

June 7, 2009
Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8
Sermon: "Here I Am!"

This is such a familiar text for most people. Ministers pull this text out when they are trying to encourage people to sign up for things in the church. Newly ordained ministers use this text during their ordination services. There has is nothing more exciting and motivating than these three words: "Here I Am!" or the request to "Send Me"! These words are meant to fire up the people of God for service. These words are meant to stir up the people to go out into the world. These words are meant to inspire the people to embrace their call to discipleship. Here I AM! Send Me! I will go Lord!

We can all relate to a time, maybe at church camp or after an inspiring sermon, that we have felt the same fire, the same drive, the same spirit urging us to step forward. We knew at that moment that we had experienced the Holy presence of God and couldn't wait to say: Here I Am, Send Me!! I will Go Lord and lead your people. I will go and hold your people in my heart. I will go and show your love to your people. I will go and work to bring about the Kingdom of God here on earth!

And to be honest, that is exactly what I thought I would be preaching on today. I thought that I would be up here today saying, We have been given a call as the people of God and now it is our choice to respond. And the Good News is that our lives are so transformed by the presence of the Holy that we jump up and say: Here I Am, Send me!

As they say in my business: That'll preach! But it didn't this week for me. Something kept me from preaching that message.

Every time I looked at this Scripture and read the words, "Here I Am, Send Me, my eyes would drop to the message that Isaiah was told to bring to the people. "Share the Good News but the people aren't going to hear. Show the people God's love, but the people aren't going to want to see it. Try to get the people to understand about the nature, the awesome presence of God, but the people won't open their minds to this life-changing experience of God."

And Isaiah's response is "How Long?" No longer is he energized for ministry. No longer is he excited that he accepted the call to be a prophet of the Lord. No longer is he anxious to go out into the world, revved up for ministry. He is beat down. He is tired. He is spiritually drained and doesn't have the energy for the journey ahead.

Where's the Good News in that?

It would have been so much simpler if I could have just brought a message about our call, and then beat the crowd to lunch at Wallace Station.

But then I started thinking about the world in which we as people of faith, as disciples of Christ find ourselves living out our faith. We find ourselves in a word that tells us that no matter how much we pray, it doesn't matter because there is no hope. We find ourselves in a world that says

God does not care. We find ourselves in a world that is struggling for answers. We find ourselves in world that says there is no Good News to share.

And we as people of faith are finding it harder and harder to be excited about calling. We as people of faith are finding it harder and harder to be energized about our ministry opportunities. We as people of faith are finding it harder and harder to be eager about being disciples of Christ.

And we begin to wonder Where is the Good News? What's the point? Why do I even bother when it doesn't matter? No one is listening.

That is until we remember that we are a resurrection people. Until we remember God's words to Isaiah: "There is a holy seed in those stumps." Until we remember the empty tomb from that first Easter morning. Until we remember that promise of new life. Until we remember the power of the cross.

Until we remember that God is in control and that we have experienced the awe-some, awe-filled, awe-inspiring presence of God in our lives. Just like Isaiah, we remember that our God is an awesome God who reigns from heaven above, with wisdom, power and love. That our God is a God that created the mighty mountains and created the delicate wings of the butterfly. That our God loved us so much that God gave God's only Son for you and for me.

That our God's presence changes lives, transforms lives, and gives us hope, gives us energy to say to this broken, hurting world, you do not have the last word. God does!

That is the Good News that we are called to share! God is among us. God's Spirit is stirring us as people of faith. God's presence transforms our lives. God is there with us, walking beside us, lifting us up on wings like an eagle. God is there, giving us strength to say to this world: Yes, there is hope. Yes, there is grace. Yes, there is love. Yes, there is new life!

Because that is the God that we have experienced in our lives. That is God who formed us in the womb. That is the God who has watched over us from our birth. That is the God that knows our comings and our goings. This mighty, majestic, powerful, mystery God who took the form of a baby and came to restore us and renew us as people of God.

Just like Isaiah, when we come into the presence of God, we are filled with amazement and wonder. Just like Isaiah, We realize that we have tried to limit God, to put God in a box, to tame God. Just like Isaiah, when we stand before the presence of God, we realize how impossible that task really was. We can't limit God. Our God is too powerful. We can't make God safe. Our God is too mysterious. We can't tame God. Our God is Holy!

Our God is an awesome God who reigns from heaven above with wisdom, power and love. Our God is not a God who can be contained in a box. Our God is holy, majestic, and mysterious. Our God inspires God's people. Our God cares passionately for God's people. Our God provides hope for God's people.

And that is the God that Isaiah encounters in our Scripture today. That is the God that Isaiah responds to when he says Here I Am. That is the God that renews Isaiah when his ministry

becomes too much too bear. That is the God that Isaiah remembers when he says this world does not have the last word. That is the God that calls Isaiah forth as a prophet.

“Holiness, majesty, and mystery characterize Isaiah’s God. The people...needed such dimensions in order to find their way through the transitions. We too need such a God if we are going to find a way through the transitions that we face.

We have tried to make God safe. We have tried to limit God. We have tried to control God. And it doesn’t work that way. And we have discovered when the times get tough, that safe God doesn’t work. We need a God who is holy, majestic and mysterious. We need a God who loves us passionately and unconditionally. We need a God who will suffer the cross for you and me. We need a God who will overcome death and bring forth new life. We need a God who brings hope to a broken and hurting world.

And thanks be to God, that is the God who has claimed us and called us God’s own. Thanks be to God that that is the God who we worship. Thanks be to God that that is the God whose love, mercy, and grace has transformed our lives and has made us whole.

And the Good News is that our God will be with us from the first time we hear the call as disciples and say Here I Am to the times that we wander how much longer we can go on. The Good News is that our God is an awesome God who reigns from heaven above with wisdom, power and love. The Good News is that our God knows us and loves. The Good News is that our God claims us as God’s own. The Good News is that this world does not have the last world, God does!

The Good News is that our lives have been transformed by this holy, majestic, powerful God.

The Good News is that God is among us, guiding us, leading us, strengthening us for the journey ahead, and making us whole.

Now that’ll preach!

May we always remember the presence of God is among us and in us as we accept our call as people of faith and say Here I Am. Send Me. Amen.

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