

Great Commissions:

When God comes to us

Sermon One: Great Expectations in our Great Commissions

Isaiah 6:8-13

Opening III: Sometimes, things come to you. Example: My first real job. I had no plans of getting a job, no aspirations to get a job. Actually, I was trying to go as long as possible without getting a job. ☺ One day I went to a local convenience store and the manager said, “Hey, Dom!” I was thinking about you. Do you want a job? Sometimes opportunities come to us, and when they do, it reveals a lot about us. How do we respond? What do we do? What are we afraid of? What do we value?

I. Introduction

A. To this series—

1. What are we studying for the next couple of months?

- a. We are going to be looking at examples in the Bible of when God approaches people and commissions them to service.
- b. We are going to observing how these people react.

2. Why is this important?

- a. To remind ourselves that God DOES commission us.
 - i. **Matthew 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 - b. To remind ourselves that this is not always comfortable.
 - c. To remind ourselves that we are fooling nobody with our excuses.
 - i. Moses—"I can't speak."
 - ii. Jeremiah—"I am too young."
 - iii. Peter—"I am too sinful."
 - d. To remind ourselves that our commissions are not always successful in a worldly sense.
 - i. That's what we will focus on today.

II. The Context—Isaiah 6:1-7¹

- A. God approached Isaiah by enabling him to see a vision of Heaven. vv. 1-4
- B. Isaiah reacted in humility and sweet desperation. v. 5
- C. Isaiah was purified, forgiven and restored. vv. 6-7

Quote: Almost all sermons on Isaiah 6 conclude with v. 8, probably because of the frankly disturbing character of the remainder of the chapter. It is especially disturbing to Christians whose whole upbringing has conditioned them toward an emphasis upon God's forgiving grace and will to deliver." Oswalt (NICOT, page 187)

[Motyer refers to it as "odd"]

My rejoinders to this quote: (1) I do not find this passage disturbing in the least. Confusing? Yeah. Difficult? Perhaps, but not disturbing. The first half of this chapter is so sublime and majestic, that God could say anything at this point and we would simply be consumed by His holiness. (2) I am sure that many Christians have been presented with an unbalanced view of God, but most understand that God is a God of wrath as well as a God of mercy.

III. The Commission—Isaiah 6:8-13

A. Whom shall I send? v. 8a

1. Notice that God doesn't send what he wants to send somebody to do. That is self-explanatory. This vision/this God MUST be shared.
2. Notice that God is not asking this out of any need.
 - a. **Acts 17:25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

¹ Full disclosure: I have already preached the first 7 verses of Isaiah 6. This sermon will focus on the 2nd half of the chapter.

b. **Luke 19:39-40** Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

B. Here am I, send me! v. 8b

1. Notice the urgency—Isaiah wants to tell people what he has seen and heard!
2. Notice the boldness—Isaiah is assured in his forgiveness.

Transition—Wouldn't we expect that, if Isaiah was genuinely being commissioned by God, that he would be a huge success? Wouldn't we expect that people would come flooding to hear him and that they would drink in every word that he said?

ILL: A seminarian's daydream vs a Pastor's reality. When I was in seminary, I would daydream about preaching and people would be listening and shouting amen. I praise God that this does indeed happen. I would never have guessed, though, how much opposition there is to teaching. I think our passage is a great illustration of that truth.

C. Go and tell this people vv. 9-13

1. You will be ineffective and resisted. vv. 9b-10
 - a. Notice what God says to the people:
 - i. Keep listening, but do not perceive!
 - ii. Keep looking, but do not understand!

Point: Notice that people are listening, but instead of being blessed by what they hear, the message becomes a means of judgment. We see something similar in 2 Corinthians 2:15-17. Notice the emotional toll it seems to take even on the Apostle Paul.

Point: This passage is quoted in Matthew 13:14—parable of the sower

- b. Notice what God says to the prophet:
 - i. Render their hearts insensitive!
 - ii. Make their ears dull!
 - iii. Make their eyes dim!
- c. Why does God command this?
 - i. LEST they believe! Wait...what?

Point: Isaiah wasn't alone in this! Ezekiel and Jeremiah had similar ministries. See Ezekiel 33:30-33

2. You will be dismayed—How long, o Lord? vv. 11-13a

- a. Until the cities turn into ghost towns.
- b. Until the houses are empty.
- c. Until the land is barren.
- d. Until the people are gone.
- e. Until there is only a tenth left
 - i. And even these will be subject to punishment and wrath.

3. You will be encouraged. v. 13b

- a. The holy seed is its stump—what does this mean?
 - i. See Isaiah 11:1ff.
 - ii. **Jeremiah 23:5-6** "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶"In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, "The LORD our righteousness."

IV. The Conclusions

- A. The very existence and character of God make the commission of sharing Him with the world compelling.
- B. We are responsible for faithfulness, not for results.

Quote: "One cannot but admire and even love Isaiah for his willingness and readiness to serve God, even though he was told that his labors would appear to be fruitless. From this we learn the necessity for continuing in the work of the gospel, even when outward success does not appear to attend our work. It may be that apparent lack of outward success is in part due to our own inefficiency; our task, however, is to be faithful. May God grant that his church may have ministers who, above all else, are faithful, even as was Isaiah." Young, 261