

Introduction:

- I want to talk about the Priority of the Presence.
 - When I say the "Priority of the Presence" I am talking about the importance of having the presence of God in our lives.
 - Our Bible would not have been written if it weren't for people who encountered God and decided to live for Him and write about Him so that other generations might encounter Him too. I.e. Adam and Eve encountered God in the cool of the day after they sinned. Abraham encountered God. Moses encountered God at the burning bush and upon Mount Sinai. The three Hebrew children encountered God in a fiery furnace. Joseph and Mary encountered God. Paul encountered God on the road to Damascus.
 - What is an encounter with God? It is a popular word these days in the church but what does it mean to encounter God?
 - Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines encounter as: 1. to meet face to face, unexpectedly or suddenly. (Saul/Paul) I.e. It is a surprise! 2. it means to have eager and warm conversation. It may be unexpected but very welcomed. (Jesus to Mary at the tomb)
- Our text this morning: *"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord."* (1 Samuel 3:19-20, ESV). God knew the need of Israel. His purpose was always before Him...He will have a family. So He raised up Samuel to be a part of this plan. He is raising up deliverers right here this morning. He wants children sitting here today to be part of His plan.

I. God Raises Up People For His Purpose

- A. God has the end in mind. When God starts something He has the end in mind. I.e. Samuel Saltzman saw himself as pastor of this church. *"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord."* (1 Samuel 3:19-20, ESV).
1. God has the end in mind. He is going somewhere with our lives! What an honor to be known by Him and living to make a difference in this world with Him.
 2. He declares the end from the beginning. Only God can do that! Prophets discern that and speak it. *"...for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"* (Isaiah 46:9-10, ESV)
- B. God desires to raise up prophetic voices among our children that will be nation changers! Children that will encounter His love, know His voice, and speak for Him.
1. Samuel is someone you can learn from, admire and desire to follow after. It was said of Him: (None of His Words fell to the ground!)

- C. Key: Samuel Grew. This is a common theme in the first three chapters of First Samuel. We have the description of Samuel's growth.
1. It makes a difference where you grow up at.
 2. Hannah and her husband positioned Samuel to grow up in the Presence of God.

"Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord." (1 Samuel 2:21, ESV). Look where he grew! In the Presence.

 - a) Hannah had other sons and daughters who grew up at home but NOTE:
 - b) Samuel was growing up in the tabernacle of the Lord. In the presence of God.
 - c) Samuel was becoming great. Great as in size/scope of influence not numerous.
 3. Hannah purposed early on that Samuel would grow up in the Presence of the Lord. Oh, that all parents would purpose to have their children grow in the Presence of God.
 - a) "But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever." (1 Samuel 1:22, ESV) This is while he is a baby!
 - b) Presence - Hebrew word for Presence - pene. "To turn towards, turn to a certain direction. Face, In the meaning "before" in the sense of "in full view of, under the eye of." Hamilton, V. P. (1999). [פנה 1782](#). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 728). Moody Press.
 - (1) Samuel, by his parents, was pointed in the direction of God. He was taught early on to direct his attention toward God! This is so important children. Look in the direction of God. Seek Him where He may be found go after Him.
 - (2) Presence means to live 'in full view' or under the eye of God's gaze. Not hiding.
 - (3) Live looking to encounter the One under whose gaze you live.
 4. Samuel continued to grow. May this always be our testimony! That we continue to grow. I want you to see that he was a child that continued to grow in God.
 - a) "Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man." (1 Samuel 2:26, ESV) grow gavel – grow up, become great.
 - b) He increased in favor! Heb. 'tob' meaning 'goodness'; goodness in so many different ways.
 - (1) If Samuel increased in favor then it meant that those around him would also have opportunity to increase in favor.
 - (2) When you walk in the favor of God others will be impacted by that! Favor makes outreach more fun and enjoyable. Giving away what God has given you. Exporting to others what you have produced in your own life by growth!

II. The Presence Makes All The Difference

- A. The presence makes these first few chapters of Samuel unique. God's presence was on

Hannah's heart. God's presence was what Samuel grew up in.

1. You can't have an encounter with God without His presence.
 2. The presence is the start of every encounter.
 3. We purposely position ourselves in His presence that we might encounter Him.
 - a) As simple as "I know He is here."
 - b) As powerful as going out in the Spirit.
 - c) As humbling as knowing the closeness of His love.
- B. Another unique thing about Samuel is his capacity to minister.
1. *Samuel ministered to the Lord* in the presence of Eli the priest. (1 Samuel 2:11 Ministered to the Lord.)
 2. Elkana went home and Samuel ministered to the Lord.
 3. Minister comes from the Hebrew. - sarat - "minister or serve. It is a higher category of service vs menial employment. One of major uses of the word is the ministry of worship on the part of those who stand in a special relationship to God, such as the priests." Austel, H. J. (1999). 2472 שָׂרַת. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 958). Moody Press.
 - a) Samuel stood in a special relationship with God in worship because:
 - (1) His momma purposed for him to grow up in the presence.
 - (2) He was a gift to his mother that was won in the place of prayer.
 - (3) He served God in the tabernacle under the priest Eli.
 - (4) Eli's sons had no regard for God. They were called worthless men full of sin.
 4. *Samuel was a boy ministering before the Lord* with a Lined Ephod. (garment for the priest). He was carrying out priestly functions while Eli's son were perishing in their sin.
 - a) Ministered before the Lord.
 5. *Now Samuel was ministering to the Lord. And the word of the Lord was rare in that day.*
- C. Three times we are shown Samuel the boy ministering to the Lord.
1. I believe that God wants both parents and children to see this about Samuel.
- D. What do we know about Samuel?
1. He grew up in the presence of God.
 2. He learned early to minister to the Lord.
 3. He learned early to minister before the Lord.
 - a) I minister before the Lord with my life.
 - b) I minister to the Lord with my heart and my mouth.
 - c) Everyone can do this! It is not just for the preachers.

III. The Lord Was With Him

- A. A strange scripture in this story. "*Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of*

the Lord had not yet been revealed to him." (1 Samuel 3:7, ESV)

1. How do you minister to the Lord and not know him? You minister out of the presence that others have brought. You minister out of faith.
 - a) We know from 3:3 that Samuel slept by the ark in the tabernacle. Moses was the reason for the presence in the ark.
 - b) We know Hannah made a vow to the Lord if He would bless her with a son she would dedicate him to the Lord. Hannah was partly responsible for the Presence.
 - c) God's heart for His people was a huge reason for the presence.
 2. Samuel did not know God because he had never heard God speak. He knew history. He knew religious activity. He knew presence but now He is encountering God and God is revealing himself to Samuel.
 3. Hence, "to know the Lord" means to know the will of the Lord who reveals himself through his word. Tsumura, D. (2007). The First Book of Samuel (p. 177). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- B. 1 Samuel 3:19 *"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.*
1. The result of Samuel's growth was that the Lord was with him! Will this be your testimony? Are you still growing...moms and dad? Are your children ready to grow ?
 2. This is a common theme of those chosen by God to impact the nations or to make a difference in the lives of people. "The Lord was with him!" Ie. Stonewall Jackson
 3. I can do anything when I know the Lord is with me! So can you!
- C. The Lord was with him.
1. None of his words fell to the ground.
 2. He was established as a prophet of the Lord. God wants to establish some children here this morning to be His voice in days ahead. Will you be that voice!

Conclusion:

- *"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord."* (1 Samuel 3:19-20, ESV).
- *And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord."* 1 Sam. 3:20.
- When you know the Lord and are known by Him you will be known by many! From Dan to Beersheba people will know you are marked by God.