

Send Me

Isaiah 6:1-8

April 23, 2016

Today

Isaiah stood in the portico of the temple - he just stood there and stared. He knew that God had called him, but he wasn't sure that he WANTED TO BE CALLED.

It was God's purpose, that through Israel, His character would be revealed and the whole earth would be drawn to Him. He placed them in the land of Canaan – the economic crossroads of the world. All trade from Egypt to countries in the North and Babylon to the East went through Israel.

Even before entering Canaan God's purposes were presented to the Children of Israel..... (Deut. 11)

External Pressure:

- Tiglath-Pilser III became king of Assyria in 745 BC. He would terrorize and conquer much of western Asia and looked for any excuse to invade Judah.
- King Uzziah, who was a leading voice of resistance against Assyria, died.
- Judah would be invaded by Northern Israel, Syria and Assyria during Isaiah's lifetime.
- Samaria would fall to Assyria in 722 BC and the ten tribes of Israel would be scattered among the nations.

If the threats from without had been the only problems the call of God would have been quite easy to accept, but that was not the only problem, in fact that was not the problem at all....

Internal Turmoil:

- **2nd Kings 17:7-23** - For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God,
- Both Israel and Judah adopted the practice of Idol worship
 - Even sacrificing their own children (2 Kings 21:1-7)
- Leadership did not fear or worship God
- They practiced witchcraft and soothsaying
- They exploited the poor
- Justice could be bought
- They rejected the covenant with God
- The rich illegally accumulated land and wealth

Ellen White {PK 306}: It was the perversity of his people that brought the Lord's servant the greatest perplexity and deepest depression.

SDA Bible Commentary says that because of their sins, the professed people of God had forfeited divine protection and it seemed to be only a matter of time before Judah would be overwhelmed. In other words the dangers from without were not as serious as the dangers from within. It was the apostasy of Judah, not so much the threat of invasion that was driving the message of Isaiah. Their need was not for physical deliverance, but for a national rejection of their current way of life. From the lowest to the highest, everyone was out for their own gain. Idolatry was everywhere and it was not an uncommon practice to sacrifice your own children to the gods (2 Chronicles 28:1-4).

God's people had gotten used to sin – their sin – and they expected that they could remain in their sin while God would continue to bless them. They did not see the sinfulness of their sin, "The people who walk in great darkness have adjusted their eyes".

VISION

In the midst of all this turmoil God called Isaiah to bear warnings and reproof to His people. To Isaiah the task seemed hopeless. God knew this. He could see Isaiah's despair and discouragement and as Isaiah was standing in the portico of the temple God chose to reveal Himself.

- **Isaiah 6:1-3** - I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy,

Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." As each called, the threshold shook to its foundations at the sound, while the house began to fill with clouds of smoke.

- Isaiah needed to personally experience the power and holiness and purity of God.
- Isaiah needed to see that the reality of earth is not the reality of heaven. Despite the ugliness of a sin filled world, God is still on His throne; He is still holy. He is still sovereign and His plans and purposes will be accomplished.
- Isaiah needed comfort and encouragement for the task ahead

PERSONAL REALIZATION AND FORGIVENESS

How did Isaiah react? He was dropped to his knees!!!

- **Isaiah 6: 5** - Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Never before had he felt his sin as keenly as he did at that moment. He was in the very presence of God!!! He was a sinner and he knew it!!! Not only that he was a citizen of THE nation chosen by God who had WILLINGLY and WILLFULLY turned their backs on God. Isaiah felt the oppression and doom of their collective sins.

One of the remarkable facets of God's love and mercy is what happened next. He did not leave Isaiah weighed down in his sin:

- **Isaiah 6:6,7** - Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ And he touched my mouth *with it* and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven."

Isaiah was forgiven AND his sin was wiped-out. The sins of Judah, however, were not removed and it was in that moment that Isaiah UNDERSTOOD his calling: to warn, to threaten, to cajole, to prophesy on behalf of God to His people who had rejected Him. Because He loved them THAT much.

CALL of GOD

I heard the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?'

RESPONSE of ISAIAH

No longer depressed or perplexed, Isaiah responded IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT HESITATION.

I said: 'Here am I! Send me....'

Isaiah's call did not change – but he changed and he became a bold voice for God and for the next 60 years he would preach the messages of God and for 60 years he would meet with mockery and rejection, but his voice never faltered and his message never changed. After all he had seen God!!!

Take Aways

We have information ABOUT God – week after week, year after year, perhaps decade after decade we've sat in the pews and absorbed information BUT information ABOUT God is not the same as relationship WITH God.

Have you EXPERIENCED God in your life? Have you experienced that defining moment, when like Isaiah, you can say "I saw the Lord seated on a throne high and lifted up?"

- Perhaps you are afraid to experience God because it will mean dramatic changes in our life.
- Perhaps you are afraid of the rejection and mockery that those changes will bring.
- Perhaps you are weighed down by the burden of responsibility because to experience God means a call to action.
- Perhaps you are overwhelmed by our own realized sins.
- OR maybe you'd rather be comfortable
- OR maybe you like things just as they are

Here is my argument this morning:

- Information without experience is just that - information.
- Information + a personal experience with Jesus Christ = transformational knowledge, which leads to a transformed life.

When you have experienced Jesus in your life you are transformed – you are different. You become a servant of God and a lover of men. God’s passions become your passions. You will do whatever God asks you to do. You will speak what God asks you to speak. You will give up whatever God asks you to give up. You will become a sold-out disciple of Jesus and you will never be the same.

This is my prayer for you this morning:

- That you will experience God in your life and that you will be transformed.
- That you will understand the depth of your sinfulness and the freedom that comes when you lay your sins at the foot of the cross.
- That you will realize the Majesty and Holiness of God and His saving power in your life.
- And finally, that when God calls you into service for Him that you will, without hesitation and without looking back, say I’LL GO, SEND ME.