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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Sunday closest to June 1 |
| Proper 4 Year B RCL |

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| ***Track 1*** |  |  |
| 1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20) Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17 2 Corinthians 4:5-12 Mark 2:23-3:6 |  |  |

**The Collect**

O God, your never-failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and earth: Put away from us, we entreat you, all hurtful things, and give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**1 Samuel 3:1--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 theLord.

**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**

**2 Corinthians 4:5-12**

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

**The Gospel**

**Mark 2:23-3:6**

One sabbath Jesus and his disciples were going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.” Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

“Let light shine out of darkness,”

We like to think that we call upon God, and in a sense we do when we pray, but let’s make no mistake—-when it is for God’s purposes, it is God that does the calling.

The story of the call of Samuel is in a word, sweet. We often feel it is something to which we can relate—- after all, most people would say that “the word of the Lord is rare” in these days in which we live. I don’t know if the word of the Lord is rare or if we just aren’t very good at hearing it. Maybe that is what the call of Samuel is about. When people are not very good at hearing the word of the Lord, then it seems like the word of the Lord is rare.

Almost all the other times in the bible, God calls someone… the person hears his or her name twice (kind of reminds one of the psalms (62)- “God has spoken once, twice have I heard it.” ) Anyway, the person hears his or her name spoken twice… “Moses, Moses”… and now “Samuel, Samuel,’ and usually the person answers with “Hi’nay’ nee”, which means “Lo or Behold, it is I”, or one could imagine in today’s lingo, “yep, what’s up?” But one is NOT able to answer this way if you don’t know who is calling. All in all, when applied to Samuel this is kind of funny in a sense. Here, poor little Samuel, his mother Hannah has dedicated him to the Lord, dropped him off at the temple. I mean Samuel is even sleeping in the temple. (not exactly the Sponge Bob sleeping bag). He gets woken up several times, and Samuel doesn’t get it, and then he goes to Eli, and Eli doesn’t get it either. And so here we have Eli is as a priest and there Samuel is dedicated to the Lord to learn to be a priest, and they are just baffled. This is what happens when you talk to the Lord and don’t listen. You start to think the word of the Lord rare, and if you don’t recognize it when you hear it, I guess it IS rare.

Besides thinking we will know what the word of the Lord sounds like, and thus that we will know when we are being commissioned for God’s purposes, we also like to think that we know what God’s purposes are. Sadly we are often mistaken. A biblical example of thinking that we can think for God brings us to today’s Gospel where Jesus and his disciples are plucking grain and Jesus then cures the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. Because we, as people, like to think for God, we receive a law from God, and then we revise it. I had an Orthodox Jewish professor at UVA explain this as the concept as putting a fence around the Torah. If you want to make sure you don’t accidently break a rule, you make it stricter than it has to be so that you make sure to keep away from an indiscretion. It would be like if a library allowed whispering, so you decided you could not talk AT ALL. This is a good concept and is a good way to explain why the disciples plucking off the wheat heads was considered breaking the Sabbath… because they were not actually working, they weren’t harvesting. It also explains how the 10 commandments turn into 651 laws in Leviticus.

So, of course one could heal on the Sabbath, but only if by doing so, a life was going to be saved [the fence around the law]. Clearly curing a withered hand was not going to save a life, after all it could wait until the next day. It was not a make or break decision. Maybe other healers could have charged and made a profit from it, so it has to be outlawed [the fence]. … Instead Jesus is doing it for delight, and the rules then come second to delight Jesus brings in bringing healing, and must always serve that delight!. The Pharisees, stuck on the rules and preoccupied only with themselves, view his action as if done only to anger them. The God who is always about letting light shine out of darkness, made the Sabbath for people, pours out the divine life, always, for people, and delights always in the flourishing of people. We are made in the image of God who in the creation story rested on the 7th day. The Sabbath is to recharge, remake peace, walk through fields and pluck wheat, cure somebody if it is going to bring delight to that person. Jesus is determined to not allow others to think for God. As if to say, “please, not one of you now or ever, please don’t think you know God’s purposes.”

So maybe, given that we have so little SPECIFC idea most of the time what God is up to, we always start with the premise that, whatever it is, it will always be to bring more love in the world. If it is not for that, it probably has nothing to do with God’s call or God’s purpose and is pretty much useless. If we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, then we can let light shine out of darkness. If love is shining in our hearts, then we can perhaps do a better job of listening for God and not presuming we speak for God, we can let love do the speaking.