

First Friends Church, a Quaker Meeting

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I Wish You Enough

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Scripture

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.

Message

I wish you enough, to know you are enough, to see God sends enough and that God is enough.

Once upon a time a conversation between a parent and adult child at the airport was overheard. As they said goodbye, they said to each other, “I love you, I wish you enough.” Later an observer asked, “What does I wish you enough mean?” The parent responded, “It means we wish a life filled with enough; enough sun to keep your attitude bright and enough rain to appreciate the sun more, enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger, enough gain to satisfy your wants and enough loss to appreciate all that you possess, and enough “Hello’s” to get you through the final “Good-bye.”¹ All we need is enough.

Samuels’s story is one of enough; enough despair and joy, hope and prophecy. Before he was born Samuel’s mother Hannah went to God’s temple in tears and desperation because people told her she was not enough. She begged God for a child who she vowed to dedicate to God. God knew Hannah was enough, sent her one child which was enough, and who she named Samuel. Hannah sang God’s praise in a song that was enough to reverberate in Psalm 113 and in Mary’s Magnificat. “My heart rejoices ...and my strength is exalted in the Lord....” Hannah brought Samuel to the temple to serve God and he lived there from the time he was weaned. He was only 11 years old when he heard the voice of God and spoke God’s words. Samuel’s name means child of God and he was enough.

¹ <https://alltimeshortstories.com/i-wish-you-enough-story/>

Our scripture and tradition tell us that we are children of God, and that we are created in God's image; that of God, God's Light is within us. Breathe, as I repeat that again so it can sink in; in God's image, to be like God, that of God, Light. Yet we struggle with not being perfect enough, smart enough, thin enough, old enough, young enough... enough. We wonder if we can be forgiven for the past and fear that we cannot rise to the challenges the future will bring. We need to hear and heed the words of Maya Angelou, the late poet laureate; "If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However the wisest thing you can do is be present in the present...Gratefully." Or as Jesus said, "Take courage ...your sins are forgiven," and "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."²

When we feel powerless and small, overwhelmed by challenges and choices we need to remember God calls us enough. When we doubt our gifts and talents we need to affirm them. When we wonder if we have any at all or think we are too new to the whole listening to God thing. we need to open ourselves to the reality of God. We were all created by God, and I think pretty much all of us listening are older than 11. If we listen to God's voice well and yet like Samuel still doubt Who we are hearing, we need to see, hear and know; we are abundantly enough and "God does not call those who are equipped, God equips those who are called."

² Matthew 9:2b, 6:34

There is trouble swirling all around us. Some of us are dealing with enough of our own stuff to keep us busy. Others are looking for enough ways to be part of the solution to the problems. Some of us say “enough” to both! It can be, often is, overwhelming. Yet, remember, however it came about: God created everything that is; out of nothingness, darkness, chaos. God is enough.

There are many stories in the Bible where God’s people experience enough. God, Elijah, Jesus and the disciples always have enough to feed all the people. Another story of enough is recorded in 1 & 2 Maccabees, two books not in the canon or Bible. In 167 BCE, between the time of the prophets and the birth of Jesus, a small band of people liberated the Temple in Jerusalem. They faced down superior forces of occupying Syrian Greeks who had imposed their Hellenistic culture, defiled the temple and prohibited religious practice. Their three-year campaign culminated liberation of the people and the land, the cleansing and rededication of the Temple, and a celebration of the seven days of Sukkot.

We might think that surely this was enough of a “miracle.” But to emphasize how important this moment was to the people and their relationship with God the story took on mythological character. No oil could be found in the whole city to replenish God’s lamp in the Temple. Yet the Light burned for the whole seven day celebration. A story of a supernatural event centering on the oil, a miracle, resulted

in a holiday named Hanukah.³ There was enough oil because God is enough! But the people, created by God in God's image were already enough.

You probably noticed this message is based on the word enough. Words are symbols and they can be used and heard it many different ways. When my father said, "Enough now," we kids (and the dog) knew he was not saying, "Thank you, I've had enough fun, ice cream, or affection." He was saying, "Stop that now or there will be enough trouble that you will wish you had." This week I had enough occasions to ponder the meaning of some words, the way people use them and what they really mean, in particular in politics and the media.

But I also had an epiphany about words when I thought of the painting by James Doyle Penrose named "The Presence in the Midst." It depicts Friends gathered in open worship with heads bowed. Hovering over them in Light is a shimmering image. The question that came to me was, "Which is the presence and which is the midst?" Do we gather in worship to call the Presence of God into our midst? Do we bring our full presence when we are in the midst of worship? Are we mindful that the Presence is always in our midst? Or do we exist as presence in the midst of God?

³ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hanukkah-history/#:~:text=Hanukkah%20is%20one%20of%20the%20few%20Jewish%20holidays,of%20the%20Jewish%20canon%20of%20the%20Hebrew%20Bible.>

Created in the image of God, to be godlike we must be on the search for goodness. “God is all that is good,” “God is goodness itself” and “has revealed God’s goodness with such abundance and plentitude.” We live in a world not only enough, but “abundant and overflowing with goodness.”⁴ If this is true which of the statements about presence is really enough?

As we continue to walk into an unknown future in our community and country, how can we live lives that bring about a positive change? Can we focus on those parts of our life that bring hope and freedom to others?⁵ Can we take time to live our life enough; to appreciate the sun and the rain and all the other blessings of nature and life, to fully experience the joy and know the reason for our pain, to want less and share what we possess, to engage deeply in relationships so that we are satisfied when it comes time to say goodbye?

I wish you enough, to know you are enough, to see God sends enough and that God is enough.

⁴ Matthew Fox, Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic-and Beyond, pp.xxxvi.22f.

⁵ <https://www.theacorn.com/articles/living-the-best-life-today-by-looking-at-gods-grace-for-us/>