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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Second Sunday after the Epiphany |
| Year B RCL |

1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17

**The Collect**

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever.*Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)**

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.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 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. Then the Lord called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!” 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. 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.” Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 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. 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.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” [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. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.”

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.” Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him.”

As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.]

**The Response**

**Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17**

***Domine, probasti***

1 Lord, you have searched me out and known me; \*  
you know my sitting down and my rising up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.

2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places \*  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, \*  
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

4 You press upon me behind and before \*  
and lay your hand upon me.

5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; \*  
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

12 For you yourself created my inmost parts; \*  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

13 I will thank you because I am marvelously made; \*  
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

14 My body was not hidden from you, \*  
while I was being made in secret  
and woven in the depths of the earth.

15 Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;  
all of them were written in your book; \*  
they were fashioned day by day,  
when as yet there was none of them.

16 How deep I find your thoughts, O God! \*  
how great is the sum of them!

17 If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; \*  
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

**The Epistle**

**1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

**The Gospel**

**John 1:43-51**

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

“Lord, you have searched me out and known me; \*  
you know my sitting down and my rising up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.”

To be known. I love this concept. We have so many stories in our lives that even when we have shared stories with someone for years, even decades, a new one from the recesses of the mind pops up.

And yet God knows us, each and every one of us, completely God knows us before we know God or when we don’t know God. And God hears us before we hear God.

Our Old testament story sounds strikingly similar to our times today. “The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.” Today just like then, God is not confounded by this.

Why do I say this?

A few little tidbits from the Hebrew. They are funny tidbits and make the story even more fun. In Hebrew, Samuel is Sha mu El. El is God and Shamu- is has heard or is hearing, So Samuel, “Shamuel,” keeps hearing his name called, but the name means “God has heard.”

More Funny: The name Eli- means “my God”. So “God has heard” hears his name called and then goes to wake up Eli, who although spiritual at one time, has kind of lost his way, and particularly his sons, his heirs, have lost their way.

So, bear this in mind. You don’t just happen to stumble upon God. God is always calling you, even when it feels that visions are not widespread and the word of the Lord is rare. You may not know why you come to church. You may come to church out of guilt, or you have been fed before, and are not fed now, or you have always been fed at church, or you found this church home, or you love the people, or you just want Eucharist. There are so many ways, and not just at church but in your daily life too….you may carry one little morsel from this sermon with you, you may hear the Eucharistic prayer different today. But in all these things, whatever the reason you are here and whatever you take from this liturgy, know that God has heard you, heard your longing, knows your desires, knows your need even beneath your desires, before you made a sound, have no doubt.

So… close your eyes…. [call people’s names….] Listen for the call of God, who has already heard the call of your own soul and need. And what do you answer? “Here I am, for your servant is listening.” St. Patrick’s St Patrick’s… everyone… “Here I am, for your servant is listening.”

I’m not God— obviously. In the Bible people are always called twice by their names. Like Samuel, we may get confused and answer the wrong call thinking that is God’s call, but keep listening. Prayer is less about talking and more about listening. God has already heard us, now is the time for us to listen. So it starts with God knowing you and then you come to know God. Knowledge of God allows you to listen.

And be aware when you answer, sometimes as in this story, God leads you to do uncomfortable things: like speaking truth to power. Like loving those who are unlovable. Like changing what you have been, to be something new – something God knows is the deeper you anyway, and you just haven’t awakend to that yet. Uncomfortable is just that—uncomfortable… but, if it’s God-called it’s still good and it is what the world needs.

Because …and here’s the deep truth of it… you have no existence apart from the purpose that God has for you and no deeper fulfillment than presence of God with you, and through you, to others. Like the Corinthians, you do not belong to yourself or your spouse or partner or your parents or your children, but you belong to God.

You are known because you are God’s. You have been formed like clay, knit together in your mother’s womb. God knows your rising up and your lying down. God knew Samuel, in his youthful enthusiasm to answer. God knew Eli, even in his loss of vigor. God, in Jesus, knew Nathanael, idling under the fig tree. Nathanael is astonished at Jesus’ knowledge. It is this knowledge leads Nathanael (and us) to the conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God, because only God could have such knowledge: the one who knows us first, loves us first, calls us first, calls us again and again until we are clear that God is calling. And with God’s own help, we have only to answer.