

## Listening to God and Knowing Jesus!

**SPRINGLINE PARISH – LIVING NEW YEAR 2018 WITH GOD! – EPIPHANY 2 YEAR B 2018**

READINGS: 1 Sam 3. 1-10 (11-20), Revelation 5. 1-10, Jn 1.43-51

### Introduction

Two weeks ago at our service on the New Year's Day, we had looked at all the three readings which gave us a clear New Year message for us!

1. Ponder and treasure in your heart what God has done! (Gospel)
2. You are an adopted child of God and you can call God "Abba! Father!" (Epistle)
3. You are blessed by God! (Old Testament, Book of Numbers)

Today the Lord is again speaking to us in the Word of God that we heard. All the three main readings have a message each for us.

1. Learn to listen to God!
2. Only Jesus can open the seals of the scroll of life!
3. Jesus knows us - who we are and where we are today!

The first message is from the first reading from the Book of Samuel is:

#### **1. Learn to listen to God** (1 Sam 3. 1-10 (11-20))

This message comes across strongly from the story of Samuel and his prophetic call from God. All sorts of things happen in our lives – emotional crisis, disappointing relationships, sickness, fear of the future. We need to listen to what God is saying to us. The first reading the story of Samuel will help us learn to listen to God and His will. The reading speaks to us of the circumstances of the call of Samuel to be a prophet.

Verse 1: *"The Word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread!"*

Verse 3: *"Samuel was lying down in the Temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was."*

Verse 4: *"Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!'"*

Verse 7: *"Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and Word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him."*

Verse 8: *"Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy."*

Verse 9 and 10: *"Speak, Lord for your servant is listening."*

Verse 19: *"As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground."*

We hear in verse 1: *"The Word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread!"* Those who have spiritual visions could be having a gift of the Holy Spirit. There is something wrong and lacking in a Church when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not manifest as it was a sad situation in Israel those days. But I think St Michael's is lucky because we do have persons who have the gift of visions. I know of at least three to four persons who have this gift which I think is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

We hear in verse 7 that Samuel did not know the Lord yet. I think this is the problem with most of us. We do not know the Lord; so even if the Lord speaks to us we fail to hear him because we do not know how to listen. Very interesting verse! So many things happen in our lives, so many people we meet, but do we *perceive* the Lord's presence in all these events and happenings?

We need spiritual mentors and guides in our growth in spiritual life. Samuel was lucky to have the wise priest Eli. He was able to guide Samuel to encounter the Lord and perceive his presence and recognise his word. We need to say this prayer often in our lives. We need to ask the Lord, like Samuel, *"Speak, Lord for your servant is listening"* and listen when he speaks!"

#### **1. Only Jesus can open the seals of the scroll of life!** (Revelation 5. 1-10)

Verse 1: *"A scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals."*

Verse 6: *"A Lamb as if it had been slaughtered."*

Verse 9: *"You are worthy!"*

No one is to open the seals which contained the mysteries of the end times.

The mystery of human life and existence – only Jesus has the answer to what we are searching for! Just like the sealed scroll that only The Lamb, namely Jesus, can open, our life is like a sealed scroll. We don't always understand what life is or what it is all about.

But as we heard in the reading, the Lamb Alone is worthy to open the seal and to understand the mysteries. God is in reality not only Creator but also the Almighty who is coming to restore the creation. (v8) This also our faith when we proclaim: "Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!" The third message that we have from the Word of God is :

2. **Jesus knows us - who we are and where we are in life today!** (Jn 1.43-51)

The gospel speaks of the encounter of Nathanael with Jesus and how his life was p changed. Nathanael's experience could be ours too. Philip was called by Jesus to follow him and Philip spoke of Jesus to Nathanael. It is nice to see how Philip testifies his faith in Jesus to Nathanael. Anyway, Nathanael is hardly interested as we see in verse verse 46: "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*" Very cynical words from Nathanael not only about the village of Nazareth but also of Jesus! We are also reminded of the humble beginnings of Jesus.

*Verse 46: "Come and see!":* there is something that we can learn here. If we really know Jesus as Saviour we will take others to Jesus as Philip did. Nathanael went and met Jesus and his meeting transformed and changed his life forever! Many of us are quite cynical like Nathanael when it comes to experience of Jesus. Many don't easily take into experiences of others and testimonies. We are quite like Thomas who told his fellow disciples, "*Unless I see the wound of the nails, and unless I put my finger in the holes that the nails made, I will not believe!*" Nathanael was quite like that!

*Verse 47: "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"*

Just think of someone about whom you spoke badly and when you meet that person he proffers you with the best and the highest complement! This is what happened to Nathanael. He had just made a rather cynical statement about Jesus and Jesus, instead, makes an extraordinary declaration and an extraordinary complement! Here was Jesus, unlike Nathanael, who knew Nathanael to the core of his being. Jesus knows us. He knows us as we really are. He knows us to the deepest depths of our being. He knows us where we are at this moment in our life.

*Verse 48: "Where did you come to know me?"*

*Verse 49: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"*

Nathanael recognised that Jesus was no ordinary man, that he was divine, the Son of God! We are reminded of the words of Thomas, the apostle of Jesus, after he met the Risen Jesus and had seen his wounds and the holes of the nails in his body: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus knows you. He knows where you are in life today at this moment. He loves you. Will you, like Nathanael, like Thomas, like Samuel, like so many faithful saints, acknowledge him as your Saviour and God? Will you accept him as your Creator and God?

God is a God of surprises! We have seen how God surprised Samuel and called him. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, "*what no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man conceived is what God has prepared for those who love him.*" (1 Corinthians 2.9) "*O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways!*" (Rom 11.33) We need to learn to see the footprints of God in our lives as we hear of Moses in his God-encounter and call. "*Then he said, 'Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'*" (Exodus 3.5)

## **Conclusion**

Today the Lord is again speaking to us in the Word of God that we heard. All the three main readings have a message each for us for today and this New Year. (Repeat the three points in the introduction)

[ST Mattapally]