



SERMON RECAP

APRIL 12, 2026

2nd Sunday of Easter

“We are called, even you”

1 Samuel 3:1-15

In seminary, every student has to develop their “call story.” We have to know why we are there, and we have to articulate a sense of purpose. It is a good exercise in self-reflection. My call story started on fall day in 1993, when I was a sophomore in high school. It was a day that I realized that I wanted to be a writer. Actually, the feeling was more that I discovered, “I am a writer.”

It was the evening my grandfather died. When we got the news, no one in my family was surprised. He had been suffering with emphysema for quite some time. I had visited him just a few days before and had a feeling that was my “goodbye.” So when my Mom got the phone call and came into my room to tell me, there was little surprise, but there were a lot of emotions. My emotions were all over the place.

There was sadness for my loss but also for my mom and grandma. There was relief he was not suffering, and a little bit of guilt for feeling relief. There was joy at knowing he was with Jesus. It was a lot for a 15 year old boy to process, and as I was getting ready to leave to be with family at my grandma’s house, I saw a notebook on the floor. I picked it up and immediately felt a sense of calm.

In that moment I felt a conviction - that I still believe was from the Holy Spirit - that writing was my gift. I knew that I wanted to write about it. It was a moment of clarity, the likes of which I have only experienced a couple of times in my life. A few minutes later, while waiting with my Mom for my Dad to get in the car and drive to Grandma’s, I decided to share this epiphany with her.

“I know what I want to be when I grow up,” I said.

She said simply, “You are going to be a minister.”

I sat there in silence for the rest of the ride. It was not something I had ever considered, and I did not enter seminary for another 10 years, but her prophetic call upon my life was something I could not escape. Over the next ten years I shared my mom’s vision with friends, pastors, and even a girl I was starting to date. They all confirmed what my Mom’s vision, and eventually I married that girl.

Not every call story is so dramatic. Most of my classmates talked about a nagging feeling they couldn’t

kick, lack of meaning at a job they didn’t enjoy, a conversation with a friend, a suggestion of a pastor, or a crisis that changed the course of their life.

Sometimes however, call stories that have been well-thought out, told and retold, and developed over time can obscure something. People hearing them expect that their call story is going to be that clear.

Or they read a story like Samuel hearing God’s voice in the night and think that kind of thing only happens to Biblical prophets or ordained clergy. As Samuel’s story is told, God’s words are in direct quotes, but I came here to tell you today that God seldom speaks in direct quotes.

God whispers in the night, nudges us to action, nags us to make a change, but very seldom can anyone put God’s calling into direct quotations. Samuel heard something that night and luckily had Eli to help guide him, but just because God doesn’t usually speak in an audible voice, doesn’t mean God isn’t calling you right now.

In fact, I believe God is calling you. Samuel lived in a time when “Lord’s word was rare at that time, and visions weren’t widely known.” Eli was their religious leader, and he had failed. He picked his successors based on nepotism, not merit. He allowed his sons to abuse their power, using their position for personal profit instead of helping the people. It was a time of upheaval, distrust, and misinformation.

The word of the LORD was rare and visions were not known, but the the light of God had not gone out. Out of the noise of despair and confusion came God’s voice in the night.

We are living in a time of confusion, greed, and the failure of public institutions. We are fighting wars of choice, Scripture is being abused in halls of power, righteous people and voices of justice are being obscured. The word of the LORD is rare, but the light of God has not been put out.

You are being called. You are being called to serve, to share, to learn, and to grow. It is a time for us to claim our vision. Visions of God were rare - but here, today - they are real. We have a vision set before us. Empathy, Service, Justice, Discipleship, Connection. These are the things which we have claimed as a church.

What is your vision? God is calling you to be a part of something. Calling is not the privilege of the ordained, it is the spiritual gift of the baptized. God’s light has not been extinguished. Together we can bring the light to a world where visions are rare. We can ensure that the vision of God real.

NEXT WEEK:

Called to trust like Mary; Luke 1:26-38