

The Calling of Isaiah – Part I

Imagine having an ordinary time of prayer and all of a sudden finding yourself in heaven before the throne of almighty God. What you have believed by faith you now experience by sight? This happened to Paul in the New Testament and it happened to Isaiah in the Old Testament because of the monumental ministries they were being called to. Today we start a study in the book of Isaiah that will last all the way until Christmas. The book is not in sequential order so we will begin with the calling of Isaiah which is in chapter 6.

Isaiah 6:1-7 ESV

- I. Introduction to Isaiah.
 - a. He begins to prophesy in 740 BC and speaks into the lives of four kings. He lives through the destruction of the northern kingdom (Israel – 722 BC), and foresees the captivity of the southern kingdom (Judah – 605 BC).
 - b. It is called the Bible within the Bible.
 - i. The first 39 chapters – Judgment with the promise of redemption. The holiness of God and the judgment of God are highlighted – God has a right to judge and has the resources to bring judgement and He will exercise them in His timing. Yet His heart is still redemptive and promises that the end of His judgment is a cleansing to bring in a beautiful future. These 39 chapters correspond to the first 39 books of the Bible – the Old Testament which has the same themes.
 - ii. The second 27 chapters – Redemption is highlighted with still warning of judgment for those who don't respond to God's mercy. Isaiah means, "Yahweh saves." This corresponds to the 27 books of the New Testament – God's plan of redemption yet ending with Revelation and the warning of judgment on those who reject His salvation. Isaiah 40 starts with the calling of John the Baptist and Isaiah 53 is the clearest vision of Jesus as our Savior in the Old Testament.
- II. God has two addresses.
 - a. He is high and lifted up. Isaiah 57:15a ESV: "For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place..." *Holy, holy, holy – either a reference to the Trinity or the Hebrew way of magnifying something or both!
 - i. 1Samuel 2:2 ESV "There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." He is the uncreated, Creator – transcendent over all He has made.

- ii. Isaiah 46:5 ESV “To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike?” We can’t really know Him at this address – we embrace the mystery and worship.
- b. Isaiah 57:15b ESV “...and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” We can experience the real Presence of God in this second home but we must be broken.
 - i. Isaiah is in the temple – it’s a difficult time in the nation. Just because we’re religious doesn’t mean we’re experiencing the real Presence of God. The prodigal son runs from God in rebellion; the older brother hides from God in religion.
 - ii. Psalm 51:6 NASB “You desire truth in the innermost part.” *Our missionaries – David has a position, and he’s still going through the motions – it takes a prophet to call him out of hiding. Cast me not away, don’t take, restore to me the joy...
 - iii. Psalm 51:17 ESV “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” The way back to God is repentance and brokenness. *Isaiah “I am ruined”; I am lost; I am silenced.”

III. True forgiveness.

- a. What he experiences next is the basis for his entire message. Chapter 1 comes after the experience of chapter 6. Isaiah 1:18 ESV “Come now, let us reason[ⓐ] together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” Remove the log from your own eye then you will be able to speak to others. Before he tells others to get right with God, he gets right with God.
- b. Unclean lips:
 - i. Dirty conversation – vulgar, taking the Lord’s name in vain, “a people of unclean lips.” TV, internet, movies – filthy language is the norm. Have you joined them?
 - ii. Grumbling and complaining – talking behind God’s back – if you’ve got something to complain about, take it to the source! If you’re bringing it to someone in authority are you doing it with respect?
 - iii. Boasting – Proverbs 27:2 ESV “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.” Have you ever fished for a compliment? “I’m so bad...”, “What did you think about the way I...” Jeremy Taylor: “Never say anything, directly or indirectly, that will provoke praise or elicit compliments from others. Do not let your praise be the intended end of what you say. If it so happens that someone speaks well of you in the midst of a conversation, you are not to stop the conversation. Only remember

this: do not let praise for yourself be the design of your conversation.” Unclean lips – there is a Hero but it’s not you!

- iv. Gossiping – Jantalgen – no one is special – we don’t want anyone to get the big head. Cutting others down is another way of lifting yourself up. “I’m just speaking the truth...” Be careful.
- v. Quarrelling – Proverbs 18:2 ESV “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” *My early experience with this verse. *Is anyone listening today? Two ears and one mouth – listen twice as much as you speak.

c. The sacrifice necessary for true forgiveness.

- i. The altar – Lambs were sacrificed so that there could be real forgiveness that includes a coal that changes us. God granting repentance means there will be a change in behavior.
- ii. The Lamb – John 1:1; 1:14 ESV “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
- iii. Isaiah 53:2b-5 ESV “...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected^[b] by men, a man of sorrows^[c] and acquainted with^[d] grief;^[e] and as one from whom men hide their faces^[f] he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” Jesus is God’s accessible address. We can know Him in Christ; we can be truly forgiven in Christ; we can experience the real Presence of God in Christ.

Let’s pray together.