

Here I am. Send me!

**Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11**

Have you ever experienced God's call on your life? I had heard this passage read many times, but this time I had a most unusual experience, I actually **felt** God's touch. When the words of verse six were read I **felt** the glowing hot coal touch my lips, which set off an amazing chain of events in my life. When we read about Isaiah's commission, it was also mine, personal to me, as it should be for **all** of us. **"Here I am. Send me!"** To this day when I hear Isaiah's words, I feel the presence of the hot coal on my lips vividly; it was that powerful an experience. I had no idea where God was sending me, but I knew I was ready to go. For me it was a mission trip, for you it was probably something different. What we have in common with each other and with Isaiah, Paul and Jesus' first disciples is that we are all called according to God's purpose. It may be to something you are already doing, it may involve a move away from the familiar, it may involve a challenge, it may take you out of your comfort zone. Whatever it involves, know that God has called **you** to **his** purpose, and he will equip you with the gifts and talents needed to fulfil these tasks.

At the time I had a young family, children aged 10, 7, 5 and 3 and my husband was working fulltime. Financially this trip was out of our reach. Yet I felt God calling me to go. I guess, I identified a little with Peter and those fishermen we heard about in our gospel reading today. They had fished all night and caught nothing, and were probably very disappointed, exhausted, and maybe a little annoyed with themselves, just wanting to go home and rest. Then Jesus asked to use their boat to preach from and then, he tells them to take the boat back out to deeper water and recast their nets. Despite what Peter was feeling, he was obedient to Jesus' request and the reward was extraordinary.

Isaiah is being called to be God's prophet, to speak on behalf of God. Then he is informed that he should expect that no one will listen to him or even understand him. I cannot imagine that was an incentive. God is illustrating to Isaiah, that it is God's words his lips will speak, not Isaiah's. The Holy Spirit will interpret them for the hearers, not Isaiah.

Whether they are heard or not is the choice of the hearer, not a result of how Isaiah speaks.

Therefore, God speaks, God interprets, God receives the praise, honour and glory. When Isaiah witnesses the glory in the Temple he is convicted by the Holy Spirit.

He realises that he is a 'man of unclean lips', only then is he cleansed by the hot coal. Isaiah is to prophesy about the impending exile that the Israelites must endure to cleanse them from their unfaithfulness to God.

When we hear God's calling, like Isaiah, many of us feel unworthy, ill equipped, not capable of what we are being asked or given the opportunity to do. When we trust God and step out in faith, we will find that God makes a way. We are clean because Jesus died for our sin, redeeming us in God's sight. When we speak out our faith and it falls on deaf ears it does not reflect on us, it is God who takes the burden. We are called to be obedient.

Like Paul, "by God's grace I am who I am", I was unable to make this mission experience happen for myself. It was by God's unmerited grace and provision that all fell into place to enable me to go and be part of this amazing group of people. The grace that grasped Paul enabled him to reach out in grace to grasp others. Yet by his own admission it was not Paul, it was Christ Jesus in Paul, who spoke the good news of God's victory over death through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

In our gospel reading we have the account of Jesus calling his first disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John; ordinary fisherman living ordinary daily lives. Jesus, on the cusp of his ministry has boarded a boat to speak to the crowds on the shore. Then He chooses to illustrate the extraordinary that God can accomplish through the ordinary. After he had spoken to the crowd, he instructed the disciples to cast their nets out again. They could have ignored him, knowing that they had worked the nets all night and caught nothing. But to their credit they obeyed Jesus and followed his instructions, experiencing a miracle of extraordinary proportion. As a result, they reaped the benefits; Jesus called them to accompany him on a greater mission, to fish for men.

Peter's reaction was like Isaiah's; he was convicted by the Holy Spirit, falling at Jesus's knees and asking him to depart from him, he was not worthy to be in His presence. God had trusted him with this small request to which they had been obedient, now they would become

God's representatives to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, restoring people's trust in God and his purpose for their lives.

When God calls us, he has a purpose for our lives envisioned. We may not see the possibilities, only the barriers, but God goes before us, preparing the way, opening doors and nets to enable us to step forward. We can do so, in faith, confident in God's provision. We are powerless individuals in our own strength, but when we allow God to work in our lives, we find He can accomplish the impossible through each one of us, when we are obedient, using our hands and feet.

As a result of my obedience to attend the mission trip God spoke to me and I heard the **official** call to the priesthood. Little did I know that my journey from that time would lead me through much sorrow and grief. **Trusting** God to work in your life does not mean it will be all sunshine and rainbows, but it **does** mean that he will be with you every step of the way, providing your material needs, comfort in times of sickness and sorrow, and He rejoices with us through the good times. **After** my desert experiences I have emerged with the purpose to follow God's will for my life into the priesthood.

Where is God calling **you** to go into the world, share the good news and make disciples of the people you meet?

Is Jesus calling **you** today to cast your net out into deeper water?

Like Isaiah, Paul and Peter are **you** ready to answer his call?

**Here I am. Send me!**

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.