

Before the Lamp of God Went Out

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the importance of heeding the word of God, focusing on the story of Samuel and Eli in 1 Samuel chapter 3. It emphasizes the rarity of God's word and the consequences of spiritual complacency, urging listeners to seek God's presence and illumination through His word. The sermon challenges individuals to truly hear and obey God's word, highlighting the need for men and women who will faithfully teach and live out the unvarnished truth of Scripture, even when it convicts and challenges. It concludes with a call to respond to God's word with obedience, recognizing the cost of compromise and the blessings of walking in alignment with His truth.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1, Proverbs 29:18, 2 Corinthians 2:17, Psalms 90:8, Amos 8:11, Matthew 4:4

Topics: "Heeding God's Word", "Spiritual Complacency"

Description

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Transcript

This morning, 1st Samuel chapter 3, and verse 1. Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days, and there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place.

The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. And it is this. The lamp of God.

The lamp of God. We know that ever such a lot has taken place up until this point in the history of Israel. Of course they've traveled through the wilderness, and they've had the leadership of Moses under God.

And Moses has been up the mountain and received directions from the Lord, and instructions from him, and so on. As a result, the tabernacle has been constructed, and the form of worship which God had ordained was underway, and so on. The story has unfolded.

I'm not going to try and retell all of the detail. They're now in the Promised Land, and at this point they're settled in this area called Shiloh. And Eli was the high priest.

And there's a reference to his sons there, who were functioning as priests. So at least that's what they were supposed to be doing, and so on. Since we're aware of the directions which God gave in the book of Exodus for the tabernacle, we know that God gave instructions about every detail.

There was nothing left for man to plan, or scheme, or do on his own. God gave him precise details. One of the features of that tabernacle was the golden lampstand.

And that whole subject of the tabernacle, and its significance in its unfolding of God's plan and purpose in the redemptive work of Christ, is a fabulous study. We've done it years ago, and perhaps should do it again. I'm not going to go over all that kind of detail.

But the fact is that the lampstand was situated in an area called the Holy Place. Opposite to the lampstand was the table of showbread. And immediately in front of both of those items was the altar of incense.

And then the second veil, which divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. And inside the Most Holy Place was the Ark of God. And it was there that God chose to have his presence manifest.

There were those of that day who referred to the glory of God's presence as the Shekinah glory. The outshining of God's glory. Significantly demonstrating that God's presence was among his people.

And there's a lot more about the lamp. And I do feel it's very possible we'll talk about that this evening. But when I read here that Samuel, obviously things were different.

They weren't set up the way they were when they were traveling with the tabernacle. With the priesthood engaged in all of the various activities. It's very obvious here that Samuel, you know how he came on the scene from reading the first chapter of this book of Samuel.

God's call was on his life. His mother had recognized that and she'd given him over to be available to God. Remember all that story? And so he's in that tent of meeting that they had at that point in time.

And he's working helping Eli. And at least I know he was opening the door of the area. So when I read in this context of this section of Scripture about the lamp of God.

And the lamp of God had not yet gone out. And Samuel was lying down in the temple at some point somewhere and so on. I think the primary context that I'm reading there has to do with the time.

The literal time of the day or the time of the night more particularly. It was before daybreak that was taking place here. That's how the general way that we would understand what's happening here.

But when I read that phrase, I can't help but feel deeply in my heart that there's far more to it than merely that. Notwithstanding that was very possibly true. But the fact is the lamp of God.

Do you remember we sang earlier, We sense his presence. And there's illumination that comes to our own hearts and to our understandings when he reveals by his light. And he is light.

And then when I read this statement here. The light of God. And then it goes on to say it had not yet gone out.

Now once again whether that has to do with the time of the day or not. I'm putting that all to one side. That is not the important thing that God's impressing on my heart.

But this was a stage when the light of God had almost gone out. That would be just another way of understanding the statement. And we know that in a spiritual sense.

That's exactly what was going on in Israel. And if that needed to be highlighted in any way. It was certainly highlighted by what we just read already.

When the reference was to the high priest Eli. And we'll say a little bit more about that in a few minutes. We hear the judgment that God spoke against the house of Eli.

To Samuel and then through him and so on. So clearly it was a time in the history of the people of God as they were then. When the light of God was very, very dim.

It's also interesting to me that Eli's physical eyes. He probably had cataracts and needed them removed. Sorry I was there last week.

Eli wasn't there by the way. But the fact is even that statement about the man of God. In that chief role as the high priest in the nation.

To have it said that his eyes were dim. He could hardly see. And I think that's borne out in a spiritual sense.

It may be true of your life this morning. That you can hardly see what God is wanting to reveal to you. And in you.

But such was the case then. And in looking at these words in that context. I can't help but at least make a passing comment.

About the condition of our western society. Where we live at this particular point in time. Because I'd like to suggest to you.

That the lamp of God is almost out. In our society at this point in time. You know we don't have to look back very far.

In our own natural history. To be convinced beyond any doubt. That the Christian contribution to our western society.

Has been very, very significant. The Christian contribution. The morality.

The teaching of the Bible. Has impacted our society. And shaped the society in which we live.

And organized so much of our society. In the way that it operates and is run. So much more can be said about this.

But I fail to understand how anyone who is a Bible reading Christian. They're the only kind really. Can fail to recognize that the impact upon our western society.

That has been credited clearly to the Christian gospel. Through the years. But we live at a time.

When once again we can't possibly fail to recognize. That that lamp of God is diminished greatly. It's almost extinguished.

Moreover it seems plain to me. That this is not merely the result of certain individual men or women. Or leaders and so on.

But I see this as a demonic strategy. It's not a new strategy. But we see it plainly in these days.

Someone was talking to me yesterday. And without going into the detail of the conversation. There's a reference being made to.

You know the way people want freedom of speech. And freedom. And you can't discriminate against anyone.

But the irony that was being highlighted in that conversation. Was something that we're all very familiar with. And that's all well and good out there.

In society at large. But Christianity is being certainly isolated. And discriminated against.

No question. I believe that there's a demonic force working against Christ. It's the ultimate anti-Christ spirit and movement.

Which is seeking at this point in time. To delete from our society everything Christian. For all that has been such a blessing.

Even just in a general sense to our society. Is being extinguished. There's a phrase that is used in the computer world.

Which others here know more about than I do. It's not merely that there's this satanic plot. To just delete the information.

But there's this program called bleach bit. This is where it's not just deleting it off the window. That you're looking at on your computer.

It's not even that somehow we're able to just delete it. From the RAM memory in our computer. But it's as though this satanic plot is seeking to bleach bit it.

To erase it. Eradicate it completely. From this society in which we live.

And that's happening at this point in time. And from my understanding of what God is doing. I am not convinced at all.

That God has positioned himself in these days. To simply clean up, if you like. The moral climate of our society.

I do not believe that that's what God has committed himself to. I believe he's doing something quite different. He's doing something on another level altogether.

And by the same token. I don't believe that the God that we're worshipping. And finding information about him recorded here in scripture.

Is identifying himself today. With a worldly, carnal, professing Christian body. Or for that matter individual.

I don't believe that God's doing that. God is not involved in a sort of clean up, tidy up. Band-aid sort of activity at all.

And I'm sure that in making statements like this. About the so-called Christian community. It's not that people are fundamentally insincere.

That's not necessarily the issue. The issue is that they are. That the modern Christianity.

Evangelicalism today is so glaringly shallow. That's a fact. And surely we're deceiving ourselves.

If we try to hide that fact from sight. There's such a casualness. About that which is considered to be.

What God is doing in these days. It defies. It contradicts everything that I'm reading.

Concerning his absolute holiness. And absolute purity. And we sort of come in in such a careless way.

Into his presence. And there's such an emphasis on us as professing Christians. Being comfortable.

Sort this out and sort that out Lord. Because this is something sticking in me here. I'm not comfortable.

Fix this and fix that. There's such a self-centered community. And such complacency.

Think about it. Think about your own life. So we're not just talking about other people outside of our room.

We're talking about ourselves. There's such complacency. About these things.

I don't believe that God will own that at all. Because it's so fundamentally contrary. To the nature and identity of God.

God himself says this in the Old Testament. He said that there's no one that's blushing. We've forgotten how to blush.

This is what God is saying. Do the people who are professing to be Christians today in our society. And what about me? And what about you? Do we feel uncomfortable? Do we blush with the fact that probably for this past week.

You've not even opened the Bible. We've not even withdrawn ourselves from other activities. To get alone with God.

And yet we come on Sunday morning. And we raise our arms and sing our songs. And make a big fuss about the fact that we're worshipping God.

We're not worshipping God. We've done our own thing all week. And now we're doing a religious thing here.

And we imagine that God's happy with that. You know. Could it be true that this week.

Let's ask ourselves. Are we guilty of spending far more time looking at screens of one size or another. Than we have been to prayerfully say.

Speak Lord for thy servant is listening. Speak to me Lord. You know.

I'd like to read something. It's a little longer than I would choose. But let me read this to you.

It's A.W. Tozer. I read this years ago. And it made a big impression on me.

But he said this. He said. Do you realize that most men play at religion as they play at games.

Religion itself being of all games. The one most universally played. The church has its fields.

It has its rules. It has its equipment for playing the game of pious words. It has devotees.

Both laymen and professionals. Who support the game with their money. And encourage it with their presence.

But who are no different in life or character. From many who take no interest in religion at all. As an athlete uses a ball.

So do many of us use words. Words spoken and words sung. Words written.

Words uttered in prayer. We throw them swiftly across the field. We learn to handle them with dexterity.

And with grace. And gain as our reward the applause of those who have enjoyed the game. In the games men play there are no moral roots.

It is a pleasant activity which changes nothing. And settles nothing at last. Sadly the religious game of pious words.

After the pleasant meeting. No one is basically any different. Than from what they were before they started the game.

Words. So the question is. What really is the lamp of God? How should we understand this? As we are looking into this passage here this morning.

The purpose of the lamp of God. This lamp that I mentioned in a little bit more detail a few minutes ago. Was there primarily to reveal the way to God.

Highlighting as it did the table of showbread. The bread of God. Christ himself.

It would highlight the activity of worship at the laver of incense. And then for the one so privileged. It highlighted the way through the second veil.

Into the holiest of all. If we are asking ourselves. If today we are being challenged.

By the progressive disappearance of the light of God. What does that mean? I'm suggesting to you. It's indicating that the presence of God.

Is disappearing before us. That reminds me of the book of Ezekiel. Where there's a prophecy being given there.

And the spirit of God is. It moves from that central place in the temple. It's a very challenging section of scripture.

And the spirit of God moves out from that place. And then halts in another area. And then it moves again. And it's on the wall of the tabernacle. And then it halts there for a while. And then goes. It's as though the spirit of God is pausing each time. The scripture doesn't say this. In any detail at all. But this is how I read it. It's as though the spirit of God is compelled to move. Because sin has come into the camp. And when sin comes in, God moves out. Whether that's the tabernacle of old. Or the temple. Or whether it's your life and mine. If we're harboring sin. We will forfeit the blessing of the presence of God. And the manifestation of his life within and through us. But with those various stages. It seems to speak to me of the reluctance of the Holy Spirit to leave. That this was the last thing that he intended to do. I see it's as though he pauses at each station. And looks back. Is there anyone who's seeking after me? Is there anyone that's pouring their heart out? Separating themselves from evil and repenting before me. That I could return again. And none are found. So he moves to a more remote place. And another until he leaves the sea there. It's very, very challenging. Certainly. There's another feature that's designated in the earlier passage of Scripture. Where it describes the lamp of God. And its function. But here's the statement I'm thinking of in particular. Concerning its flame. God said it must never go out. It must burn before God continually. And there's lots of significance in that fact. And in that purpose of God, I'm sure. But for us this morning, it's a reminder that. If at all we're anxious and desiring to know God's presence. And his light. Then his plan is that this should become your permanent or continual enjoyment. That he would be there in your heart and in your life permanently. Not merely for an hour on a Sunday morning. But in all of the details of your life and the various circumstances. That your whole life be given over to him. And to him alone. That it would never, ever go out. Amen. God's desire for your life and for mine this morning. Is that we may be guided by his light. Our path illuminated into his presence. Into his holy presence. There's a phrase, another phrase from the Old Testament. The knowledge of the holy. This is where God wants to bring us. Into his holy presence. He's given us his holy spirit.

To bring the holy benefits of Christ's redeeming work at the cross. And to manifest his holy life within us. That we may live holy lives.

As men and women of God. Or godly men and women. This is the normal plan of God.

For every one of us in the room this morning. Younger and older alike. That I might be a godly man.

Not a religious man. But a godly man. That you might be a godly man.

And a godly woman in every area of your life. And that we may then as a result enjoy holy fellowship with God. It's so cheap to say.

We're not religious. We have a relationship with God. We do.

Don't misunderstand me. But it can be so cheap. It can be so miserable.

We're not religious. We have a relationship. Really.

I want to tell you when you have this relationship. You will be an entirely different person. From the deepest roots of your heart.

To the way you conduct your life. When we come into his holy presence. And he allows his holy presence to fill in.

Fill our hearts and our minds. You will lose your love. For those other things.

And those other activities. And you won't talk about them. You know to be with some people.

You soon find out what's most important to them. Because that's what they're always talking about. But you'll be a different person.

You'll be a man of God. Or a woman of God. Let's talk about Jesus.

But not because someone's saying let's do it. That's just a line from him. I quote it.

But where it's in your heart. You're a Christian. You're on fire with his life.

And nothing is more important. Nothing is more important. At all.

But that fellowship with the living God. So in Eli's day. Here.

As the scripture is recording this. The priesthood was in a shambles. It was in a mess.

And here's the. Irony if you will. Eli knew it was.

He knew that God had called him. To something higher. He knew.

He knew so much. He knew how he should behave himself. And he wasn't doing it.

He. He knew what he should say. I gather that.

From this very conversation. That we've just read here. He knew what the right thing to say was.

He knew that the right thing for him. Was to live. Before God.
Before his holy God. And that this would. Impact the way he conducted.
His personal life. And his function as a high priest. And how he should behave toward his sons.
And how his sons should be behaving. And he did nothing about it. He's careless about it.
He tells Samuel what he should say. When he hears the Lord. But he wasn't doing it.
Otherwise God would have spoken to him. He gave great advice. We're good at giving good advice.
We all know what we should do. And the way we should be living. But who's doing it? Eli wasn't.
He said Samuel. When you hear that voice. Just say speak Lord.
For your servants hearing. Shame on you. Eli.
Let me turn your attention. To a verse of scripture. I have a couple of verses.
That we'll find elsewhere. If you want to turn to them. If you're writing down.
I'm in Proverbs. Proverbs. When I can find it.
Chapter 29. I like my new Bible. 29.
Verse 18. It says this. Where there is no prophetic vision.
The people cast off restraint. But blessed is he who keeps the law. Did you notice.
What we read in Samuel. Chapter 3 verse 1. At this particular time. The priesthood's in a shambles.
Eli's not doing what he should do. And the word of the Lord. Was rare in those days.
And there was no frequent vision. Not a religion. But no clear word.
Of God. Coming through. And this verse.
From Proverbs. Where there is no prophetic vision. The people perish.
Or the people cast off restraint. It's interesting. In making my earlier reference.
To complacency. Among the people of God. It was actually.
Charles Spurgeon. Who said something. Which I think.
Kind of hit the nail on the head. There was more to it than this. But let me just quote this.
He said. Some people have peace. Because they live for entertainment.
And excitement. Which is distracting them. From higher things.
Or distracting them. From really hearing the word of God. To their hearts.

And he went on to say. Some people have peace. Because they are ignorant.
Of the things of God. And they need to be told the truth. He wrote.
Isn't that true? I think this. We could quote more. Of the statement that he made.
But the fact is. This complacency. Which we feel okay.
We are okay with living the way we are. And the kind of degree or depth. Of our Christianity.
Why are we okay? It is either okay. Because we are giving no attention. To what God is really saying.
Or we have never really. Come to a point where we have understood. What God is saying.
And what the scriptures are saying. Here for us. The apostle Paul wrote.
To the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 2.17 We apostles. We are not like so many.
Who are peddling the word of God. Another translation. And probably more literally says.
We are not of those. Who water down. And dilute.
The word of God. I am in Canada right now. When I lived in England.
I had never heard of Buckley's. Cough syrup. It sounded earlier on.
Maybe someone needed it in the room. I can still remember. The first time I had Buckley's.
Cough syrup. It is like the first taste. Is a hitchy throat.
There is a chemist here as well. I don't know what they put in it. It knocks you off your balance.
Quite a bit. It is as though the medication. Is not satisfied with that.
You are just getting over that. And the next one. You feel like you have been hit.
With a freight train or something. It seems to do the job. That is why some people.
Put up with the taste of it. Or whatever it is. No one wants to water it down.
Because it would lose its effect. That is the argument. If we look at things more seriously.
We hear a lot about chemotherapy. At this point in time. What kind of sanity.
Or insanity would it be. For someone who believes. That is the appropriate medication.
To ask for reduced doses of it. To reduce it down. So we don't have horrible side effects.
Everyone would choose to go that route. If it were a possibility. To some degree it is.
I know nothing about it. Do you see what I am trying to say. Paul is saying here.
We are not like those. Who are diluting the word of God. We are not doing that.

Because he understood very plainly. That it was right. That the word of God.

Would have a cutting edge to it. The fact is. That today.

We know that this is true. I am not making these stories up. There is an effort.

To dilute the scripture. Not by that name. Of course.

But we want to make it seeker friendly. That is more in line with the modern jargon. What does that mean.

It means that we will be selective. In what we preach about. And we will be cautious about the way we apply it.

Because we do not want to upset people. Because we need the people. Because we need their money.

To keep the business going. Sorry. I am going to carry it away.

But the fact is. You know. In Jeremiah chapter 6. God says.

He is against the spiritual leaders. Of that day. And the reason.

Is stated there. Because they are saying peace. Peace.

When there is no peace. You know the message. Of peace.

Whatever that may mean. Or however that may be interpreted. Or presented.

In a Sunday morning meeting. That is good news. It is like.

You know. Mummy with the child. Passing on the bag.

Everything is going to be alright. Go back to sleep. But that is not God.

God sees from eternal perspective. We may be preoccupied. With some particular need.

Or some issue that is going on in our lives. And we pray and ask the Lord to help us. I am not being cynical about that.

But I am simply wanting to emphasize the fact. That God has got a far broader picture. He sees your eternal destiny.

He loves you. He cares about you. We are preoccupied with the bits and pieces.

That amuse us. And keep us busy in the day. God is looking for men.

And for women. Who will hear his word to their hearts. And respond.

Don't forget when I started talking about. Good men who die on the hill. Being distracted.

But maybe the word. That needs to come through on a Sunday morning. Is not peace, peace.

Maybe the word that needs to be preached. More widely in our pulpits. Is repent.

And prepare yourself for judgment. You know every single Christian. Never mind those who are not Christians.

Every Christian is going to stand. Before the judgment seat of Christ. Everyone.

You will. I will. To give an account.

Paul says. He is talking to a Christian church. You will stand.

Before we shall all stand. Before the judgment seat of Christ. To give an account of the deeds that we have done.

While we have been in our body. I must give an account for my life. You must give an account for your life.

Ultimately. Even though you are saying. I am a Christian today.

The message for those who are not converted. Is far more serious. If we can talk in those terms.

God said. I am against the leaders who say. Peace, peace.

When there is no peace. For they have healed the hurt of my people. Slightly.

They have put a band aid on something. They have said. They are there.

Just carry on. Now you are born again. Now you are saved.

Now you are filled with the spirit. Up you go. God says.

No, no, no. That is not my word. My message is different.

It reminds me of someone. Who came to this meeting. Not in this room.

But a long time ago. He spoke to me after the meeting. He said.

You know what? Maybe you can relate to this. Maybe you. Stab me with the same knife.

He said. You know what? We love the word here. But we hate your music.

They chose music. And they left. What are you after? At what level.

In your life. Are you aware of God? And what you are hearing? By way of complete contrast. Over the years of our time.

We have had people. We are talking about Ontario. With someone just the other day.

People who would drive 80 miles. From St. Catharines. Near Niagara Falls.

To come to our meetings. Backwards and forwards. 80 miles from Kitchener.

Waterloo or somewhere. Several car loads coming. Just to come and be there.

In winter. In Ontario. It is wonderful.

When you find men and women. Most of these have been young people. Who just want the word of God.

And are prepared to make whatever sacrifice. God is looking for those kinds of people. This morning. Here. The word of God. We are reading about in Proverbs.

Do you notice how this translation said. The prophetic word of God. That is coming from the fact. That the Hebrew word is. The Jews there. It means a word that has.

And carries divine illumination. Prophetic word. Is the alternative given there.

This translation says. Where there is no prophetic vision. The people cast off restraint. Where there is no awareness. Of the light of God. And the word of God.

You just go. And you just do your own thing. Which seems fine for now.

But it is a very short sighted way. To conduct your life. And what we need today.

I believe this is the need. It is the need in this church. It is the need universally.

The great need is not. Merely for men. Who are men of the books.

That are available. The Christian books. Of which there are so many.

We need today men. And this goes for women as well. If I keep saying men.

God is looking for men. Who withdraw. From whatever it is.

They withdraw from. To get alone with God. And hear from God.

We need. We need men. Who hear from God.

Not who are clever at cut and paste. You know from this commentary. And the other commentary.

And put it all together. And present a very eloquent. Sounding message.

But we want someone. Someone who is. Lives in his presence.

And listens to God. This is the need. Maybe God is speaking to you about this.

I don't know. We need. Those who are able to teach.

More than mere words. But are able to teach. God himself.

To us. That is our need. My question.

My question is this. Where. Where are we going to find.

I am not trying to give you an answer. I am just saying. These are the questions out there.

They are on the table if you like. Where are we going to find. Those kinds of men.

Where are we going to find. Those who will present. The unvarnished word of God.

To us. Where are we going to find. Those who will present.
That razor sharp. Cutting. Deeply challenging word of God.
To us. That we need so desperately. Where are we going to do it.
Where are we going to find this word. Which will lay our hearts bare. With conviction.
In thy light. We see light. This is the text of scripture.
In your presence. Where your word is. Coming.
It brings exposure. To the deeper needs. Of our lives.
Because the one who will be speaking. Is the one who gained a reputation. For overturning tables in the temple.
He is not saying. There there. You will be alright.
Just go back to sleep son of God. He is not saying that. He is saying wake up.
Wake up from your sleep. This is the word. The apostolic word.
Wake up from your sleep. Wake up to the reality. You need to get serious about this.
Because this is serious business. You need to hear my word. Unvarnished.
Word of God to your heart. Maybe when this happens. There is something of a stampede to the door.
Because not everyone wants it. This is what we do know. But where we don't have it.
Dare I say this. We don't have the Holy Spirit. His presence always exposes.
Psalm 90. From the amplified translation. Comes like this.
Our iniquities. Our secret heart. And its sins.
Which we would so like to conceal from ourselves. You have set. In the revealing light.
Of your countenance. Our iniquities. Our secret heart.
And its sins. Which we would so like to conceal. Even from ourselves.
You have set. In the revealing light. Of your countenance.
Amen. In the book of Amos. We can read about the word of God.
We read there that there is a famine. For the hearing of the word. Of the Lord.
Notice the wording there. If you're looking at the text. It's Amos 11 verses 11 and 12.
But there's a famine. For the hearing. Of the word.
We've already been given. Some thought to the fact. There's just an absence of the word of the Lord.

But even where the Lord's word. Is being ministered. There's a different kind of problem.
That's so common. And that is the people. The people of God have faulty ears.
And they're not hearing. What God is saying. We may be.
The words are going in. It's an audio word. That's being spoken.
But am I hearing it? You know that the key. Or perhaps. Put it a different way.
The fact that will. Indicate beyond any doubt. That I am hearing the word of God.
Is that I am. Being obedient to it. Campbell Morgan said.
It's not a case of. God withholding. His revelation.
But people being. In such a state. That they do not see it.
And they do not hear. The words. If it's true.
That it's rare. To be exposed. To the cutting edge word of God.
The unvarnished word of God. As I've called it. And so on.
Perhaps this is the even more serious situation. When we may be exposed. To that word.
But we don't really hear it. We don't really get hold of it. With all of our hearts.
Remember how Jesus. Responded to Satan. Who was tempting him.
On that particular occasion. He quotes from a scripture. But really is.
Stating also. By the same token. What the nature of his own life was.
He said. Man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word.
That proceeds out of the mouth of God. Every word. Every word.
He said. Man shall not live by bread alone. Man shall not live by.
And you fill in all the blanks. That we can think about. There to put in.
He said. The only thing. That will nourish your soul.
Is when you feed upon. Every word of God. We've got a book full of it here.
Jesus. Jesus. Also.
Told a parable that you'll remember. He's talking about a wise man. And a foolish man.
And without going into all of the detail. He speaks about the wise man. He said.
He builds his life. On the word of God. The foolish man.

He builds his life on the sand. Of other things. And that's the challenge.

I know as I close here. The issue. That we started out with.

Was Samuel hearing. God speaking. But he didn't realize it was God speaking.

And then God spoke again. He still didn't realize it was God speaking. And then.

The man who should have been doing it himself. Gave the right advice. To Samuel.

And he said. When you hear next time. Say speak Lord.

For your servant heareth. I don't know what's going on in your life. Today.

I don't know where you're up to. I don't know how things are in your own relationship with God. Whether you're in this room.

Or you're listening to this at some later stage. I don't know any of those things. But I know that the very best advice.

That anyone could give to you. Is to apply yourself. To the word of God.

And expose yourself. To the word of God. It was interesting.

Right at the end of the long chapter. I read to you at the beginning. The last verse reads like this.

And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh. Here it is. For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel.

At Shiloh. By the word of God. That's today.

That's how God will reveal himself. Could it be. Could it be that even this morning.

God is revealing himself. To you this morning. By his word.

Could it be. That he's speaking to you. And challenging you.

This morning. With his word. Could it be that this is not the first time.

He's spoken to you. Could it be that this is the second time. Could it be that this is your third time.

As it were. As it were. Someone is helping you to pay attention.

That this that you're feeling. This that you're sensing. This conviction that seems to be in your heart.

Is really the work of the spirit of God. This is God. Loving you.

This is God demonstrating his care. For your life. He doesn't want to dismantle you.

He doesn't want to bring wreckage. And spoil your life. He wants to enhance your life.

With himself. And fill your heart. With himself.

With his joy. With his peace. Purifying you inwardly.

In your inward being. Giving you true purpose for life. In this world.
Which inevitably will be a preparation. For all that lies yet ahead. In the world to come.
You noticed. And I close with this. That when Samuel heard.
What God said to him. He was afraid. He was afraid.
He recoiled from it. Can you imagine. I don't know if he was 10 or whether he was 12.
Or whatever he was. But the Bible here tells me. That he was afraid.
And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. There it is. Why? Well it's pretty obvious.
It was a strong word. When God said in the very word. That he was going to speak.
And he was going to cause people's ears to tingle. Well I'm assured. That Samuel's ears were tingling.
When he heard what God was saying. He was going to bring judgment into the house of Eli. Because he had not been.
Walking in obedience before God. And the time was coming. When there would be consequences.
As there always is. For that disobedience. The fact of the matter is.
For Samuel. And indeed for me. And for you.
The issue of actually responding. To the word of God. That comes to us.
Always carries a challenge. Always. It's just in the very nature of things.
There's a challenge. In order to be obedient to him. There's always a cost.
It's the cost of obedience to God. And that's where the good men die. And good women die.
Because they're not prepared. To come to terms. With obeying the word.
That God has spoken to them. But you know I want to tell you this. The cost of compromising.
When the word of God comes to you. Is far greater. As it will turn out.
In due course. Amen. Let's pray.
And close.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/j8tzfIWQRW8.mp4>

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