

Homily - 17 January 2021 - 1 Sam 3:3-19, Jn 1:35-42
By: Fr. Paul Magyar

In today's readings the emphasis is on the call and invitation to discipleship. In the first reading we hear how the Lord calls Samuel. Samuel was the last of the ruling judges in the Old Testament. He anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel and later anointed David to be king. Samuel means "name of God" and also "God heard." Biblical names are functional and here we see how Samuel heard God calling him.

God's voice came from out of the visible glory of God, the Shekinah in Hebrew. It is the cloud of God that rested on mount Sinai and here it rested on God's earthly throne, the mercy seat of God. The mercy seat formed the top of the Ark. It was overshadowed by the outspread wings of the golden Cherubim.

The voice of God came during the night and it awoke Samuel from his sleep, 4 different times. Some parallels here is when the angel appears to Joseph and the wise men in a dream. Angel appears to the shepherds at night, Jesus is born at night. During the fourth time God calls, Samuel responds as Eli instructs him to, by identifying himself as a servant of God who is listening. When Samuel is ready to listen, God responds by delivering to Samuel grace throughout his life: as Samuel grew up the Lord was with his servant, giving him strength and wisdom, guiding him and guarding him; and did not let his words fall, thus preventing him from falling into sin and evil.

The servant disciple is emphasized in Samuel and in the gospel of John. There are two particular disciples that John the baptist chooses that he believes are ready to follow Christ. In any band of disciples there is always an inner circle of those who, because they can receive more, are taught more. They looked, gazed at the "Lamb of God" and their goal in life was revealed to them and they followed Christ. They call Jesus Rabbi, teacher. That term was a modern term in Jesus' time. Only since 30 BC. Not known by the Greeks.

One of the two disciples is Andrew, the name is Greek, it means "man, brave, strong, courageous, warrior." He has a brother name Simon. Simon is a Hebrew name meaning "listen, hearing, flattened nose." Jesus changes Simon's name to another Hebrew name, "Cephas", Peter in Latin which means "rock, stumbling block."

What we see here between the two brothers Andrew and Peter the first two official disciples of Christ, the initial requirements of being a

disciple. Same as with Samuel, the disciple needs to listen well and hear the word of God. Once the disciple accepts and follows the word of God, the disciple needs to be firm in faith as a stumbling block/rock is firmly embedded into the ground. God will deliver the disciple strength, bravery, courage and the resilience of a warrior. No matter how many times the world of sin will make the disciple trip and fall flat on his face (flattened nose), the disciple will be able to stand back up and move forward.

Praying for all of you

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