

Sunday School Superintendent

SUMMER QUARTER
June, July, August 2022



**Union
Gospel
Press**

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Editorials.....	2
Servants and Healers	
UNIT I: Faithful to Serve	
June 5—Samuel’s Call and Ministry—I Sam. 3:1-9, 19-20; 7:3-5, 10, 12.....	4
June 12—Isaiah’s Commission—Isa. 6:1-8	6
June 19—Asaph’s Lament—Ps. 73:1-3, 12-13, 16-18, 21-26	8
June 26—The Service of Godly Leaders—Ezra 6:13-22.....	10
UNIT II: Faithful to Prophecy	
July 3—Haggai Calls for Faithful Service—Hag. 1:1-11.....	12
July 10—Micah Stands Firm for God—Mic. 2:4-11	14
July 17—Habakkuk Praises God’s Faithfulness—Hab. 2:1-5; 3:17-19.....	16
July 24—Ezekiel Brings Hope to Israel—Ezek. 37:1-14.....	18
UNIT III: Faithful to Heal	
July 31—Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant—Luke 7:1-10.....	20
Aug. 7—Jesus Heals Two Demoniacs—Matt. 8:23-34.....	22
Aug. 14—A Lame Man Healed—Acts 3:1-16.....	24
Aug. 21—Ananias Heals Saul—Acts 9:10-20	26
Aug. 28—Miracles on Malta—Acts 28:1-10	28
Paragraphs on Places and People	30

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Editorials

MEGAN HICKMAN

Small Servants, Big God

Will the way you serve the Lord go down in history? Probably not. Sometimes, when we look at the ways God called people of the Bible to serve—through powerful ministry, prophesying, and healing—we can really struggle with feelings of inadequacy. What am I doing to serve the Lord in comparison? But our takeaway from this quarter should not be primarily about the role of each servant or healer we study; rather, we should focus on each servant's faithfulness.

God does not measure our service to Him by how impressive it appears in the world's eyes. He looks at how faithful we are with what He has provided. Luke 16:10 points out that he who is faithful with little will also be faithful with much. God sees our devotion to His work as more significant than the perceived importance of what we contribute. This quarter, we will study many different kinds of servants and how they are examples to us of everyday faithfulness.

Make no mistake—there are some very impressive figures in our lessons for this quarter, but we must never forget that it was their incremental faithfulness that led them to impressive lives of service. For example, Samuel was called as a young boy to be both a prophet and judge. At the beginning, he did not even recognize the Lord's

voice without guidance from his mentor, Eli. But by the end of his life, Samuel was leading the people of Israel back to the Lord.

In the case of Isaiah, his commission shows us that his simple willingness and his large view of God's holiness fueled his ministry (Isa. 6:5, 8). God uses people who are willing to serve Him due to their deep understanding of who He is. This shows us that our service to God is not about us; it is about Him and His glory.

But we also make it a point this quarter to study some less notable figures and some discouraged servants of God. We all feel small and discouraged at points in our ministries, but God can still use us for great things. God used many people to bring about His purpose in rebuilding the temple. And God used Asaph to write psalms that would validate the righteous frustrations of believers for centuries to come and show them how to handle disappointment in this sinful world.

When it comes to God's prophets, we look at the resistance they often incurred from God's people. Some of them had difficult messages to deliver. The people were historically hostile to prophets, which surely made each of them hesitant to speak God's words. But because they feared God

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more than man, they were faithful to the calling God had given them.

Sometimes, as with Ezekiel, the prophets were delivering messages of hope in hopeless times. At other times, it was a message to rejoice in the midst of sadness, as it was with the prophet Habakkuk, showing that God is still worthy to be praised even when we do not perceive His goodness. No matter what kinds of messages God called His prophets to deliver, the important thing is that they diligently and faithfully spoke His words. We should all take this to heart, faithfully speaking God's words no matter how uncomfortable or countercultural they might be.

In our third unit, we study people to whom God gave the gift of healing. Of course, the only Person who can actually heal is God, but He used others to bring about His sovereign will in this way. This can be difficult for us today since many of us do not experience miraculous healing in our hardships, but—at the risk of sound-

ing trite for lack of space—we can trust that if the Lord does not choose to heal, in His goodness He still always knows what is for our ultimate welfare.

But we cannot deny that God worked through many of His servants in the Scriptures by performing miraculous healings. Why He did this we are not sure, except that He did it for His glory and for the furtherance of His kingdom. Jesus' healing ministry was prompted by compassion, but it also proved His deity. Then, He gave the same authority and power to His disciples so they could demonstrate the might of the gospel, which is the power of God to raise people from spiritual death to life.

It was probably a temptation for Jesus' disciples to claim credit for these miraculous healings, but we see in the case of the apostle Paul that even though he was called a god by some pagans, he used the impression of the miracles to show the compassion and power of Jesus, not elevate his own status. In this, Paul sets an example for all of us. We are to faithfully use our gifts to magnify God and not ourselves. Self-glorification is a very real temptation of which we must always be aware.

The common theme of our lessons this quarter is that the ways we serve God are secondary to our heart attitude. Though God does provide us good works to do in His name (Eph. 2:10), He cares more about our faithfulness to Him and His glory than He cares about our worldly status, or even our status in the church. In the church, we are prone to envy one another—even one another's spiritual gifts. But if we all work together to magnify the glory of God, our ministry for Him will abound in joy. Let us all consider ourselves small servants with a big God, so the world will see His glory.

LESSON 1—JUNE 5, 2022

Samuel's Call and Ministry

Lesson Text: I Samuel 3:1-9, 19-20; 7:3-5, 10, 12

GOLDEN TEXT—"The Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3:10).

OPENING MOMENTS

Suggested Song (Adults)

"Lord, Speak to Me" (Havergal)

Suggested Song (Children)

"Where He Leads Me" (Blandly)

Icebreaker

What are some ways you make sure you are listening to God in your daily walk with Him?

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Called of God (I Sam. 3:1-9)
2. Established as a prophet (I Sam. 3:19-20)
3. Standing between God and man (I Sam. 7:3-5)
4. Ebenezer (I Sam. 7:10, 12)

KEY ISSUES

When you turn on your radio, you may sometimes have difficulty getting precisely tuned to the station you want. If you turn the dial a little too far to the right or a little too far to the left, you do not get a clear signal. If the broadcast signal is coming from far away or if a stronger signal is invading the frequency you want, you may just give up.

Perhaps our reception of God's

instruction is like that. We need to be sharply attuned to Him and able to exclude or ignore interference so that we will grasp what He is saying. Thankfully, He is not far from us.

This week's lesson examines a man who was very much attuned to God. Even as a child, he could hear God loud and clear. That should be the desire of each one of us.

When a man is attuned to God, he hears God's call, obeys God's commands, and is used to do God's work.

When young Samuel first heard God calling, he mistook the voice for that of Eli. Eli was a father figure to the child and was undoubtedly the most spiritual person Samuel knew. It would seem that Samuel's mistake, therefore, was quite natural.

Children often get their first impressions of God from the adult believers who are around them. That is why it is so important that you, as superintendent, and the teachers in your Sunday school model truly godly lives before the children. When those children first hear God speaking to them, you may well be the one who prepares them to recognize His voice.