

#164 “Here I Am, Send Me”

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God is always looking for faithful men and women that He can support and empower to accomplish His will and purposes on this earth (2 Chronicles 16:9). He has given us a commission to be active in making disciples and to teach them all that He has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). He wants workers, and He asks that we would pray for more workers to go out into the harvest (Luke 10:2). God’s method in building His kingdom is by using willing and obedient servants, people who avail themselves to God’s call upon their lives. For some, the call may be to foreign missions or to the ministry, but for most of us, we will be called to be ministers of the gospel even though our career paths might look much different. Wherever we are and in whatever we do, God is looking for people whom He can support to build His kingdom. He has missions for us to do, but the question is whether or not we will accept the call.

There is nothing particularly extraordinary about faithful men like Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, etc., at least in and of themselves. James makes that clear when he says, “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours” (James 5:17). He was human just like we are with all the faults and weaknesses and temptations. Yet he, like many other faithful men and women of old (Hebrews 11), was faithful to do what God asked him to do. We would do well to consider what it was that made these individuals take God up on His offer to serve, to be used mightily of Him, to suffer for Him, and to lay aside the passing pleasures of sin in exchange for the glory of God. They were ordinary human beings, but they let God do extraordinary things in their lives.

Isaiah’s commissioning to service gives us some insight into the perspective that is required for a person to come to view their lives as a servant of God and to sacrifice accordingly. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah received a vision of God seated on His high and exalted heavenly throne. That the train of His robe filled the entire temple was a symbol of total power and authority (Isaiah 6:1). Even the seraphim, angels Who minister in God’s very throne room, maintained positions of reverence, covering their eyes and their feet while flying so that they wouldn’t touch or see the holiness of God (Isaiah 6:2, Exodus 3:5). They called out to one another saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3). The three-fold emphasis of God’s holiness is meant to be emphatic to the highest extent. The only right posture as the seraphim demonstrated was to bow, worship, and exalt. Deference to the King of Kings was the only thing that made sense. Add to Isaiah’s experience the fact that the foundations of the room were shaking and the room was being filled with smoke, likely symbolizing God’s glory indwelling the entire place. Isaiah couldn’t take it anymore, being immersed with glory, perfection, and holiness, and he cried out, “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” (Isaiah 6:5). In light of God’s perfection and holiness, Isaiah was overwhelmed by his imperfections and sinfulness. It so sickened him that he thought that he was going to die. He recognized that he was unclean and that his people were unclean. But this is exactly what he needed to see. He needed to first see just how

holy and wonderful God was before he could see his inadequacies and his need for change and sanctification. Only when we see God for Who He really is can we rightly deal with the true state of our own hearts which God will graciously enable us to do. In Isaiah's case, one of the seraphim took a burning coal from the altar before God and touched it to his mouth (Isaiah 6:6). The coal symbolized the holy cleansing of God sanctifying Isaiah and removing his sin (Isaiah 6:7). This encounter with the grace of God had to be so incredibly relieving and moving that it was something he could never forget and something he was eager to share with his people.

Now up to this point God had not spoken. Isaiah had only seen visions of Him, but then God asked a question. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" (Isaiah 6:8). The Us clearly refers to all three Persons of the Godhead, for the "I" and "Us" are used in the same sentence for the same God. This just serves to further convey the wonder, majesty, power, and uniqueness of God, and in this environment and asked by such a God, Isaiah's only reasonable answer was to volunteer himself. In Isaiah 6:8 he says, "Here I am. Send me." Interestingly, God didn't force Isaiah to volunteer. He merely asked if there was any who would go, and Isaiah said, "I'm available. I'll go." God doesn't force us to serve, but He works in our hearts so that we desire to volunteer for Him. We should come to see within ourselves the attitude that Isaiah possessed of willingly taking God up on His offer to serve for the kingdom of God.

Isaiah's commissioning ends with God giving Isaiah instructions about how hard his calling is going to be in that those to whom he preached by and large wouldn't listen (Isaiah 1:9-13). Yet, at this point, Isaiah has already committed himself. We are not given any evidence that he wanted to back out, and this is what is so remarkable. He had been so impacted by God's holiness, the depth of his sinfulness, and the grace of God that he was ready and willing to obey God no matter what. He didn't put conditions upon his obedience, but he simply said that he would do what God would ask even though God hadn't yet told him what that would be. Even when he found out that it would be a difficult calling, he didn't back down. When we see God as Isaiah saw God, it is hard not to make ourselves available and it is hard to be dissuaded from our calling, no matter how difficult it might be. A right view of God, of ourselves, of our sin, and of grace is essential for faithfulness to what God has called us to do.

Too often, we wait for someone else to share the gospel with a loved one because we don't want to stir the waters. Sometimes we expect our pastor to do all of the ministry things while we just show up and support him. This is not God's way. He wants us to say with Isaiah that we are available and willing to go and do whatever we are asked. He wants us to have willing hearts and not pass off our responsibilities to someone else. God has created good works for us to do (Ephesians 2:10), and it is our responsibility to do them. We will not be judged one day by what our pastor has done or by what other people do but by what we do. We will give an account for ourselves.

Isaiah, an ordinary man, was willing to obey God and step out in faith to let God do extraordinary things through him. Let us pray that we would come to see and value God as Isaiah did such that we will say with Isaiah, "Here I am. Send me."