

Epiphany 5  
February 10, 2019

Isaiah 6:1-8  
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“Here I Am, Send Me!”

- I. Here I am – forgiven by God.
- II. Here I am – sent by God.

Dear Christian friends,

It’s pretty obvious that Isaiah was NOT a **Lutheran**. There’s no way he could have been. Lutherans **may get RAILROADED** into a job but they don’t volunteer for one. Lutherans say, **“Here I am** – but don’t look at me – send him instead!” **Lutherans** say, “I’m too busy – if you can’t get anybody else then I SUPPOSE I could help but don’t expect me to do anything that will take too much **time** or **effort**.”

We can joke about that but in all seriousness IT’S NOT a joke. Our sinful nature loves to **volunteer others** but God wants us to **volunteer OUR OWN time** and **effort** and **help**. God wants us imitating Isaiah’s example not joking about it. **God wants** you and me to say, **“Here I am – Send me!”** Like Isaiah – 1) **Here I am** – forgiven by God. 2) **Here I am** – sent by God.

### I. Here I am – forgiven by God.

**“Here I am,”** Isaiah said – and WHAT A SIGHT it was for him! **“I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”** It was an AWESOME – breath-taking sight – the MAJESTIC – HOLY Lord God. He’s on a throne **“high and exalted”** yet **“the train of His robe”** fills **“the temple.”** He is Lord of the NATIONS and Lord of the CHURCH.

**“Above Him stood the seraphim. Each one had six wings. With two they covered their faces. With two they covered their feet. With two they flew.”** This is the only place in the Bible were the **“seraphim”** are mentioned. They are some type of angel. They ARE PERFECT creatures – holy and sinless – yet even they are OVERWHELMED to **be in the presence** of the Lord God. They are humble and reverent. If these holy creatures are SO OVERWHELMED - so HUMBLE and **reverent** - shouldn’t we sinners be EVEN MORE SO?

**“One called to another and said, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Armies! The whole earth is full of his glory!’ The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of the one who called, and the temple was filled with smoke.”** **“Holy”** literally means to be SET APART. The Lord God is **“holy”** – set apart – from all creation. God is IN A CLASS by Himself – there is no one else like Him. God is **“holy”** – set apart from all that is IMPERFECT or IMPURE. God is **set apart** from all sin and He cannot condone or **tolerate** ANY sin. As the seraphim sing the praises of the **“holy”** Lord God the throne room echoes and **shakes**. WOW! What a sight!

Yet for Isaiah it was NOT WOW but **“Woe!”** **“I am doomed! I am ruined!”** Isaiah cries out. WHO was he to be there – to see and **hear** this? He’s an INTRUDER in such a holy and **awesome** place. He is SO UNWORTHY and UNFIT to be in the presence of the Lord Almighty. The holy angels were filled with AWE and HUMILITY. The sinful Isaiah was CRUSHED – **condemned**. **“I am doomed! I am ruined, because I am a man with unclean lips, and I dwell among a people with unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies!”**

In Psalms 24 David wrote, **“Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.”** Clean hands – pure heart? That’s NOT ME – or you! In Psalms 14 David wrote, **“LORD, who may dwell in Your sanctuary? Who may live on Your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is right, who does his neighbor no wrong.”** Again – that’s NOT ME or you. Those who want to think of God as some kind of a WISHY-WASHY pushover need to stand next to Isaiah and see and hear what he did here.

Isaiah hears the holy angels praising the **most holy** Lord God and he thinks of HOW HE'S USED **his lips** and tongue. But it hasn't always been to SING God's praises! **How often** haven't we used our mouths NOT TO PRAISE our **holy** God but to curse and swear – to lie to our spouse, parents, teacher, boss – to spread gossip about others – to tells jokes that **wouldn't make** our **holy** Lord God laugh. Isaiah had known all along that God is **holy** but NOW SEEING and **hearing** it he is crushed by his **sin** and **guilt**. ***"I am doomed! I am ruined!"*** Here we are JUST LIKE Isaiah. HOW DARE we come into the presence of the **most holy** Lord God!

But now see what happens! ***"One of the seraphim flew to me, carrying a glowing coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with the coal and said, 'Look, this has touched your lips, so your guilt is taken away, and your sin is forgiven.'"*** The **holy Lord** God didn't ignore and excuse Isaiah's sin but He did GRACIOUSLY FORGIVE it.

We know the reality behind this **picture**. God didn't simply wave a **magic wand** over our sins and make them disappear. The **holy Lord God** sent His own eternal Son to be our Savior. The Lord Jesus left His ***"high and exalted throne"*** in heaven and was born one of us in **Bethlehem's barn**. IN OUR PLACE and to our credit Jesus actually live the life holy and perfect **in every way**. And then – NEVER CEASE to marvel at this! – the holy and sinless Son of God took the sin of the whole world on Himself. Jesus **took that sin to His cross** and there He was punished in our place. THERE on the cross Jesus personally paid for all our sins with His own innocent suffering and death. THERE at the cross the holy Lord God says, ***"Your guilt is taken away, and your sin is forgiven."*** THERE at **Jesus' cross** our forgiveness became an **accomplished** HISTORICAL FACT.

Here we are – FORGIVEN by God's **grace** because of what **Jesus all did** for us. Now with Isaiah we hear God asking, ***"Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"*** Like Isaiah CLEANSED and MOTIVATED by God's grace we respond, ***"Here I am. Send me!"***

## II. Here I am – sent by God.

***"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne."*** This vision takes us back to about **740BC**. Uzziah was the last of **Judah's prosperous** kings. In both the **northern** kingdom of Israel and the **southern** kingdom of Judah there had been one last GOLDEN AGE of prosperity. The economy was **booming**. Their armies were **winning**. The times were **good**. But SPIRITUALLY it was a **disaster**. The cancer of idolatry was **eating away** at God's people. Both kingdoms were TERMINAL but neither would admit it and **repent** of their sin. God had been sending them prophet after prophet but with NO SUCCESS. Soon enough God's JUDGMENT would **fall on both** kingdoms.

***"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne."*** What a CONTRAST – God ***"on a throne, high and exalted"*** and Uzziah dead and buried. **Uzziah** had ONCE BEEN so mighty – so successful – so rich and **powerful**. NOW he was dead. So it goes – there is ***"a time to be born and a time to die."*** We KNOW that yet how often don't people get so wrapped up in this life as if this is ALL THERE IS to life?

***"In the year that King Uzziah died,"*** Isaiah saw God and heard Him asking, ***"Whom shall I send?"*** Isaiah quickly responded, ***"Here I am. Send me!"*** Isaiah didn't even know WHAT he was **volunteering** for – but if his Savior needs and wants his help He's GOT IT – no questions asked – no excuses offered.

That's the difference God's FORGIVING GRACE makes in our hearts and lives. **How** can we go to Jesus' bloody cross and empty grave and then tell him we're "TOO BUSY" or to find somebody else – we've "DONE ENOUGH" already? ***"I said, 'Here I am. Send ME!"***

God tells Isaiah, ***"Go and tell this people."*** Isaiah was going to be one of God's OT ***"fishers of men"*** – just as Jesus called Peter to be in the gospel reading. There's an OBVIOUS play on words

there – but some important lessons too! The **“fisherman”** goes fishing to feed himself or make money by selling his fish. His fishing is FOR HIMSELF. But for the **“fisher of men”** it’s NOT ABOUT SELF but others – what I can do for others – how can I share the gospel with others. The **“fisherman”** wants to kill and eat the fish – or sell them for money – or maybe mount it as a **trophy** on his wall. The **“fisher of men”** is NOT ABOUT DEATH but life – bringing God’s gospel of **eternal life** in heaven to people dying in their sin and heading to hell.

The work of sharing the gospel is ALL IMPORTANT. **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,”** Paul told us in the epistle reading. Jesus came FOR EVERYONE but only those who actually trust in Jesus as their Savior have eternal life in heaven. Yet **as Paul continued** HOW can anyone believe in Jesus if they’ve never heard about Jesus? FOR ANYONE to believe in Jesus he must FIRST HEAR – **learn** – about Jesus. **For anyone to stay** a Christian he must CONTINUE to hear about Jesus. **“Faith comes from hearing the message.”**

Isaiah wasn’t sent to a **foreign** country but to the people right there in the kingdom of Judah. SO TOO for us! **“Here I am”** and God sends us back first to our FAMILIES. God sends parents to **teach** their children about Jesus. God sends congregations to ASSIST parents in teaching their children God’s Word and how to live as God’s children in a very ungodly world. But it DOESN’T STOP there. God sends us to relatives and **friends** – to neighbors and **co-workers**. ALL AROUND us are people who haven’t heard about Jesus – who have drifted away from Jesus – people who think they can LIVE JUST FINE without **God interfering** in their lives. Yet just like King Uzziah – **like you** and me – THEY TOO will one day be dead and buried – and WITHOUT JESUS there is no eternal life in heaven but only eternal punishment in hell.

The work is urgent but it’s NOT EASY. It’s **not one stunning success** after another. God never promised us that. it wasn’t that way for **Isaiah** or **Peter** or **Paul** or **even Jesus**. But that’s no excuse to just GIVE UP or **not even TRY**. There will always be SOME who **by God’s grace believe** and are saved.

**“Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? Here I am. Send ME!”** FORGIVEN by **God’s grace** we are now sent to share God’s grace with the world around us. Amen.

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