

Eli is the high priest of Shiloh. It is normal that the sons of the High Priest would follow dad into ministry. Eli's sons were terrible pastors. Yes, pastors are human too and some of them are simply not very good. So we read in 1 Samuel 2: 12

"Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord, or for the duties of the priests to the people"

One of the things the sons would do is to eat of the meat that was supposed to go for sacrifices. The upshot of this sad affair is that God decides new leadership is needed. So who does God pick? Samuel. As an infant he is dedicated to the Lord and given into Eli's care. He is now training to be high priest and prophet. Samuel is considered to be a young boy at the time we read of his calling.

We are going to do something a little different this morning. Instead of me giving you some words, to ponder, I thought today would be a good singing sermon. I am going to sing, and you get to listen to me. Well that would not be good. Trust me. Here is an idea, why don't we sing together. So for my singing sermon we are going to look at the hymn, Here I am Lord. So we begin by singing the first verse followed by the chorus. Please open your hymnbooks to hymn number 574. Keep it open for my message this morning. Let's sing the first vers3

A big theme of the Old Testament is God hearing the prayers of people who are oppressed. This is especially true of the Exodus. So the opening verse says God, the Lord of Sea and Sky, is hearing the cry of people. God knows that people are hurting. And who is going to do the saving. Well, God does. The verse says, my hand will save. Now how does God most of the time do the saving. He works through people.

Guy on the Roof

This is an old story about a guy who is stranded on the roof in a flood. This hits home for those who have been hit by hurricanes. As the flood waters rises, the guy prays. A boat shows up. Can I pick you up. The guy responds. No I am waiting on God. A second boat comes up. He turns that boat away for the same reason. At last a helicopter shows up. He turns that away as well. The water comes up and the guy dies. In heaven, he complains, God where were you? God says, look, I sent you two guys in a boat, and a helicopter, what more did you need?

You see, whether we like it or not, God chooses to work through people. Now truth be told, we get that, as long as the people are not us. You see we think God only chooses the wise, the extremely faithful, the good people of the world. We often don't see ourselves as worthy of God's attention. Well guess what! God always chooses people you least expect. Go down the list, David, Peter, Paul, all of them had their issues. Samuel is just a small boy. In fact we learn that when God calls Samuel, Samuel has yet to know the Lord. So Samuel isn't even a good priest at this point. He is an intern. So being not qualified is an excuse. If God works through people than it is people who answers the call to respond.

The trick of course is found in the chorus. Here I am Lord, It is I lord. I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Bob Pearce Picture

In 1947 Bob Pierce met Tena Hoelkedoer, a teacher, while on a trip to China. He stopped outside an orphanage and noticed a battered and abandoned child named White Jade. Bob asked Tena, what about this child. The orphanage was full. Tena lifted the child and placed her into his arms and asked him, "What are you going to do about her?"

This is the start of World Vision. God may not be calling us to create large Christian ministries. But God is always seeking people to join God in ministry. Chances are you will not get called through a vision like Samuel. Chances are it will be a gentle push, a movement of the Holy Spirit if you will. But it begins by being open to listening. If God is your God, and God is the savior of the world. Than we, you and I are called to be open to listening.

Let us sing the Second verse. I will speak my word to them. Who shall I send? Samuel will become the voice of God. We too are called to be God's voice in the world. Now there is nothing more scarier to people than the word Evangelism. While some people have the gift of reaching those far from God, most of us do not. But there are lots of ways we can speak God's word to people. The saying goes, you may be the only page of the Bible anyone ever reads. So kind words, acts of generosity, hugs and tears are ways to speak God's voice. There are lots of nice and good people in the world. Many of them are not Christ followers. Many of them are actually kinder than some Christ followers. The trouble is while we may sing, Here I am Lord, what we really mean deep down, is Oh Lord, please sends someone else!

So as we carry God's message to the world in all of its forms, pray that God will use you to spark an interest. This means when opportunity arises, and it will if you pray for it, ask the Holy Spirit to provide a way for you to explain why you are sent by God. What I am talking about is that the world needs to hear why we are kind and caring people. It is of course, because Jesus cares for us. So share that when God provides a way.

Let us sing the last verse. I will tend the poor and lame. My Hand will save. Finest bread I will provide. I will give my life for them. Who shall I send?

This verse certainly mentions all the people in the world that need help. But it is also about salvation and the joy of knowing you are one with God. Isn't it the best thing in the world to be a Christian? If this is so, than the world needs to hear the news. It is why it is called Good News after all.

Mission Trip

At Vernon Lutheran Church in Mukwonago I initially served as a co-pastor. The other pastor was taking a group of people to work at an orphanage in Haiti. I did a message about God calling us to do something significant in the world. I said that there could be someone right now in this sanctuary that God is calling. There was probably about 150 people in worship that morning. After my message a recently retired man came up to me. Way to go pastor. For whatever reason, I just feel I have to go to Haiti. The man was afraid. The man was doing something out of his comfort zone. But he heard the call, and said he would go if God would lead him.

Whatever God may be calling you what keeps us in our comfort zone is simply fear. We don't feel qualified, we wonder how things will work, and too often we choose the easy way out which is to say no. But my friends, this is why faith in the face of fear, grows people. Hey that is pretty good isn't it. Let's repeat it.

Faith in the face of Fear, grows people.

It begins with God calling, but God also leads us. Amen.