



Resurrection, not Insurrection – TouchPoint for January 13, 2021

Samuel 3:1-11 NRSV Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

TOUCH POINT

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ 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. ⁴ Then the LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!”^[a] and he said, “Here I am!” ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. ⁶ The LORD called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.”

Grace and peace from the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being.

*“The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread...the lamp of God had not **yet** gone out.”*

It was a difficult time for the people of Israel. They had been overrun by other kingdoms. Then rescued by God, only to turn away from God and be over run again. This cycle had completed itself over and over numerous times for hundreds of years. Their nation was in shambles.

*“The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread...the lamp of God had not **yet** gone out.”*

Who of us hasn't felt that at some time this past week? A time of desolation and darkness. A feeling of God-forsakenness. A longing for a word from the Lord.

*“The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread...the lamp of God had not **yet** gone out.”*

Why, one can almost hear Bob Dylan in the background singing, “It's not dark yet, but it's getting there.”

*“...the lamp of God had not **yet** gone out.” ... but things were rather dim.*

Last week, what we saw in our nation's Capitol was an insurrection. Now I want to do a little language course here for a few minutes, if I may. The word ‘surrection’ means upheaval. It is a geological word describing when the Earth's plates come together and collide and push up to create mountains. It is from the bottom up. It begins, below the surface, in the tombs of the earth and breaks forth.

Now, the preface "in" means "not". Inadequate means not adequate. Inadmissible means not admissible. So, the word insurrection means not a resurrection. It is not from the ground up it is from the top down. It is a power play. Imposing its will and its view on others against their will.

What we saw last Wednesday was an insurrection, a power play against the will of the majority of people in this country. What we saw was an insurrection, a power play, against the browning of America. What we saw was an insurrection, a power play, against the belief that this country belongs to all who live here and all who wish to come here.

It was an insurrection, a power play, against John McCain's description of this country, when he said something to the effect, "America is not a piece of dirt. It is not the ground on which we walk. It is an idea. It is a hope." In other words, it is a dream for all of humanity in a way to live together and share the fruits of the gifts of God.

It is extremely important for us as Christians to understand the difference between an insurrection and a resurrection. If we don't, we will be like those at the Capitol last week who held up signs that read "John 3:16", and "Jesus is my savior. Trump is my president." And we will be like those who believe that our faith is something that can be imposed, forced upon, and rammed down the religious throats of others. But that is not what a resurrection is ... that is an insurrection.

And there is no such thing as a Christian insurrection.

A resurrection lifts up, builds up, raises up. An insurrection tears down, levels, destroys. And so, as people of the Re-surrection, we move from the ground up. We move in love and light and inclusion. We speak words of forgiveness not dominance. And we do not run from the darkness of this world, but into it. Because it was from the darkness of the tomb that the greatest Resurrection happened.

What we offer the world is not a different source of dominance. It is a different way. A non-violent way. It is not soft, but it exerts itself in love and self-giving and self-denial. We do not demand our rights. We speak of our responsibility. We do not demand our individuality be honored. We speak of our connectedness. We do not hold up banners claiming that God is on our side. But rather seek to be on God's side. And that just might involve us listening to what God is doing.

Hear the rest of our bible passage:

God speaks:

"Samuel, Samuel" and in the fog like state between sleep and wake, Samuel hears but doesn't hear. He gets up and goes to Eli and says, "What do you want?"

And Eli replies, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed."

A second time it happens, and Samuel runs to Eli. Then a third time. By this time Eli either suspects it is the Lord calling Samuel or else he is getting tired of Samuel interrupting his sleep.

For Eli, it's 3 strikes and you're out, Samuel. And so, he says.

"Go lie down, and if he calls again (a 4th time), say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'

I think that's the Bible's nice way of saying Eli told Samuel, "If it happens again, just shut up and listen..."

and let me sleep.”

'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' or “...just shut up and listen.”

It isn't usually how we react to crisis. It isn't usually how we respond when things are dim and dark. It isn't how we usually respond when the light at the end of the tunnel seems to have been shut off.

No! We need to respond! We need to do something! We need to impose our will. You know, “Snap out of it!” “Pull yourself up by your bootstraps.” “Just do it.”

But the problem is I don't know what needs to be 'snapped'. I don't have any 'boots'. And I haven't figured out what the “IT” is that I need to just “DO”.

'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' or to use my inherited and ever-present parent voice “...just shut up and listen.”

What a strange starting point. To LISTEN! Listen... Listen... Not DO...but listen. And what does one hear when one listens...when one listens to God.

Well, if we take anything from this Samuel story it might just be this.. When we listen to God, what we hear being told to us is not what we should do, but what God is going to do.

“See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.”

How strange is that? How often when I ask God to speak to me, do I ask, “Tell me what to do, God! I don't know what to do! Tell me what to do!” And the arrogant assumption is that I will do it...No problem... But I don't think I have ever prayed to God and said, “Speak Lord, and tell me what you are going to do.”

“Speak Lord, and tell me what YOU are going to do.” Never, ever have I said that. Never, ever have I prayed that. How pathetic am I?

“Speak Lord, and tell me what YOU are going to do.” 64 years and I've never said that. I wonder why not? Maybe because I am afraid of the answer. Maybe because it takes me out of the equation. Maybe because it stops me from being the subject of the sentence and forces me to be the object upon whom God will act.

“Tell ME what to do, God.” And I maintain some control. I can choose to do it or not.

“Tell me what YOU are going to do, God.” Yikes. I'm not sure I want to be in that position. Probably because I know what God will do with me. God will transform me first. Renew me. Restore me. God will bring about a death and resurrection in me before “THOSE OTHERS.”

...And I will never be the same again.

But that more than scares me because I kind of like the old me and I have spent my whole life justifying why I am the way I am, or at least blaming others for how I ended up.

And yet, that is my only hope. Because in the dimness and darkness of life ... When the “The word of the Lord is rare; and visions are not widespread...and the lamp of God has not yet gone out.” ...And it's not

dark yet but it's getting there... And when snapping out of it isn't possible...and I can't find my bootstraps, and getting in touch with myself only means getting in touch with that same darkness that overwhelms me...

THEN...Then...then...

A still small voice comes and says, "I will."
"I will act to you and for you and in you."

And this is where the restoration of our country will begin. In us. In us no longer staying quiet in the face of economic, racial, and judicial inequality. In us being brought into God's kingdom rather than us trying to bring God into our kingdoms, and justify our kingdoms.

This is where the restoration of the country will begin. As we are people of the Re-surrection, lifting up and raising up the concerns and welfare of those who have been beaten down by our society.

This is who our God is. A God of Re-surrection. This is what our God is doing. This is what our God is speaking.

The Lord speaks. Are the servants listening?

Amen

Spirit in the Desert

Opening Songs

Be Still

Be Still, know that I am God

You Lord Are In This Place

You Lord are in 1)...this place.
2)...my heart. 3)...my mind. 4)...my life.
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.

Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

Dwell Among Us

Keep moving and living and breathing in us
Keeping working and singing and speaking through us
You dwell among us...
With all this life I long to see, more of You and less of me
Lord send Your spirit here to work in us

The Meal

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Let Your Servant

Let your servant now go in peace, O Lord
Now go in peace according to your word