

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

February 7, 2010

Text: Isaiah 6:1-13

Theme: "Answering God's Question"

Introduction: God's question for Isaiah and for us is very simple: "Who will go for Us?" This inquiry seems to be very different from how God approached Jeremiah, which was the subject of last week's sermon, which I understand some of you actually checked out on the email that I sent. God didn't ask Jeremiah. He told him, and it was up to Jeremiah to ask the question, "Who me?" That kind of sounds like most of us, when given an important assignment. The star quarterback and the back up are injured, and the coach calls the freshman third string guy and says, "Go in and win the game for us." As he looks around, hoping the coach is talking to someone else, he realizes he is on the hot seat and says, "Who me?" God is calling all of His people to an assignment that has life and death implications. He loves the entire world, and wants all to love Him back and spend eternity in heaven. Through His Word, He is posing the same question to us as He did His prophet in our text: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me." Do we shirk away, and try to hide from ANSWERING GOD'S QUESTION or do we joyfully answer like Isaiah did. Let's talk about it!

I. The Call to service

A. Scary vision of God got Isaiah's attention!

1. No doubt who is recruiting Isaiah: Throne, angels, fire, earthquake etc.
2. Terror is only response of sinful human, when faced with 3x holy God!
3. How easy it is for us to lose awe of God! Power of nature can also get our attention: storms, earthquakes, threat of death!

B. God prepares His spokesman

1. Got to get rid of sin - fire cleanses unclean lips enabling Isaiah's service
2. Gospel - Apostles faced with terror of Jesus power - "Don't be afraid."

Transition: God used cross of His Son to cleanse us, so that He can call us to deliver His message.

II. The Message needed to catch people

A. Law necessary (vv. 9-13) even if a downer!

1. Judah needed convincing that they are stuck in unfaithfulness to Yahweh
2. God's commandments are not just vague suggestions!
3. Our job is not easy, because the world has little use for talk of sin and guilt and impending doom - even though often they feel it and don't know where to go!

B. Good News

1. "Seed" (v. 13) in the stump is Jesus, who died on the seemingly dead tree of Judah, which God never totally destroyed, because they are part of plan to bring the Messiah.
2. Christ is the Holy One who kept God's law, and then died to cleanse us all

Transition: That's the message, but the problem is the world is often not listening.

Perception of Christians often shuts the ears of people: MDA info:

#1 - Hypocritical - Christians say one thing, but live something entirely different.

#4 - Judgmental - "Christians are prideful and quick to find faults in others."

#5 - Arrogant and Overly Concerned with Converts - Christians are insincere and concerned only with converting others

#7 - Sheltered - Christians are boring, unintelligent, old-fashioned, and out of touch with reality.

III. Messengers needed - Who are they? "Who will go for Us?"

A. Call to clergy - Isaiah, Paul, more pastors and teachers needed to lead the church to "Equip God's people for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12)

B. We're all to use our gifts to "catch people."

1. Gospel - Jesus' recruiting mission picked fishermen
2. Epistle - Most important gifts are those that "build up!"

Conclusion: It's not difficult to understand why Isaiah jumped up and shouted, "Here am I, Send me!" After all he'd just witnessed a fabulous vision with shouting angels, and smoke and earthquake and the very voice of God! Who wouldn't respond as he did. But we have something that the prophet did not have. We have the total picture of God's love seen in the life, death and resurrection of His only Son. We have the Holy Spirit filling us with joy and faith through the precious Word and holy Sacraments. Here we are in the fellowship of God's saints from ancient of times until Christ returns. Wow! What an awesome and loving God we have! In faith we know hoe to ANSWER GOD'S QUESTION, saying with God's prophet, "HERE AM I! SEND ME!" Amen,