

Leader Guide

Here I Am

Winter 2025 | Week 6

Message Date 2/16/2025

THE GOAL

This week we had the fun privilege of Pastor Tim and Pastor Craig tag teaming a message from 1 Samuel 3. The key point that comes from Pastor Craig and Pastor Tim is the idea of the difference between the sacred and the secular. This week Pastor Craig also addressed church hurt. We're not going to spend a long time on this. The goal this week will be focused on differentiating the secular from the sacred.

MY STORY

- 1) If you had to be trapped in a TV show for a month, which one would it be and how would you survive?
- 2) If you had to wear a warning label, what would it say?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

This this week, Pastor Craig addressed something called church hurt. I want to address it without spending too much time in the details or what actually caused it. Meaning, I don't want to gossip about the things that have happened to us in the past. The reality is that church hurt comes from people misrepresenting God's heart in their words and actions. Because of this, people have walked away from their faith thinking that somehow the representatives of God are actually God.

- 4) If you have experienced some form of church hurt in the past, what did you do to heal from it?

Leaders, this is an area I want to encourage you to be careful. It would be easy to get caught up in gossip and allow people to vent and say bad things about their previous churches. This is not the point of this question. The point of this question is to help people recognize how God helped them overcome the flaws and mistakes that others may have done to them. This is not to make it OK or to say that it's OK. It is to recognize simply that it happened and to allow God to help them heal from it.

The first thing to remember is that healing is a choice. I have to choose that God is greater than the people who made the mistakes. I love people, but people can say and do some mean and dumb things.

- 5) The thread from Pastor Tim's message was "where we direct our eyes determines our destination." What are some of the ways that we can keep our eyes focused on Jesus today?

It may seem simple but praying to God, staying connected to His community and worshipping are the fundamentals in keeping our eyes focused on Jesus. What are some other ways?

1 Samuel 3 (NLT)

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

² One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God.

⁴ Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!"

"Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" ⁵ He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.

⁶ Then the Lord called out again, "Samuel!"

Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."

⁷ Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. ⁸ So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. ⁹ So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

¹⁰ And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

¹¹ Then the Lord said to Samuel, "I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. ¹² I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. ¹³ I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them. ¹⁴ So I have vowed that the sins of Eli and his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings."

Samuel Speaks for the Lord

¹⁵ Samuel stayed in bed until morning, then got up and opened the doors of the Tabernacle as usual. He was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him. ¹⁶ But Eli called out to him, "Samuel, my son."

"Here I am," Samuel replied.

¹⁷ “What did the Lord say to you? Tell me everything. And may God strike you and even kill you if you hide anything from me!” ¹⁸ So Samuel told Eli everything; he didn’t hold anything back. “It is the Lord’s will,” Eli replied. “Let him do what he thinks best.”

¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable. ²⁰ And all Israel, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. ²¹ The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh and gave messages to Samuel there at the Tabernacle.

- 6) In thinking back through Chapter 2 about Eli’s other sons Phineas and Hophni, how did they differ from Samuel? (If you need to review, go back and read the second half of Chapter 2.)

One of the main things that Pastor Craig and Pastor Tim pointed out was that these men lived a life that dishonored God. They lived a very secular life. Even though they were called to be in the realm of the sacred and they were priests and sons of a priest, they didn’t behave this way. In contrast, Samuel was raised by Eli, the same man, and yet chose to lean into the sacred. He served before the Lord.

- 7) What is the difference in modern days between the sacred and the secular? Take a moment and give some examples of things that we would consider sacred.

While we don’t have the temple and the Ark of the Covenant and all the things that God called sacred in the temple, our lives are meant to be set apart as sacred. The Word of God is sacred; I should love it. Worship is sacred; I should lean into it. Being a part of the Sunday morning community is sacred. You as a Jesus-follower, and my friends who are Jesus-followers, are sacred. Even people who don’t know Jesus still bear the image of God because they are created in His image; that’s sacred. What else?

- 8) One of the key things that Samuel did to lean into the sacred was listen to the voice of God. God is speaking today to His people. What are you doing to hear the voice of God in your life?

The first place and the final place absolutely needs to be that you are in the Word of God. I can hear the voice of God speak to me, but if it doesn’t line up with the Word of God, it’s not God. And I can sit there and listen and listen and listen and hear nothing, but if I’m not in the Word how can He speak? God speaks to us through His Word first. If I don’t have that grounding, I will never hear Him in other ways.

- 9) From the passage, had Eli received warnings previously about his son’s and his behavior? Why do you think God singled out Samuel in this moment?

In verse 13 God tells Samuel that He had warned Eli that judgment was coming upon his family forever. Meaning he had received warnings from God. I think Samuel was obedient. The passage says that he was sleeping in the tabernacle when God first spoke to him. I’m not sure if that makes a difference about location, but it definitely says something about Samuel. He loves the Lord and wants to be near Him.

- 10) How did Eli receive the news that Samuel told him?

It seems as though he accepted it.

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection Questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) Thinking about the thread “where we direct our eyes determines our destination,” what are your eyes focused on?
- 2) Today God is speaking to His people. What are you doing to be able to listen and hear His words?
- 3) What is God asking you to stop or start in your life?