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“God’s Calling”

Isaiah 6

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In Isaiah 6, God pulled back the curtain of heaven, which allows us to see God seated on a throne with angelic beings circling above. Isaiah’s calling into ministry is also part of this chapter. When Isaiah encountered God, he saw his unworthiness, yet he was willing to serve the Lord if the Lord saw fit to use him. All of us have “ministry” – whether to family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers, but there are also some people that God specifically calls into full-time Christian service. Might you be one of those who are called by the Lord? Have you ever wrestled with a “calling” on your life, and wondered if God was leading you into the ministry, the mission field, or some sort of vocational Christian service? Pastor Gary’s teaching today will help us see a vision of heaven, learn more about Isaiah’s calling, and understand that God is still calling people into full-time Christian service.

Isaiah’s Calling

1. Most Bible scholars believe the reason Isaiah’s call into ministry is out of chronological order with what happened in the first five chapters of this book, is that it was placed there for literary effect, as well as to help Isaiah authenticate his ministry.
2. Isaiah’s ministry began in 740BC, which was the year King Uzziah died.
 - a. **Isaiah 6:1** - *“In the year that King Uzziah died...”*
3. King Uzziah
 - a. Uzziah was also known as Azariah.
 - b. He became king at 16 years of age, and he reigned 52 years, which was the second longest reign of any of the kings of Judah. ¹

¹ King Manasseh reigned 55 years.

- c. The Lord was with Uzziah and gave him great success, which made him very popular with the people of Judah.
 - d. Uzziah was a great builder, military leader, and king.
 - i. The account of Uzziah's life is found in [2 Chronicles 26:1-15](#).
 - e. Unfortunately, near the end of his life, Uzziah stumbled in his walk with the Lord, having committed a grievous sin by entering the Temple to burn incense on the altar, which was a priestly duty.
 - i. God's judgment for Uzziah's sin is found in [2 Chronicles 26:16-21](#).
4. Pastor Gary said: "[Overall, King Uzziah is] considered [to be] one of the relatively good kings of Judah, because, for most of his life he sought the Lord, and as he sought the Lord, God gave him [success]. [Because] of this you need to understand the climate of the culture at the time of Uzziah's death. He was very popular, very well liked, [and a] very successful king. So, now that the king [was] dead, what [was] to happen to a nation whose very popular king has died? They [were] thrown [into] insecurity and instability. ... They began to worry [about what they were going to do]. ... And so, they [were] beside themselves and they were anxious [and] worried about their future. I want you to read [Isaiah 6:1](#) not just as a timeline [event]. ... I want you to read it as a statement, as it's intended to be, because God [was] making a statement... about power and authority. [The rest of [Isaiah 6:1](#) is saying, that] though the throne on earth might be vacant, the throne in heaven is occupied, and always will be! Because God is forever on his throne! And so, Isaiah [was] saying this as a word of comfort to himself and to the people of Judah. ... God is still in control, and God is still LORD, and everything is going to be okay."

God Is Always On The Throne

- 5. [Isaiah 6:1](#) - *"... I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted..."*
- 6. Like the people of Judah, we too can become unsettled and fearful, but that's when we need to remember that God is in control and he's still on the throne.
- 7. Pastor Gary said: "[We need to put] things into perspective by remembering that [no matter what], God is on the throne. [God] is in control. [God] cares and God sees, and God knows."
- 8. [Psalm 25:15](#) - *"My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare."*
- 9. Pastor Gary said: "[God] was the living God [then], and God will always be the living God. God was the living God when the universe was spoken into existence,

and he's still the living God. God was the living God when [Friedrich] Nietzsche said, 'God is dead,'² and God is still the living God. God was the living God when John Lennon said, '[Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that; I'm right and I will be proved right.]'³ And, God is still the living God. And will always be the living God [one] trillion ages from now when all of the puny philosophers will fade into obscurity like a \$2.00 bill, because God is on the throne!"

God Is Majestic And Holy

10. **Isaiah 6:1** - *"... and the train of his robe filled the temple."*
11. In addition to the splendor of the Lord seated on his throne in the Temple, is the presence of seraphim!
 - a. **Isaiah 6:2** - *"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."*
 - i. In Hebrew, the word seraph means, fire, and seraphim (more than one seraph) would mean, fiery ones.
 1. The wings that covered their faces indicate that they were unworthy to behold the presence of God.
 2. The wings that covered their feet indicate that they were unworthy to stand in the presence of God.
 3. This is the only reference to seraphim in the Bible.
 4. The primary role of seraphim was to give praise to God for his holiness.
 - a. **Isaiah 6:3** - *"And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' "*
 - b. The word, holy, is the only word in the Bible used in triplicate to describe God.
 - i. Four creatures are mentioned in the book of Revelation who call out in a similar way.
 1. **Revelation 4:8** - *"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' "*
 5. **Isaiah 6:4** - *"At the sound of their voices the doorposts and*

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_is_dead

³ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/john_lennon_151452

thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.”

- a. Moses understood the holiness of God, too.
 - i. **Exodus 15:11** - *“Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”*

12. **Psalm 96:9** - *“Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.”*

God Is A Mirror To My Soul

13. Isaiah realized his own sinfulness when he was in the presence of God.

14. **Isaiah 6:5** - *“‘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.’”*

15. Pastor Gary said: “The same thing will happen to you and me when we spend time in the presence of the Lord. When you spend time praying, reading your [Bible], and getting into the presence of God, what begins to happen is [that] you just begin to see a mirror of yourself. And, in contrast to his holiness, you begin to see your unholiness. In contrast to his magnificence, you begin to see your insignificance. In contrast to his love, you begin to see your own loveless-ness. [The] more time we spend in the presence of God the more we become gripped with our own broken condition.”

God Is The Remedy For My Sin

16. When Isaiah saw the depth of his sinfulness, he realized that God was the only one who could provide a remedy for his sin.

17. **Isaiah 6:6-7** - *“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.’”*

18. The angel wasn’t worthy to touch the altar of God, so he used tongs to select a burning coal from the altar.

19. The angel transferred the coal to his hand and administered it to Isaiah by touching his lips with the burning coal.

20. Pastor Gary said: “Why go through [the] exchange of transferring it to his

hand? Because it is a statement to us, that when God used this angel as an agent of atonement, God did not want [an] impersonal touch of cold, metallic tongs; [he] wanted the personal touch of atonement so that Isaiah would be a vessel that God could use. And, two thousand years ago, God did a similar thing, [when] his son, Jesus, became the personal touch of atonement for you and me. Not an impersonal God, [who is] far removed, but God himself in flesh [became] the agent of atonement, [who died] on a cross for us so that we might be personally cleansed, because of his atoning work.”

21. **1 John 4:10** – *“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

God Is Still Using People To Reach People

22. **Isaiah 6:8a** – *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ ”*

a. A reflection of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is seen in this verse.

23. **Isaiah 6:8b** – *“And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’ ”*

24. God has always been concerned about the lost, and who would reach people who don’t know him, and those who don’t know that they don’t know him!

25. Pastor Gary said: “What [this] literally means [is], ‘Look me over, God, and see if I’ll do.’ ... This begins the commissioning and the calling of Isaiah as someone that God [used] for his purposes and for his glory. ... Could you be an Isaiah for this generation? Could God possibly be calling you to be a vessel that he would use for this generation? [God] is still using people to reach people. Now I want to clarify something lest anyone misunderstand me. I’m not saying that the only people that God can use are those in full-time ministry. We have ministry wherever we are, wherever we go, wherever we work, [and] wherever we live, and I hope everyone understands that. Wherever you live, God has planted you [there] and that circle of your neighbors is your ministry. [Wherever] you work, God has planted you and your co-workers is [your] ministry. Wherever [we] go God wants us to be vessels that he would use as salt and light in the world. So, I want everyone to hear that clearly. But there are also those that God will call to give the rest of their lives in service to the work of the ministry. ... I believe he’s calling some of you. All of us have ministry, but some of you God wants to call... in service to the Lord.”

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Isaiah 6:1-8](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the God being in control, even when things are unsettled, etc. (See #4 through #9 above)
3. Read and discuss [Isaiah 6:1](#) concerning Isaiah's description of God seated on his throne in heaven. (See #10 above)
4. Provide an overview of the description and role of seraphim and focus on our responsibility to "*Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.*" (See #11 and #12 above)
5. Allow people to share their experience about coming to a full understanding of the depth of their sin and their need of a Savior. (See #13 and #15 above)
6. Read and discuss [Isaiah 6:6-7](#).
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about God's atoning work in Isaiah's life. (See #20 above)
8. Read and discuss [1 John 4:10](#). (See #21 above)
9. Read and discuss [Isaiah 6:8](#) and focus on Isaiah's commissioning and calling into ministry. (See #22 through #24 above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the ways the Lord is still calling people into full-time ministry. (See #25 above)
11. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).