

«Behold, I make all things new »

(Revelation 21 :5)

Lent Retreat 2022

I AM LOVED

1 Samuel 3: 1 - 10

At the beginning of this spiritual retreat, we look into Prophet Samuel and God's call to him. We measure our life's issues and our relationship with God in comparison to how the young prophet Samuel did; we then calmly and in a meditative manner examine why God has chosen Samuel; is it because He loved him? And why did Samuel respond and accepted God's call? Is it because he loved God? The answer to those questionings is actually in this passage, and it is that the call is but a love relationship between God and us. We also perceive the means God uses to call upon us, and then we understand that the Lord does not leave us alone on the path; He actually escorts us in each step we take.

God calls Samuel "the Boy" (1, 3) – meaning the young or maybe at the beginning of his youth years – for prophecy. Nevertheless, God calls us at any age; we can either ignore His presence and live a careless spiritual life that may prolong to our entire life or we become responsive to Him and our life changes upside down.

The call for prophecy in this passage seems quite clear; for what is Prophecy other than knowing God's will. And God's people were accustomed to listening to His prophets and act according to their words as these words spring from the Lord.

Samuel was called at night. It is known that the night is governed by silence. And in the silence, we can listen deeper to the voice of the Lord. We can thus distinguish His work in our daily life. At night, the word of the Lord comes through our dreams just like the voice in Samuel's dream. This dream is repeated to ensure that it is not like any regular dream that we may have once and may not have a second time. Samuel's dream was repeated incontestably to prove that it is a voice from above conveying a Godly will.

We discover that a lot have dreamt at night and the Lord was talking to them through their dreams. In the New Testament for instance, the Lord has spoken to

Prophet Joseph saying: “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Of course, we will not only wait for the night to build our relationship with God. What is required is to allocate quality time to our Lord, a time governed by silence and meditation to be able to hear His voice. And similarly, to all spiritual retreats, there will be moments of daily silent meditation to achieve this purpose. And as much as we are capable of hearing and understanding “Listen Israel”, we will hear God addressing us personally and we will discover that He knows us well and feels our pains and joys and

any situation we are going through. Through listening to God’s voice, we will discover that He loves us; and what a beautiful moment it is when you rest assured that you are loved by your God.

After listening to God’s call, Samuel felt God’s love towards him and shouted saying: “here am I Lord.” In this particular state where Samuel was prepared, the features of the call started becoming clear. God wants such type of prophetic surrender to Him, for He is so sensitive and does not accept half solutions. He does not accept that we stay at the door, instead he wants us to enter the depth of the dwelling.

Samuel understood that the Lord needed him for a specific message, but he was not aware of it yet. He also knew that the Lord insists on hearing his final and firm stance from which there is no turning back no matter the difficulties; and knowing that the Lord’s love will never harm him, he said: “Speak; for thy servant heareth.” With these words, started the march towards God’s call and God talked to Samuel and specified to him his new life path. The call does a complete change to our lives; this call is often unexpected. So, when the Lord was aware that Samuels’ heart, ears and all his being were ready to pursue the call, He explained to him the nature of the call he bestowed upon him, and which is prophecy. As if being prepared to accept the call is as important as the call itself.

Each one of us, therefore, should observe themselves in the light of Samuel’s call. Where is the Lord calling us? knowing that the call is for everyone without exceptions. Has the Lord spoken to us? Or will He do so and accordingly we shall wait? Will I perceive His words or will I reject them? These questionings are to be put during this period of fasting, so we can remain alert. Let’s be assertive that every relationship with the Lord starts by discovering His love towards me in person. Then, it continues by living this relationship throughout my everyday life and interpreting its fruits so that one hand I learn to reject all the things that will damage this relationship, and on the other hand, adopt all the things that will make this relationship grow. In summary, it is

a permanent and renewable process, a process of personal maturity and growth to our mind, heart and way of living; it is “METANOIA.”