

Superheroes and superpowers – 1 Samuel 3

Hulk – super strength – gained by radiation exposure

Spiderman – spider skills – bitten by spider

Captain America – super soldier – special serum

What is Samuel's superpower?

Maybe it was being in God's presence:

Samuel is there in the Tabernacle – God's house. He'd been dedicated to God by his mother, Hannah. For those that don't know the story, Samuel's mother, Hannah, had never been able to get pregnant and in those days that was a mark of shame. In desperation she'd called out to God and he answered her prayers. Hannah then dedicated Samuel to God and when he was old enough, she sent him to the Tabernacle, to work for Eli.

As God had gifted Samuel to Hannah, so Hannah gifted Samuel to God. As an aside, I think there's a real lesson about selfless and sacrificial giving here!

So Samuel has this privilege of being in the place where the people of Israel come to worship God.

So is this his superpower, no, because all of us can be in God's presence. God isn't confined to a tent. He wasn't then and he isn't now. It's simply about making time and space to be with God. I hate to say it, but it's not difficult. An overwhelming number of us here will make time and space in our daily lives to let a box on the wall speak messages to us. If we can do that, we can make space to hear more important messages from God.

Therefore, maybe it was being called to a task by God:

Samuel is a miracle baby. And if there's one thing the bible loves, it's a miracle baby. Samuel was born for a purpose. He was to be God's messenger.

At the time, there was a spiritual leader in Israel – Eli – but he was getting old and his sons were rotten. They may have thought they'd take on their father's role but God had other plans.

Being God's messenger and leader was not an inherited position, there could be no sense of entitlement about it.

But you don't have to be a miracle baby to be called by God. Because God calls all of us, to different tasks at different times and in different ways.

While God most likely will not call us as He called Samuel with an audible voice, God still has His own unique purposes for our lives. Each of us is indispensable to God's plan.

The Lord has created us each unique with our own skills and talents, and He wants us to use these skills and talents to serve Him.

Being called is not a superpower, being called is normal.

Maybe instead, his superpower was hearing God speak?

Might think so, I've not met too many people who have literally heard God speak out loud. God is there in the Tabernacle speaking to Samuel. There's not even many occasions in the Bible when this happens! Wouldn't it immense to have that overwhelming confidence to know that when God wants to speak to us, you're just going to hear that voice.

The only thing greater, I guess, would be if God took the time to write things down so that we have his words ready and available in front of us so we don't have to wait for him to open his mouth...

Samuel's superpower is not hearing God speak. God speaks to us in all sorts of different ways. The bible is there at your fingertips every single day. We can easily surround ourselves with godly brothers and sisters who will speak God's truth into our lives.

We may not always understand or initially recognise God's voice, but then neither did Samuel. It took time and help to work out that God was speaking to him.

So, what is Samuel's superpower?

Samuel's superpower is that Samuel does the one thing that is the hardest of all. Samuel trusts God enough to obey.

When God gives Samuel a doom laden message, He gives the full message to Eli (warts and all) and so is proved trustworthy. It must have been daunting for a young lad to give such a message to the spiritual leader of Israel, a father figure to him but he does it.

It would have been easy to sugar-coat the message, to water it down and miss bits out so as to avoid disturbing Eli, but he doesn't. He is faithful to what is given to him and he is faithful to the calling God has placed upon his life.

And so we see that Samuel's superpower isn't really hearing God but it's being obedient.

But is it really a superpower?

Well, compared to the rest of what we've thought about, yes.

We can all spend time in God's presence.

We can all hear God speak.

We are all called.

But do we all trust God enough to obey him?

It comes down to what we looked at last time

Jesus said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

A little child instinctively trusts a parent. Samuel instinctively trusts his heavenly Father.

To receive the kingdom of God we need to trust God in the same way. And when we trust God, we will obey what he asks of us.

So may God grant you the faith to trust him. May you know that you have the time and space to spend with God, may you recognise the immense privilege of holding the word of God and being surrounded by God's family on earth, may you acknowledge that God has placed a call upon your life and has equipped you for the task in hand but may he now, through his holy spirit, give you the faith to trust and obey him.