

The Heart Of A Volunteer

Isaiah 6

We are all here to make a difference in our world. We have the opportunity to make a difference for those closest to us, for our generation, and for God. We are called to be the solution to wickedness and be the light in the darkness. The call of God is upon each of us. There are so many books that talk about your unique skills, your unique giftings, and what you're going to do with your life, and where you're going to go, but none of them talk about your calling.

What is my call? What am I meant for? What's my anointing? What should I do?

You'll never miss what God has called you to do, if you just make a decision to serve people. Carrie Chapman Catt says this, "Service to a just cause rewards the worker with more real happiness and satisfaction than any other venture in life."

So many people think that it's their career that is going to make them happy. Finding your giftings and using them is what is going to make you happy. Fulfillment comes in discovering what you are good at and using it to serve other people. I don't know anybody that makes being happy their goal and actually finds happiness. Their lives end up on a junk heap if they pursue just happiness. The key to long and lasting happiness is to follow Jesus and serve people.

What is the heart of a volunteer?

Did you know Jesus was a volunteer?

Jesus said, "*Nobody takes my life. I give it. I have the authority to lay it down. I got the authority to lift it up. I lay it down freely.*" John 10:18

If you choose to have a volunteer's heart, it's something that you choose to do. When you hear the word "offerings" in the Old Testament, like the peace offerings, sin offerings, grain offerings, different kinds of animal or burnt offerings, it literally means "free will." We all have a free will. God will never force you to do anything. You get to believe what you want, act out what you want, and live how you want.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Mother Teresa said, "Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough. Money can be got, but people need your hearts to love them. So spread your love everywhere you go."

A Greek proverb says, "A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit."

All of us are building something. We're building people and buildings, and when we're gone, every generation that will rise up after us will take the technology and the buildings to wherever it needs to go.

Isaiah 6 is the prophet's own spiritual autobiography that tells us how he came to be the prophet of God.

He mentions the death of King Uzziah, the tenth king of Judah, and he was a very godly man. He was highly influenced by the prophet Zechariah and, unlike many of the other kings, he never totally departed from the worship of the true God. Under his influence, the southern kingdom attained power, wealth, and success unlike any it had enjoyed since the days of Solomon. Made proud by his success as king and by his blessings from the Lord, Uzziah made the mistake of offering incense in the Temple. (2 Chronicles 26) He was stricken with

leprosy by the Lord for his disobedience to the Lord's commands. He died in that leprous condition! Disobedience to the Lord is a serious thing! Isaiah is disturbed by the death of the great king.

Isaiah's life was shaken emotionally, personally, and financially at the same time.

His death signaled the end of a time of great prosperity and consistency. For Isaiah and the entire nation, it ushered in a time of uncertainty, change, and doubt. Yet, for Isaiah, this was to be a time of rediscovery.

Apparently Isaiah had his attention focused on Uzziah, but now that Uzziah is dead, his attention is redirected back to the Lord. What must have been a down time in the prophet's life became an up time. That which had held his attention was removed, and Isaiah had a fresh encounter with God. What happened to Isaiah in this event spotlights for us what we need during the down times in our own lives.

Isaiah had to change his mind about things—about himself—about others—about God.

1. WE NEED TO SEE WHAT ISAIAH SAW.

How we think of God will affect our lives.

A low view of God tends to produce a low form of living.

A lofty view of God will produce a higher form of living.

- He Saw God's Position.

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another." Isaiah 6:1

Isaiah saw God in His sovereignty.

An earthly king may have died, but the Lord still reigned. He saw the Lord in all His glory, and it had a profound impact on the life of Isaiah. When life seems to fall apart at the seams, we need to remember the God Who is in control of it all!

- He Saw God's Presence.

"And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke." Isaiah 6:3

"The house was filled with smoke" was a symbol of the presence of God. God's "train" filled the temple! God was the central figure in the Temple! Isaiah was reminded, rather forcefully, that Uzziah might be gone, but the Lord was still there!

We need to remember this truth as well! If we are saved, we are never alone, and even during the down times of life, we still have the presence of the Lord with us at all times.

2. WE NEED TO SENSE WHAT ISAIAH SENSED.

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” Isaiah 6:5-6

Isaiah is one of the most incredible prophets, and as soon as he sees God, it wakes him up. He gets a look into heaven and the throne room, filled with smoke and lights and angels that are singing “Holy holy holy,” so powerfully, and harmonically, that the foundations are trembling. He knows he's not qualified. He knows he's not able. He knows he doesn't have the gifting.

- He Sensed His Own Condition.

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he instantly realized there were problems within his own heart.

That is what happens when you get close to God! Moving closer to God, and seeing Him as He is, reveals the wickedness and sin in our own lives.

Isaiah thought all was well in his life until he saw the Lord in His glory and holiness.

When he did, he was made aware of his own shortcomings! Until we see God and are confronted with our own condition before Him, we will remain haughty and proud, but when we come face to face with Who He is and what we are, it will produce humility and confession!

Isaiah did not cry out, *“Woe is my neighbor!”*

He cried out, *“Woe is me!”*

Until we are able to see our own failures and our need for repentance before the Lord, we will never come clean, and the sooner we come clean with the Lord about our own condition, the sooner we will see our down time start to turn up!

- He Sensed A Need For Cleansing.

“Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’” Isaiah 6:5-6

The Lord does not just point out our sins, He also provides a means for our cleansing!

With Isaiah, it was an angel with a live coal from the altar. With us, it is the precious blood of Jesus.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

If we ever see Him as He is and see ourselves as we are, then we will come before Him in humility and confess our sins.

The closer you get to Him, the worse you look!

But, when that realization comes, and we deal with it in repentance before the Lord, we will experience His cleansing, and we will be able to stand in His presence and receive all He has for us!

In those days, they all believed that if you looked God in the face, it meant you were going to die.

Nobody ever feels like we're ready to do something for God.

3. WE NEED TO SAY WHAT ISAIAH SAID.

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8

He heard about an assignment from the presence of God and stepped up and volunteered.

He hears the call of the Lord.

- He said, “I Am Available.”

When we place our all on the altar for God and come to the place where the only thing that means anything to us is what He wants from us!

- He said, “I Am Agreeable.”

Lord, I am here to do what you want, and I am willing to do what you want! Send me, and let me go do what you want me to do!

We are the apathetic generation!

- Our lack of commitment is due to our lack of deep concern.

We don't want to get involved because we have a busy life.

Why is it we struggle to care like Jesus cares and to be committed like Jesus was committed?

The amount of things we are called to and exposed to makes it difficult.

- We feel helpless to make a change.
- We are so busy that we are overwhelmed.

We feel like we can't make that big of a difference because we are just one person.

- We are blessed and cursed with comfort.

We don't want to get involved because we are comfortable.

Comfort makes us very self-focused.

We are so blessed, we can press an app and have a pizza brought to us in 30 minutes.

You can tell Alexa to bring a pair of shoes to you in a couple of days.

You can have any TV show brought to you.

Comfort is like a drug. You get a little more and want more.

We leverage God for our comfort. “Lord, make my headaches go away and make my bank account go up.”

How do we overcome the epidemic of apathy?

- Consistently expose yourself to things that create a righteous discomfort.
- If there’s a lack of exposure, there is a lack of interest.

When people go to a third world country, they feel deeply for those people, and then they return to their life and lose that focus, and then things go back to normal.

When you have a righteous discomfort, you make yourself immune to the apathy that dominates so many.

“I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel.” Romans 9:1-2

That’s the upside opposite of people who do not care.

When you are like that, you can’t not do something.

The number of causes that could grab your attention are very many.

- A lot of things will catch your attention, but only a few things capture your heart.

The focused passion of Jesus affected Paul, and he made a lot of difference.

The Holy Spirit’s power and a little of our passion can make a big difference!

We are focused on not just going to church, but being the church.

We are not focused on being served by the church, but serving others and being the church.

Passion attracts others, and apathy is repulsive.

- Apathy makes excuses, but passion finds a way.

Embrace what hurts.

Paul said, “My heart is breaking for these people.”

Some people say it’s easier not to care.

I’d rather hurt with a purpose and a calling than not care.

I’d rather hurt and embrace what hurts and get involved.

If I never give sacrificially, then I’m serving a false God.

We think “blessings” are the stuff we want.

We need to be “blessed” with a burden.

- Isaiah was blessed with a burden.
- David was blessed with a burden.
- Nehemiah was blessed with a burden.
- Jesus was blessed with a burden.
- You need to be blessed with a burden.

I'd rather hurt with a purpose than exist without one.

Passion to move out of the comfort zone.

We are a generation dominated by massage chairs that lift you and set you down. It's not the things you do in this chair, it's the things you don't do when you're in this chair.

If you don't say yes, you miss out on the adventure with God.

Isaiah knows he's not qualified. He knows he's not capable, but he says, "Yes!"

What are you going to do for the rest of your life? The call of God is on you. I don't care what job or career you have. I don't care where you are. In everything that you do with your life, don't ever forget that God is still calling, and He is saying, "Who will go for us?"

If you say, "When I've got the talent to do it, I'll go." You're never going to have the talent.

He just said, "Who's going to go?" God's presence is still calling you today. He's not asking you if you can. He's not asking if you're clean enough. He's not asking if your life is pure enough. He's not asking if you've dealt with enough issues in your life. He's just saying, "Who's going to go? Who will I send?" And all Isaiah said from his complete feeling of uselessness, ungifted, and everything else was, "Here I am. Send me."

There's no difference between me and you. I'm not a multi-gifted person. I just hear calls at times.

What we need to do next is hear this and just volunteer. I admire and love all of you who roll up your sleeves and labor somewhere with us every week with the heart of a volunteer. If you don't volunteer, you're never going to know the joy. You're never going to know the excitement of being on a team rolling up your sleeves and saying, "I don't know what to do, but I'm volunteering. Put me where you want me."

Serving God is exciting!

You can only do something great when you take a chance. You can only do something great when you take a risk.

"Eternity is forever, and if eternity is forever, I've been by the bedside of probably a couple hundred people and I watched them die and I've spoken with them as they have. And I promise you, if it's not something that will rattle your cage and take a little arrogant out of your life and go, "Life is short, and the world suddenly happens quickly."

I want to make sure that my life counts for something, loving people, serving people, loving my church, my friends, my family.

What are you doing?