

Epiphany 2—January 14, 2024

Text: How Do You Know It's Jesus?

Theme: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

In our Old Testament reading for today, I Samuel 3, we are told that "... the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision." Apparently, the Lord was silent for His people. The people wanted direction from the Lord, but the Lord was not giving them the direction they wanted, so they were not listening, and the Lord remained quiet. That's how the Lord is. If you're not listening, He will not shout. Imagine what those people would have given if the Word of the Lord had just been written down so that they could hear Him speak any time they wished! Imagine how they would have rejoiced if they had what we have! It is ironic that we already have what they so desired, and yet we so often have to badger people to just read the Word of the Lord occasionally.

The prayer Samuel speaks in our Old Testament reading is a prayer that is useful for all of us whenever we open the Scriptures. "Speak Lord! Your servant listens." Any time we want to hear the Lord speak, all we have to do is open the Bible and read. One wonders, however, how Samuel knew that it was the Lord. I mean Satan certainly has the ability to speak to us in our dreams. He can send us visions. I imagine that all of us have had sinful dreams in which we participate in some kind of unholy activity. That didn't

come from God. That either came from Satan or from our own sinful flesh that is always happy to serve Satan. How did Samuel know? He had Eli. Later on in the chapter he told Eli all that the Lord had said to him, and the message was a message of condemnation against Eli because he had allowed his sons to be blasphemous heathen. Eli surely had his faults but he was open and honest with Samuel and said that the Lord spoke truly to him.

In the Gospel, they had Jesus himself to confirm for them what they heard. Was this truly the Messiah? Jesus fulfilled all the signs and wonders that the prophets had foretold and we have the Scriptures that recorded all of that. I once had a person tell me that the Lord spoke to her in tongues and she gave His prophecy in tongues. I asked why? Why would the Lord tell you something He has not already written down in the Holy Scriptures so that we can confirm everything with His Word? Why would the Lord tell you something new when He is very clear in the book of Revelation where he says,

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

There is no new Word from the Lord needed. He speaks to us through His Holy Word any time we wish to listen and we never have to wonder if what we think we hear is true. We can confirm everything by reading the Word. Imagine being able to hear the Word of the Lord anytime you want! Imagine being able to eat the body and blood of Christ every week! Imagine never having to wonder if something is true or false! We have all of that given freely to us in the Word of God.

When Samuel was alive, the people of God desperately wanted to hear the Word of God but He was silent. Today, God is very vocal, but so few people listen. As in Samuel's time, many still do not want to hear God speak because what He says does not conform to what they want to believe or what they want to do. Like Eli's sons were dealt with for their choices to ignore God, so to today, those who do not listen to God will be dealt with by God. Be like Samuel. Open God's Word every day and pray, "Speak Lord, your servant listens." Even if you only read a few verses, take advantage of the gift God offers you every day and you will be amazed at all that He has to say to you, and you will be amazed at how relevant it is for your day.

I have promised many times that you will be amazed and blessed if you take God seriously. If you doubt me, ask someone who reads and studies His Word every day and they will concur.

Nothing brings us more peace and more strength in this world than regular consumption of the Word of God. It seems so simple. It is that simple. Want more peace in your life? Want more strength to combat the forces of evil in this world? Then read the Word of God every day. Receive the body and blood of Christ every week and participate in Bible Study with someone who knows more than you do about the Scriptures. It really is that simple. The Lord knows us. That's why He keeps it simple.