

# 35

## Send Me

*“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)*

There are many things I love about children’s sermons. Kids have such freedom in expressing themselves. I am sure that many parents hold their breath, wondering what their child might say or reveal that would embarrass the family. One of the things I particularly enjoy is when I ask for a volunteer. Before I can even say what it is that I want them to do, the hands go up: “Pick me . . . pick me . . . please. . . .” It matters not what the task. They just want to be picked.

This is the spirit I see in Isaiah as he stands before the Lord. Before he even knows what God wants, his hand shoots up like some preschooler: “Pick me . . . pick me . . . please . . . .”

All of the mission responses we have looked at over these last 34 days are empty without this kind of heart. Jesus said,

*“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men” (Matthew 15:8-9).*

The heart of one who is willing to be sent out reflects this unrestrained joyous surrender to the will of God.

Getting to that point is no small thing. There is so much that can stand in the way. Look at Isaiah. Listen to how it was for him:

*“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs,*

*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: ‘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. ‘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.’ Then one of the seraphs 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.’ 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 6:1-8).*

What happened? How does Isaiah move from “Woe is me! I am ruined!” to “Here am I. Send me!”? That is quite a jump. Knowing the answer is foundational to any church becoming a sending church or any Christian living with that inner sense that they are sent on a mission from God. As a way of approaching this, let’s use the word HOLY as an acrostic to show the way in which Isaiah was able to move from fear to faith, and from guilt to grace.

## H Him

*“I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying” (Isaiah 6:1-2).*

Worship is about Him. He has created us so that we might delight in Him and give praise to Him.

*“Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations” (Psalm 100).*

Do you notice how many times the pronoun he or him or his is mentioned? Life is all about Him. Worship is all about Him. Rick Warren expresses it this way:

“It’s not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It’s far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by his purpose and for his purpose” (p. 17).

So often I want to make it about me: My needs. My hurts. My joys. Matt Redman has written a song that reminds me of this each time I sing it. Here is a portion of that song:

## The Heart of Worship

When the music fades  
And all is stripped away  
And I simply come  
Longing just to bring  
Something that’s of worth  
That will bless Your heart

I’ll bring You more than a song  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required.  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear.  
You’re looking into my heart.

I’m coming back to the heart of worship  
And it’s all about You.  
It’s all about You, Jesus.  
I’m sorry. Lord, for the thing I’ve made it  
When it’s all about You,  
It’s all about You, Jesus.

When our worship is about Him, then He will be revealed to us in all of His glory and power. *“I saw the Lord.”* Those four words speak volumes as to what worship is all about. He reveals Himself to us in His Word and within the Sacraments. He speaks to us and serves us before we can even open our mouths. It’s all about you, Jesus.

## O Omnipotence and Omnipresence

*“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 6:3-4).*

Isaiah has entered this moment filled with grief and fear. King Uzziah was dead. As far as kings go, he had done well by Israel in many ways. Since David, he was the best king that sat on the throne. His reign had been for 52 years. There had been a feeling of security with him. Now the future of Israel

is uncertain. Israel is deteriorating on the slippery slope of immorality. Isaiah is also grieving the death of a friend. The world seems to be caving in on him. Do you know what that feels like?

At moments like this, the vision of God in all of His holiness and glory can create both fear and comfort. God-pleasing worship carries that tension. On the one hand, worship helps us in times of trial and testing to remind us that we are not the victims, but that in Christ we are the victors. He is bigger and stronger than any problem we face. In the face of many changes, Isaiah was reminded of God's omnipotence and omnipresence. Worship that reveals God in His holiness and glory will also strike fear in our heart.

## **L** Lowly

*“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).*

God's holiness and purity. You see this time after time. Habakkuk trembles before the holiness of God (Habakkuk 3:16). Job repents in the face of God's purity and wisdom (Job 42:1-6). The disciples, in view of the righteousness of Jesus, understand their own sinfulness (Luke 5:8).

One cannot look at God without having a sense of one's own unworthiness. The thief on the cross saw not so much the power of Jesus as he did His righteousness and holiness. In response, he saw his own unworthiness and asked for mercy.

Isaiah, in view of God's holiness, fully understood his own condition. When he saw the holiness of God it was as if he realized, “If this is the standard, if this is how high the bar is raised, then I am doomed. I don't even come close. I have seen God, the Lord Almighty. I live in the midst of an unclean land. What hope is there for me?”

## **Y** Yield

*“Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar” (vs. 6).*

*“From the altar.”* This was the place where a continual sacrifice burned in the Old Testament. One lamb offered in the morning. One lamb offered in the evening. The altar was the place to which people turned to find peace in the atoning sacrifice. Could Isaiah now find that as well?

*With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’ 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 6:7-8).*

“Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Those words not only took away his guilt, they took away his fear and dread before the Lord. Isaiah then only wants the opportunity to respond. He and the woman with the alabaster jar who anointed Jesus would understand each other very well.

The heart of the sending church and the heart of the believer are rooted in that moment when a person comes face to face with the holiness and the grace of God. In that moment, at the foot of the Cross, there is a cleansing in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus that makes children out of all believers, who are just itching to raise their hands and say, “Pick me . . . pick me . . . please . . . .”

**Prayer:** Cleansed by the blood of the Lam. The guilt of sin atoned for by your grace. Here I am, O God. Send me. **Amen.**

**Challenge:** Spend some time this day with your favorite Christian music or reading some Psalms and offer praise and worship to God for His cleansing that you have received.

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 6

**From the Book of Concord:** “Observe that in these three petitions we have needs that concern God himself in a very simple form, and yet everything has been for our sake. What we pray for concerns only ourselves in that, as mentioned above, we ask that what otherwise must be done without us may also be done in us. Just as God’s name must be hallowed and his kingdom must come even without our prayer, so must his will be done and prevail even though the devil and all his host bluster, storm, and rage furiously against it in their attempt to exterminate the gospel utterly. But we must pray for our own sake so that his will may be done also among us without hindrance, in spite of their fury, so that they may accomplish nothing and we may remain steadfast against all violence and persecution and submit to the will of God” (The Large Catechism, The Third Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, p. 449.68).

**In Your Own Words:** Write below or in the margins the key thought or lesson you have learned in this chapter on Send and/or a thought you would like to explore further.