hands.

And I remember the sounds...see if you remember these sounds:

- **SLIDE** DIAL TONE – yeah, that's the dial tone. It's strange to think that my daughter may never know that sound.
- **SLIDE** OFF HOOK – Yeah, that'll make your ears bleed! It's when you'd leave the phone receiver off the hook.

- **SLIDE** BUSY SIGNAL – That’s the busy signal.
 - Now this sound is almost totally lost to antiquity as well,
 - because of a new little invention that showed up
 - called call waiting.
 - Which we still have.
 - That little beep interrupting your current call
 - Telling you that someone else was calling you.

EXPLAIN: CALL WAITING

And that’s what I’m calling this sermon today: **SLIDE** CALL WAITING

I just want to let you know right off the bat that...

- God wants to speak to you.
- God wants to call to you.
- But you’ve gotta click over when you hear that little beep.

We believe in a God who speaks to us...

- who calls to us.
- We believe in a God who is living and active
- and who still speaks to us!

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ILLUSTRATION: WAYS GOD SPEAKS

And God speaks to us in many different ways. Ok? I think for many of us we are secretly wanting God to speak to us in an audible voice. Right?

“Like, if I just hear God speak to me in an audible voice, then I’d certainly obey him!”

You think so? Cause, frankly, the Bible says something different.

- Adam hears God's voice and he hides.
- Moses hears God's voice and he argues with him.
- Jonah hears God's voice, and he runs the other way!

You see, the Bible shows us that even when the audible voice of God is heard, it's difficult to heed the call.

But I want you to know that even if you don't hear an audible voice, God still wants to speak to you...he just does so in various ways.

- Sometimes God speaks through nudgings...
 - like, sometimes I just feel the Spirit nudge me.
- Sometimes God speaks through dreams and visions.
 - And I know that freaks out some of my Baptists here,
 - but listen, it happens...
- Sometimes God speaks to us as we listen in our prayer times.
 - Just getting alone with him.
 - Pouring out our souls to him.
- Yo, how about the Bible?
 - God has given us his word.
 - The written Word of God is sufficient
 - it is the best,
 - and the most trustworthy way God speaks to us.
- But God also speaks to us through other people.
- God speaks to us through the church.
- God speaks to us through preaching.

We serve a God who speaks to us...who calls to us.

TRANSITION

So, let's look at our text today, because it's all about God speaking...God calling...and what we are to do when we hear that little call waiting alert from the Lord.

1 Samuel 3 starting in verse 1:

1 SAMUEL 3:1

[1] Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

EXPLAIN: SETTING

You see, the setting of 1 Samuel is that we are at the tail end of the period of the judges.

- This is the period before there's a king of Israel,
- and these super shady people called Judges ruled Israel.
- It was a very dark time in Israel's history.
- And one of the phrases on repeat in the book of Judges was,
- "In those days there was no king in Israel.
- Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

And I think

- because they were doing what was right in their own eyes,
- that's what leads us to 1 Samuel 3:1,
- where the word of the Lord was rare in those days
- and there was no frequent vision.

But, in the midst of this dark season,

- Samuel had been ministering to the Lord for years.
- He'd been growing in stature and in favor with the Lord.
- And what we're about to see
- is that God is going to speak to him. To call him.

Verse 2:

1 SAMUEL 3:2-7

[2] At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. [3] The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

[4] Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" [5] and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

[6] And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." [7] Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

EXPLAIN: PROXIMITY

Now, did you notice that Eli and Samuel are doing the exact same thing.

- Eli is lying down,
- and Samuel is lying down.

They are doing the same thing...but in two different places.

- It said that Eli was lying down in his own place.
- But Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD,
 - where the ark of God was.

And THEN verse 4 says: Then the LORD called Samuel.

Now this, I think, is a big deal.

- Before we get to “Then the Lord called Samuel”
- we have to see where he has positioned himself.
 - He’s not in his own place, like Eli.
 - He is in the temple, near the ark.

The ark was the place where the presence of God dwelt.

- Now, Samuel couldn’t be in the actual room with the ark.
- That was forbidden.
- But he was likely in an adjoining room
- where the priests would sleep.

But we’ve seen this all through chapter 2.

- Verse 11: And Samuel was ministering to the Lord.
- Verse 21: And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.
- Verse 26: Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord.

He does all this stuff over the course of years. We think he’s 11 here, so he’s probably been at this for 8 years!

Listen to me: PROXIMITY INCREASES RECEPTIVITY. Proximity increases receptivity!

- Samuel's not cutting corners.
- He's not doing the bare minimum.
- He's not just going through the motions,
- hoping he gets a word from God.
- No! He's trying to get as close as he possibly can to God.
- **And THEN the Lord called Samuel.**

What are YOU doing to get closer to God? Proximity increases receptivity.

Look at verse 8:

1 SAMUEL 3:8

[8] And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.

ILLUSTRATION: COLLEGE

Now, we believe that God still speaks to us. But when people say all the time, "Well, God called me to do this," you ever think, "Really? How do you know?"

- "Bro, I know the girl I'm gonna marry!
- God spoke to me clearly about her.
- You see, she's in my small group,
- and as I left to drive home, it was all green lights,
 - and she has green eyes.
- And that one red one I got stopped at, well,
 - she has red hair.

- And as I stopped I was thinking about her red hair,
- and I looked to my right,
- and there was a billboard for Pantene shampoo
 - with a model with red hair on it.
- And right at that moment,
 - Dream Weaver came on the radio,
- so I know God's calling me to marry her."

- "Hey man, that doesn't really sound like God's calling
- as much as it does a prelude to a restraining order."

TRANSITION

Now, that's a bit of an exaggeration...but, how do you know if God is speaking to you or calling you? How do you discern this stuff?

Well, let me give us something of a grid to work through if you are trying to discern God's call or will for you in a circumstance or decision.

So, these are 4 things to consider when discerning God's call:

POINT 1: WORD OF GOD

First: the **SLIDE** WORD OF GOD.

What does the Bible say about this topic? We MUST always start there!

- Does it command,
- permit,
- or prohibit this?

The Scriptures are the place where the very words of God are written down...and these words are living and breathing and active.

Sometimes people will tell me,

- *“Chris, I just don’t feel God.*
- *I don’t hear God.*
- *I don’t know what he wants from me.”*

And I quickly respond with:

- *“are you in his word?*
- *Are you obedient to what he’s already said?*
- *Why do you think you’d hear something fresh from the Lord,*
- *when you fail to read his very words provided for you?”*

I DO think God can speak to and call to us specifically,

- but he will never do so
- if you aren’t first rooted
- in his general call to every believer
- to know him through his word.

God has commanded every believer some things that we don’t even have to debate about.

- Are you gathering with the church and worshipping him?
- Are you using your gifts to serve the church?
- Are you sharing the gospel with those around you?
- Are you praying?
- Are you digging deeper in your own faith journey?

We announced at our members meeting two weeks ago that our vision for 2021 is to **SLIDE DIG DEEP & REACH WIDE.**

- We want to see you dig deep.
- So, let's get busy digging deeper together.

Don't look for God's specific word for you,
if you haven't been faithful with his written word for you.

POINT 2: WISE COUNSEL

Number two: **SLIDE WISE COUNSEL**

- What do other, wise Christians say about this call?
- Do you have any wise counsel around you to run this by?
- And I'm not just talking your crew, ok?
- Please don't just seek the input of your crew around you.

I want to throw a concept out here that is wildly unpopular:
SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY. Have you submitted yourself to any wise spiritual authority?

Listen to me, one of the clearest ways God will speak to you is
through submitting to the wise counsel of a spiritual authority.

I mean, Samuel runs to Eli.

- When he hears the voice
- and doesn't know what to do
- he runs to the man he has submitted himself under.

When I was preparing to plant this church,

- there were a select few men who I placed myself under.
- I sought wise counsel from these men,
- and essentially asked them to tell it to me as it is.
- Was I hearing God correctly that I should plant this church?
- I submitted under wise counsel.

This is why you need to be in a Discipleship Group, or Bible Study.

This is why you need to be a member of a church, submitted under Godly leadership.

- You need mature men and women of God around you
 - to check these perceived words from the Lord with.
- You need wise people to encourage and build you up,
 - but who will also correct,
 - and confront,
 - and even at times, rebuke you.

Your crew will tell you what you WANT to hear.

Wise counsel will tell you what you NEED to hear.

POINT 3: WAIT ON GOD

Third: **SLIDE WAIT ON GOD.**

- Have you spent adequate time praying about this?
- Have you laid this thing out before the Lord,
- and waited on the Lord for an adequate amount of time?

ILLUSTRATION: MARYSE

I remember when I first met Maryse, I was a Sophomore in college.

But I first saw her, I was like,

- “Woah!”
- It was like this instantaneous:
- “I want to date that girl!”

The problem was that Maryse wasn't as in tune to God's voice back then.

- She just didn't hear it as quickly.

So, we were friends for a long time,

- but man, I knew I wanted more...
- and so, I asked her to date me...

Well, she straight up shot me down.

Which is what I'm training my daughter to do!

- But the first time I asked, she said *no*.
- The second time I asked, she shot me down again.
- The third time I asked her to be my girlfriend,
 - she again said *no*.

Now, how many of you know that when you're waiting for something to happen, man,

- you get nervous...
- you start to get uncertain...
- you start to doubt yourself...

And that's where I got...I was a wreck...but I wanted her!

Well, you know the story:

- that she eventually submitted to the Holy Spirit...
- and I've been blessing her life ever since...

APPLICATION

Have you waited on the Lord?

- Cause in waiting, yes, there are some challenges...
- but in waiting, that's where you begin to see with clarity.
 - I clearly knew I wanted Maryse...
 - because I had to wait and pursue her.

Have you prayed and waited?

- Cause if it's God calling you,
- he won't stop with just a one-time-spark of interest.
- He's going to keep calling you.
- He called out to Samuel three times.

Have you really prayed about it, and waited on the Lord?

POINT 4: WITNESS

And finally: **SLIDE WITNESS.**

- Will this call help me to be a better witness to the unbelieving world?
- Will I have more opportunities to share about the Gospel of Jesus Christ because of this decision?

Again, our vision for 2021 here at Fathom is to **SLIDE DIG DEEP & REACH WIDE.**

- And I'm just telling you,
- God will not call you to do something
- that would not push further his mission forward.
- How will this decision affect my witness?

Is this call primarily about your glory or God's glory?

I think 95% of the whole "God is calling me" stuff can be weeded out right here.

Is this more about you and what you want, or is it about God and what he wants?

TRANSITION

So, I hope these are some helpful grids to run the whole, "I think God is calling me to..." stuff through.

Now, on to verse 9:

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1 SAMUEL 3:9-14

[9] Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

[10] And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." [11] Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

- I didn't even know that God used the word *tingle*...
- I'm changing this sermon to be called "*Tingle Time*".
- Not really, but that would make a great sermon title!

[12] On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. [13] And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. [14] Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

EXPLAIN

Now, this is a difficult message to hear from the Lord!

When most people say they want to hear God speak,

- They're not thinking about the kind of
- HARD message God gave Samuel.
- Are we ready for WHATEVER God may say to us?
- Or are we ready to accept only the "good" message
 - that corresponds with our desires?

This is a message of judgment and punishment for Eli...Samuel's mentor!

But look what Samuel does. Verse 15:

1 SAMUEL 3:15-18

[15] Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. [16] But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." [17] And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." [18] So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

EXPLAIN: SPEAK EVERYTHING

- Samuel is courageous and bold.
- He speaks God's word.
- He speaks everything and hid nothing from him.

Oh church, beware of the preacher or church that doesn't speak everything and hide nothing from you.

- This is one of the primary reasons we preach straight through books of the Bible.
- Because I want you to be informed of the whole counsel of God.

I want to speak every word God has for you, and hide nothing... no matter how difficult it is to understand or to hear.

And now, hear how this chapter ends:

1 SAMUEL 3:19-21

[19] And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. [20] And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. [21] And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

EXPLAIN: CALLING CONFIRMED

Now, I want to end with this:

- Samuel is established as a prophet
- and all of Israel knows and confirms this...
- but only after he obeys God's call on his life.

Did you see that?

- His proximity to God,
- led to receptivity to God's Word,
- and by obeying what God told him,
- he is now confirmed in his calling.

Some of you don't need a new word from God today.

- He's already spoken to you!
- You don't need a new word...
- you need to go back to THE word,
- and you need to listen to it again,
- and you need to obey it completely!

CONCLUSION

So, let me ask you this?

- What is God speaking to you about?
- What's going on in your life,
 - and you hear that little call waiting
 - beep from the Lord?
- Where do you need to say:
 - *"Speak, Lord, for your servant hears"*

INVITATION

Maybe you've never heard God's voice...

- but today, maybe for the first time...
- you feel like you might be hearing him.

It doesn't even have to be your first time in church...

- yo, Samuel had been serving the Lord for years
- before he heard this call from God.

If there is a conversion moment for Samuel, this might be it.

- Maybe you've been in church for a minute,
- but today is the first time you're feeling or hearing that call...
- that desire to follow Christ.
- That's the call waiting!

And I'd implore you to answer that call! Just say,

- *"Jesus I give you my life!*
- *Speak, Lord, for your servant hears!"*

If you hear God's word,
and discern God's word,
and then obey God's word...
your calling will be confirmed.

Just like Samuel.

And I want to commend to you that as we dig deep and reach wide together this year at Fathom, verse 11 is for us, too:

"Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle."

It's tingle time!

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *Making a Prophet*.
- Martin, Joby. *Speak for Your Servant Hears*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The First Book of Samuel.