*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 19 - 24

“Mexico Youth Mission Trip”

**Monday, June 19 1 Samuel 3:1-10**

*“The Lord called out, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’”*

 As a young boy serving in the Lord’s house, Samuel is stirred in the night by the voice of God. Samuel’s recurring self-announcement (“Here I am; you called me”) is the expression of those who volunteer themselves for service. He is placing himself at the disposal, at the beck and call, of his master. Samuel is willing to serve, but he is confused about the identity of the one calling him for he is still inexperienced in the ways of God (“he did not yet know the Lord.”) He has not yet experienced God in the way that leads to an intimate and lasting relationship with God. That will soon change.

 His willingness to serve, together with his childlike acceptance of religious instruction, prepares Samuel to experience God in a new way. His lack of knowledge of God leads to confusion in this moment of call, but eventually Eli, a man who at some point in his past understood and appreciated the ways of God, discerns that it is God who is calling the youth. Samuel is about to enter into a new experience with God.

*Here I am, Lord, it is I, Lord; I have heard you calling in the night. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 20 1 Samuel 3:11-21**

*“Samuel replied: ‘Yes, your servant is listening’”*

 God’s Word has a renewing and transforming force for all who respond to his call. The powerful spoken word of God in this passage transforms Samuel. At the beginning, he is a young intern priest who does not know the Lord or the Lord’s ways with people. He is unaware of God’s voice or call and seems naïve about Eli’s leadership. But at the end of the chapter, he is a bold prophet announcing God’s intentions to the elder priest. He has become the regular means of prophetic revelation and is widely recognized in Israel as God’s authorized spokesman. God is with Samuel as he matures, and he continues to reveal himself to Samuel through his word.

 The purpose of God’s Word is both to *inform* us and to *form* us. God knows all about us, for he created us, but we can know nothing about him unless he tells us. God speaks to us: not only to move us to do what he wants, but to enable us to know him so that we may love him and, in love, obey him. God’s Word tells us what God has done and is doing, and calls us into a personal relationship with the loving Lord himself.

*I will go, Lord, where you lead me; I will hold your people in my heart. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 21 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

*“Samuel did as the Lord instructed him”*

 Saul has been anointed by the prophet Samuel as Israel’s first king, but he has failed in his kingship because he has rejected the Lord’s authority over him. Now God sends Samuel to anoint another to become king, one who will accept God’s authority over him in principle and will genuinely repent when he fails to follow it in practice. The new king will be God’s choice, and his name is David.

 The man after God’s own heart turns out to be an unassuming boy! Looks can be so deceiving that we actually miss the very thing we are looking for. God sends Samuel to find a new king. But he would have missed David entirely because David does not look the part. Just as David as a new king is easy to overlook, so King Jesus was overlooked because he did not appear as people were expecting. When you and I consider the qualities of the people around us, we are inevitably influenced by what we see with our eyes. But God sees things we miss, and we may often be surprised by the people he chooses to accomplish his purposes.

*I desire, Lord, to be a person after your own heart. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 19 - 24

“Mexico Youth Mission Trip”

**Thursday, June 22 1 Samuel 17:1-58**

 *“I’ll go fight this Philistine”*

 David’s dramatic victory over Goliath has become a classic for the ages. It contains all the elements of great literature. Many of us became familiar with the details of the story in our early childhood and with good reason. Who among us has not felt the terror caused by a bully like Goliath, the giant of a man who boasts as though he is invincible and appears to have the goods to back up his bravado? And who of us can resist the innocence of the young shepherd boy who simply cannot understand why this tormentor is permitted to defy the armies of the living God?

 It is the story of sling and stones verses sword, spear and javelin; of defiant military aggression versus purity and faith. This account has been dear to millions over the centuries precisely because right is victorious over might; unlike too many of our own experiences. The story illustrates the promise of God that he is for us and, while in our present circumstance we may feel weak, we “can do all things through Christ who gives us the strength” (Philippians 4:13).

*When I am weak in my own resources, Lord, I am strong in yours. Amen.*

**Friday, June 23 Luke 2:41-52**

*“Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man”*

 The annual trip for the Passover was one of the highlights of the Jewish year. For Jesus’ family the trip from Nazareth would have taken three days. On this particular occasion, Jesus remains behind in Jerusalem. Only after a day’s travel do his parents discover he is not with friends among their fellow travelers.

 By the time they find their son, he has been missing for three days – one day out from Jerusalem, another day back, and one day looking for him. They discover Jesus among the teachers in the temple, listening to them, asking questions, and giving reply. Even at this young age, Jesus has amazing knowledge of the things of God. A frustrated Mary asks her budding adolescent how he could have behaved this way, giving his parents a major anxiety attack. Jesus’ reply is just as direct: “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” Those who know God have, in a sense, two families – the biological one in which God has placed them and the spiritual one they have because they know him.

*I continue to grow in my relationship with you, Lord. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 24 James 2:14-26**

*“Faith without works is dead”*

 The central theme of James is practical Christianity. A Christian is not someone who merely hears the words of Jesus and believes in them, but who also is doing what Jesus asks. Here, of course, James is merely repeating what Jesus himself so often emphasized: “listen to my teaching and obey me.” The result of being merely hearers and not doers is that we deceive ourselves into believing that we are something which we are not. Attempting to live a life of faith which does not demonstrate itself in appropriate works is dead.

 It is important to understand the distinction between “works of the flesh” and “works of the Spirit.” When the Apostle Paul says that we are saved by faith, not by works, he is speaking of “works of the flesh” which are “works” that originates with us and, as such, are unable to produce salvation. When James speaks of “works” he means the works of the Spirit which clearly *do not* originate with us but rather in God himself. True Christian faith is faith that is revealed in the doing of work that is guided and empowered by the Spirit of God.

*Show me the work you have for me, Lord, and I will do it. Amen.*