

# Send Me

May 16, 2010

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## I) **Isaiah 6:1-8**

### II) **Introduction**

- 1) I want to thank Paul and Sheryl Noren for being with us today. You have reminded us again of what it means to answer God's call and to follow that call no matter where it leads. We will continue to pray for you and support you in any way we can and look forward to hearing what God is doing in and through you.
- 2) This morning we dive into a life changing scripture text. God asks a simple question, "Who will go for us? Whom shall I send?"
- 3) How will you answer?

### **B) Jimmy**

- 1) I was working late one night by myself when we lived in Houston. I heard a knock on my first floor office window and without thinking I went and unlocked the front door. I know now that this was a pretty dumb move because I was the only person there.
- 2) At the door was a troubled young man that I sort of knew and was not very excited to see. He was the estranged husband of a woman who was involved in the church ministry.
- 3) Just looking at him, the alarms went off in my head. Jimmy's appearance was disheveled, obviously high on drugs and quite agitated. He needed money and gave me an unbelievable story. I tried to stay calm but didn't like the situation.
- 4) I told him that I could not give him any money and I asked him to go for a walk with me. I did not want him to corner me in side the office building and thought it would be safer out on the street. I quickly changed the subject from his desire for money to matters of faith. To my surprise, Jimmy was eager to talk about God.
- 5) We sat on a curb underneath a street light and talked. Because of the drugs in his system, the conversation was scattered and at times bazaar but the longer we talked my danger meter lowered to a minor alert status.
- 6) At one point Jimmy stood up and was feeling heroic. He suggested that the two of us go to downtown Houston and find some drug dealers that he knew and tell them they were sinners and that they needed to turn their lives over to God. I know that God certainly cared about the souls of drug dealers Jimmy wanted to ambush with the Gospel, but I could say with some confidence that God was not calling him or me to that ministry that night.

### **c) God's call**

- 1) Unfortunately, like Jimmy, many of us respond unwisely to a mission in front of us out of some desperate need to feel important or to mask our own addiction to sin. When we see a need we are quick to heroically jump to our feet and recite Isaiah's infamous response, "Here am I, send me!"

- 2) God's word for us today is a sober teaching about responding to God's call.

*(a) True, God is looking for people to step forward and respond to go and change the world but not before they are ready.*

### III) Context

#### A) Uzziah

- 1) In the first verse of Isaiah 6, we are given the date of the great prophet's amazing vision. The year King Uzziah died was 735 BC, 2,745 years ago. Isaiah lived in Judah which was the southern kingdom of Israel. Uzziah became king when he was 16 years old and ruled Judah for 52 years. He is one of the few kings in this part of Israel's history that the Bible says was one of the "good kings."
  - (a) Even though Uzziah for the most part was a good king, along the way he made a mistake that came at a terrible cost to him personally and to the kingdom of Judah.*
  - (b) In arrogance, he took on a ministry that was not his to take. He went into the temple and tried to make an offering at the altar of incense to the Lord; a responsibility that was only to be done by consecrated priests.*
  - (c) Immediately he was struck with Leprosy and for the rest of his life was isolated from the court and lived out his days as a lonely leper.*
  - (d) The kingdom of Judah suffered too. Because of the king's isolation, things started to unravel in Judah to the point that when his young son, Jotham took over as king, Judah's enemies threatened and the moral fabric in Judah was well frayed. Jotham failed miserably as king.*
- 2) Judah's most dreaded enemies were the Assyrians. The Assyrians were a combination of the Nazis, Al Quida, the evil empire from Star Wars and the Chicago Bears all in one. These were nasty people who were emboldened by Judah's chaotic state.
- 3) So in the year King Uzziah died, Isaiah had this vision.

#### B) God's temple

- 1) He found himself in the heavenly Temple of God, in the unseen kingdom. There the heavenly king sat on the throne over creation.
  - (a) As with Isaiah, we cannot forget that when things around us seem to be unraveling and the enemies of God are defiantly pounding their chests, the King of heaven and earth still sits on the throne. Christ still rules the seen and unseen world.*

#### C) Isaiah's Vision

- 1) Isaiah's vision is an important reminder for you and me about the gravity of responding to the call of God to go.
  - (a) Bear in mind. Christ's call to go is for all of his followers and not just for prophets like Isaiah or people who go as missionaries like Paul and Sheryl or pastors or other kinds people in Christian ministry.*

- 2) Jesus is very clear that God's call is for **all** believers. But before you get some kind of heroic attitude like Jimmy and step forward for the wrong reasons let's follow the pattern set in Isaiah's vision for responding to God's call.
- 3) Here are 4 Rs to help organize the way we think this call.

#### IV) The 4 Rs

##### A) **First, Revere God's holiness.**

- 1) Isaiah said,
  - (a) *I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another:  
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.*
- 2) If you have ever stood in front of the Grand Canyon, seen the sunrise off the rocky coast of main, beheld the night sky from the heart of Africa, felt the spray from Niagara Falls or witnessed the miracle of child birth you know what it is to be in awe. But none of those scenes compare with what Isaiah saw, the glory of God. No wonder he said that it felt like everything was shaking, it probably began with his knees.
- 3) You see, we think and act differently when we are in the presence of God. Our priorities become clear and most importantly, our perspective of God, like Isaiah, is heart stopping awe.
- 4) Don't even think about charging off to change the world without first standing still in the presence of God. If you do, your mission is doomed for failure, like it was for Jimmy.
- 5) It is as simple as this, before you attempt to do anything for God, **first, revere God's holiness.**

##### B) **Second, Repent of your sin.**

- (a) *Isaiah said, "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."*
- 2) Have you ever gotten ready in the morning in the dark? It can be a very dangerous thing for those of us who are used to looking in a mirror.
- 3) A few years ago on a Sunday morning that's exactly what happened. I arrived at church thinking I was ready to preach. The last thing I did was make one last check in the restroom. I was horrified by what I saw.

- (a) *My tie completely clashed with my shirt.*
- (b) *Worse yet, staring at me in the mirror was a big zit on the end of my nose.*
- (c) *Worst of all, somehow I missed a big section of beard when I shaved. It looked like a badly conceived 3 day old soul patch.*
- 4) Fortunately, I had a shaver at the office and there was still enough time for Pat to bring me a different tie.
- 5) Isaiah was floored when he clearly saw his sin in the revealing light of the Lord. When he made the comparison between himself and the holiness of God, it un-did him. He was convicted when he saw how polluted his heart was. He also recognized that the culture he came from was completely corrupted.
  - (a) *You are in the dark if you assume, "Hey, I'm pretty good. God must be impressed with me because I'm not nearly as bad off as those other people." Then I'm sad to say, you have not been in the presence of God. When you are in the presence of Holiness, you melt because you see your sin as it really is, ugly.*
- 6) Before you raise your hand and volunteer to change the world for God, **repent of your sin.**
- c) **Third, Receive God's atoning fire.**
  - (a) *Isaiah said, "Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."*
  - 2) This is a very strange image. It kind of gives you the willies, doesn't it?
  - 3) Atonement is the repairing or healing of what has been injured or broken. Isaiah's sin had to be atoned before God would send him to do God's work.
  - 4) There were two places in the temple in Jerusalem that had hot coals. The Altar of Incense was located in the Holy Place from which fragrant smoke rises representing the presence of God. The other hot coals come from the brazen altar out in the courtyard where the sacrifices for sin was made. It is from the Altar used for the sacrifice of sin that the Angel retrieved the hot coals.
    - (a) *Notice that the Angel used tongs to retrieve the hot coals and we all cringe as they are pressed against Isaiah's lips. As you know, the skin of the lips are the thinnest and most sensitive skin on the body.*
  - 5) Listen carefully. Sin must be purified, it must be atoned. If you want to be restored in a right relationship with God then you must make yourself open to be touched by God in the most vulnerable places in your life.
  - 6) Did you notice that the very thing that God purified in Isaiah, the part of his life that produces speech, is the very thing that God used in Isaiah's ministry, the powerful prophetic proclamation of God's Word to Israel.
  - 7) **Revere God's holiness. Repent of your sin. Receive God's atoning fire.**

**D) Fourth, Respond to God's call**

- (a) *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*  
*And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*
- 2) The mission that God sent Isaiah to accomplish could not be done on his own merits, goodness, talent or strength.
  - 3) God calls people who are awe struck by God's holiness, repent of their sin, receive God's atoning fire and then are responsive to God's call to go and do what is humanly impossible.
  - 4) Too often our sense of call is as silly as how the great preacher Peter Marshall described.  
(a) *"Many Christians are like people dressed in diving suits designed for many fathoms deep, marching bravely forth to pull plugs from bathtubs."*
  - 5) Isaiah was sent to speak God's word to people who were destined for exile. The northern kingdom of Israel was soon going to be assimilated into the obscurity of surrounding nations including the Assyrians, thus, relinquishing their promises as God's people.
  - 6) Shortly after, the southern kingdom of Judah would be taken into exile for their hardness of heart toward God leaving only a stump from the mighty tree of the family of God.
  - 7) Isaiah, however, prophesied that one day from that stump a shoot, a new growth would break forth on the world scene and bring the hope of redemption for all people. He called it the shoot of Jesse which we know was a prophesy pointing to the coming of Jesus.

**V) Conclusion**

**A) God is calling for people to step forward to change the world.**

- 1) God asks, "Who will go for us? Whom shall I send?"
- 2) Is God calling you? Do you sense that there is something more for you to do? Do you hear that small voice in your heart that keeps saying, "respond?"
- 3) Students you may have been thinking that you are heading for a life in business, medicine, education or any number of careers. Perhaps, God is also calling you to use your education and be a missionary or a pastor or to serve in some other ministry?
- 4) Adults, it is never too late to respond to God's call. It is never too late to put your life in God's hands and say, "Here am I, send me."

**B) Bow your heads with me.**

- 1) This is a holy time. We are on holy ground because God is present here speaking to people. I invite you to be silent before God right now. Don't speak, just listen in your heart for his voice.  
(a) *Is God calling you to some kind of mission? Is God revealing a vulnerable place in your life that needs to be purified? Whatever God is saying to you, it is a summons into his holy presence.*

(b) *Be silent now before the Lord God Almighty.*

(c) *(Silence)*

#### **VI) Response**

- 1) Lord Jesus, King of all creation, we have heard your voice and know we are in your presence. Let the priorities of heaven be placed in our hearts. Purify all the pollution in our minds, our attitudes, our intentions and every part of who we are. Press upon us the hot coals of atonement upon the vulnerable places in our lives in need of cleansing and healing. After all this, call for us to respond and we will say, Here am I, send me. We pray this in the name of the holy One, Father, son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

#### **VII) Song: If You Say Go**

- 1) If You say go, we will go  
If You say wait, we will wait  
If You say step out on the water  
And they say it can't be done  
We'll fix our eyes on You and we will come

We'll fix our eyes on You and we will come

Your ways are higher than our ways

And the plans that You have laid

Are good and true

If You call us to the fire

You will not withdraw Your hand

We'll gaze into the flames and look for You

We'll gaze into the flames and look for You

#### **VIII) Benediction (responsive reading)**

- 1) **Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty,**
- 2) **the whole earth is full of his Glory.**
- 3) Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
- 4) **"Here am I. Send me!"**
- 5) Go then, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.