

## C2 (Commissioned and Committed)

### Isaiah 6:1-8

#### Intro

One of the common misunderstandings about a book like Isaiah is that all of the events that take place within these chapters happened to one person. As far as I know, there is not a commentator with any credibility out there who believes this to be the case. In fact, the totality of the prophecies contained in this volume most likely cover over 250 years worth of history. As you hear that, it logical to ask the question, “how is that possible”?

To begin with, there was an actual Isaiah. We are going to hear the story of his commissioning in a few moments.

However, once he died, the people who followed him, who believed in the divine message that he was offering, wanted to carry Isaiah’s legacy on, so they continued to speak as God implored them to do...and they used Isaiah’s name and legacy.

In terms of a modern example, the first thing that shot into my head on Friday is James Bond. This character’s story, at least in terms of the movies, has spanned 55+ years, 26 films (with another on the way in 2020!) and has had 7 different actors take on the role. Each version of the character was unique, but they were all still James Bond.

The message of Isaiah is a story of a person, and then a group of people who were so committed to the God of their faith that they were willing to do whatever was necessary, even to the point of placing their life in jeopardy. They were that committed.

This morning’s passage offers us the genesis of that level of faith as Isaiah receives a vision that he is sure will mean the end of his life.

Instead, what it signaled was era of speaking the truth, even when it was unpopular, and standing up for God, when that was one of the last things that people were thinking about.

A quick thought to leave with you: what in your life are you committed the most to? The scripture reads this way.

#### **Isaiah 6:1-8**

**6** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

<sup>4</sup> The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has

touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”<sup>8</sup> 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!”

### **“C2 (Commissioned and Committed)”**

So...apparently there was a football game that was played last Sunday? Anyone know what I’m talking about? Super Bowl? Anyone?

I know, I know: it really wasn’t worth talking about (let alone remembering!) say like the year before when the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the now current champion in exhilarating fashion (I’m done now), but when the Super Bowl is played, a huge chunk of America pauses to watch for at least a few moments to see if it’s going to be entertaining.

This year’s game wasn’t entertaining (unlike last year’s game...okay...*NOW* I’m done), but something that I did take away (especially as I started to think about this passage) was how people of faith (especially as we come together in the church) needs to be like the team when they huddle between plays during the game.

It’s the place (in regard to the football team) where everyone comes together to hear what they need to do, where they need to go, and hopefully receive the empowerment to go and do exactly what needs to be done.

The church, like a football huddle, is a place where Christians come to (hopefully) recharge, garner direction, and be empowered to go out into the world and serve the Almighty. As I thought about that, I found it rather interesting that when it’s done well that those players who leave the huddle, or as the case may be the people who depart after church, those who were listening, who were following, ultimately become leaders.

In the case of the team, as each player leaves that huddle they need to take hold of the responsibilities that are before them so that the play might be executed appropriately.

In the case of the church, once we walk out these doors, we need step up to the ways that the Holy Spirit might have us serve so that the world might be able to experience the love of God.

This sort of mentality was definitely in place in the case of Isaiah. As we hear the story of his vision this morning, he was in the position of the follower. He viewed himself as weak, unworthy, and unprepared. He was the classic biblical example of someone who looked at their life and said, “no, I’m not the one. Go talk with my neighbor across the street. They would be great for whatever job you’ve got planned. Trust me God, go talk to the other guy!”

Isaiah didn’t want to go.

God didn’t care. For as Isaiah spends time in the presence of the Almighty he is empowered, he is commissioned to go out into the world (that’s what the whole seraph and hot coal thing is about. God is commissioning Isaiah). Isaiah recognizes that he has been specially made for the task that is about to be put before him and when God calls out, “whom shall I send?”, what is Isaiah’s answer? “Here I am. Send me.”

Isaiah spent time with God (was in the huddle), was commissioned to serve (was given the play and what he needed to do in that play) and then became committed to that service (he went out and lead as the play called him to do). In that process of being commissioned and then committed to that call, Isaiah went from a follower to a leader. This process is something that each of us needs to go through. We need to go from being followers to leaders.

I know...you hear that sort of ramp up and your thoughts immediately go to, 'great...what's the guy up front want me to do now.'

And I get where that thought comes from.

For most of us, the church (and I am speaking denominationally and locally) has provided programs and opportunities that have been created with the intent of leading people to come and be a part of the church.

For example, one of the recollections that I have from denominational leadership comes from less than 20 years ago, when we were told that if we participated in X, Y, and Z that we would become the fastest growing denomination in the country within the next 10 years. In case you're wondering, the denomination has continued to shrink numerically and did so even through those 10 years that we were told we were being led to be the exact opposite.

If you do this...then you will get that.

But that isn't how God works is it? Waiting for someone else to implore us to action?

As we have moved through the years together, what we have been reminded of and what we have seen affirmed is that God whispers out into our individual lives inviting us to use the unique gifts that we have been blessed with to serve in the ways that we hear whispered.

Sometimes we are able to come together and serve through the context of the community of faith (things like missions trips, the pre-school, and Vacation Bible School absolutely fit here).

But many times (most times?), we respond to that whisper in a very private way that has us stepping out to serve individually. Now that service may end up affecting a whole lot of folks...but it starts by us being open to listening in our lives right now...not for the words from a pulpit or a viral video...but from a God who has, from before the beginning of time, known our name.

God knew Isaiah's name. He knows our name. Isaiah heard the whisper and responded (even though he didn't know what that might ultimately go). Will we...not only hear but then respond?

And that's where the huddle up comes in.

Listen through the midst of worship to feel reassured that not only are you known, but that you are loved and supported by the Creator of all. What you hear begins to empower you in order to respond.

Take the time to join in one of the various small groups to be built up through fellowship, study, music so that you are able to begin to be equipped to respond to that whisper that echoes into your life.

And that willingness is never about what you get: it's about utilizing the gift that you have been empowered and equipped to use to the glory of God. Sometimes the impact will feel great...other times it may feel small...all of it is good when it is of God and that is regardless of how we or anyone else may view the impact. You are empowered here so that you might lead out in the world of which you are a part.

God has commissioned you and is sending us out into the world to not just follow Christ, but lead the world to discover the truth that is found in God's love. God has led us to this point in our life and is in the process of empowering us to go forward into the world and lead. We need to be committed to our commissioning.

The problem with that position on the precipice is that it can be more scary than exhilarating. When you stand in that position and look out over what God is calling you to do it's real easy to say, "no, not us. We're not ready. We're not worthy." The other ways that you may have heard these understandings are, "I don't have enough time. I'm not talented enough. That person over there would do a better job than me. I'll just follow along."

That's exactly what Isaiah thought, and yet when he was commissioned to step from the ledge into his service he said, "here I am, send me." With everything that I am, I believe that God has commissioned each of us for various levels of service in the world. Now we need to be committed to those commissioning so that we are able to not just follow, but lead so that others might be able to know the truth that is found in the love of God.

### **After Sermon Prayer**

Holy God, throughout history You have commissioned people to go and serve. You are in the process of equipping us for this type of service. Let us be committed to this commissioning so that we can move beyond just following and step forward and lead. Lord, hear we are. Send us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **Congregational Prayer**

Dear God, give us the strength to do whatever You would have us do. We recognize that without the help of Your Spirit we cannot even say, "Jesus is Lord," much less can we bring others into Your kingdom. Let our common prayer bring us uncommon faith and willingness to do whatever You ask us to do in Your name. May the power of Your Spirit guide our every word and action. Fill us with Your Spirit, that our prayers and works may proclaim Your glory and work to the coming of Your reign.

God of all, wake us up! As individuals and as a community we become so transfixed upon the little worlds that we create for ourselves that we take little to no time to recognize all that is going on around us. God, we pray that Your Spirit flow in and through each of us so that we are able to open our eyes to all of the realities that are before us. Then, grant us the strength to

step forward in faith and provide as You would have us. God, life is amazing! Open our eyes so that we make this truth our own.

We come before You now with the prayers of this congregation. We pray for **(Give List)** We also pause so that we might come to You with all of our joys and concerns. Lord, hear us in the quiet of this place.

Lord, like Isaiah, You have commissioned us to serve You in the world. Help us to recognize this, and then step forward to say, here I am, send me. In Your name we pray. Amen.