

THE CALL YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS

1 Samuel 3

We hate to miss a call. That is why we refuse to be unplugged. I have watched persons almost unable to turn their phones to airplane mode when the flight attendant makes the answer that the front door is closed. We provide messages so we do not miss a call—"I am not available to take your call." "Your call is very important to me." "Please leave your name and number."

This chapter is about a call successfully completed, not missed. The story has three characters: Yahweh, Samuel, Eli. Question: Which of these persons is the most important one in the successful completion of call?

1. Of course, it is God you say.

She was a veteran of children's sermons. Every object ultimately pointed to Jesus. He was the final answer. The pastor brought a live squirrel. "What do I have?" She replied, "I know somehow it is Jesus, but it sure looks like a squirrel to me." Yahweh is the most important person in this call story.

READ 1 SAMUEL 3:1-4a It was the chaotic days of the closing years of the Judges period. The word of Yahweh was rare. God began to work in the life of Samuel (2:11, 18, 21, 26). God called to Samuel, initiated it.

Is that your story? It certainly is mine.

I had the privilege of having Christian parents. Dad was a schoolteacher when I was born. At age 27, Dad determined that God called him into vocational Christian ministry. From age 4 I was a PK. With God at work through cooperation of home and church, I trusted Jesus at age six.

Sunday, Aug 15, 2010, was a traumatic day for the Mitchell family of Payson, AZ. Their four-year-old son Travis wandered away and was missing for 18 hours. Wyman Kendall joined the search. "Are you Travis Mitchell?" Response was "Yes, how did you know my name?" God called Samuel by name. He called me by name during one revival service in August.

2. Of course Yahweh is the most important person in the story, or could it be Samuel?

God indeed called Samuel, but Samuel made the decision to respond. If Samuel had not said YES to this call, it would have been a missed call.

It was in the predawn darkness, and the phone call broke the dead silence. It was the crying voice of my daughter Ronda. "Dad, will you come get me?" In my fog, where are you? She was upstairs in her bedroom and had had a nightmare.

It was in the predawn darkness, and the call broke the dead silence. Samuel heard his name called and ran to Eli. Two more times, then he responded. **READ 1 SAMUEL 3:10** Samuel responded to the call.

Is that your story? It certainly is mine.

Pineywoods Baptist Encampment is between Groveton and Corrigan. RA camp in summer 1962. Standing next to Billy Durham. I responded to the invitation as I was convinced that I was hearing the call of God to ministry.

I identify with the boy Samuel. Do you remember what Lloyd Bentzen told Dan Quayle in the VP debate in 1988? If David were here today, he says, "Ron, I knew Samuel. He was a friend of mine, and you are no Samuel."

3. Who is the most important person in this story? Of course, it is Yahweh who calls. Or is it Samuel who said Yes? **Or could it be Eli who actually facilitated the connection between God and Samuel?**

Eli was a priest, Samuel's mentor and teacher. Physically he was almost blind, but spiritually he was perceptive. He advised the boy Samuel. **READ 1 SAMUEL 3:8-9**

He provided Samuel the instructions to follow. Without the guidance of Eli, I am not sure that Samuel would have become the great leader.

Is that your story? It certainly is mine.

My Eli was my Father. It was my DAD-----

Whose hand I took when age six I trusted Jesus

Who baptized me on the basis of my profession of faith

I rode with him on early Sunday mornings picking up people for church

I watched him come home late after responding to crises

It was my Dad who in the summer of 1962, talked with me, clarified my decision, and permitted me to preach. I was 12 when I preached my first sermon on Sunday evening, Jan. 27, 1963, from his pulpit. It was from 1 Samuel 3. Here are my notes, a piece of Dad's letterhead folded in half.

And by the way, this call from God to Samuel facilitated by Eli was lived out in community. The Israelites accepted God's word through Samuel. (1 Sam 3:20—4:1). I am grateful for the congregations that allowed me the privilege of living out my call.

I have missed many calls in my life, but this call is the one that I could not afford to miss. The call to establish a personal relationship with Jesus and to serve others in ministry.