

Readings:

Isaiah 6:1-13

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

## ***Called to be***

### ***Introduction to Scriptures***

In this Fifth week of Epiphany, the focus shifts away from Jesus himself and the light is shone on those whom God chooses, and in particular their weakness, sinfulness and unworthiness to be chosen. van de Laar noted that “Isaiah, when faced with God immediately recognizes his, and his people’s unworthiness. David recognizes his weakness and need of God’s care and protection. Paul, rejoicing in the resurrection appearances of Jesus, also protests that he is unworthy to be called an apostle. And Peter, faced with Jesus’ presence and power, after the great catch, confesses his sinfulness. Yet, each of these people ultimately responded to God’s call, and were used by God in significant ways. When God calls our human standards don’t apply, and often the ones called are the ones we would least expect.”<sup>1</sup>

## ***Called to be***

When you hear a call story do you tune out? Do you think oh this is one of the texts that is preached for ordination it’s not a text for me? Or do you think this text is for someone older, or younger, or someone more qualified or spiritual? Well if you do you need not worry because you are in the finest of company.

Have you ever in the situation where you are not the best one at the job in the room? Do you remember when we used to pick teams for school? Did you ever know what it was like to be chosen last or not at all? Well the characters in this weeks reading would have expected themselves to be that person in the Holy picking order.

David the psalmist was very aware of his weakness and as he cried out for God’s care God used him. Isaiah admitted to being a man of sinful lips from a people of sinful lips, and Paul, he was so unworthy it’s hard to believe he even made it into the biblical text. And finally Simon Peter, the rugged fisherman would not have expected Jesus to stop and take notice. And yet each of these men along with women like Mary and Sarah and Elizabeth were chosen to carry the good news of God to their worlds.

---

<sup>1</sup> Reflections on the theme sacradize John van de Laar

According to the stories of our faith God calls people not just when it is convenient and when they finally feel prepared like at the end of a degree. No God calls when we least expect it from those who least expect it. Perhaps that means God might call us now, for something new in this time. Perhaps in this year of global economic, and environmental crisis our nations will be called to live in the light. Perhaps even in a world in crisis over the devastation of Haiti new life will come. Perhaps in this time when so many of us here are struggling with job losses, personal losses and health struggles we should be prepared to recognize the nudging of the spirit. Perhaps in this time when we are so focussed on the Olympics in our back yard we will have an opportunity to share the good news in a way we never thought possible. Through us who never found ourselves capable - or even wanting to be capable of sharing the good news.

See the thing that I believe about call is that it is for us all. Not just for a select few. and yet we (and I mean me) are resistant to God's call. Why is that? Is it because it is too scary, or hard? Is it because it is too difficult to see? Is it because we don't feel it's for us? If we believe God is for all of creation in what sense are we not recognizing how God is for and believes in us?

In what way are we not awake to the spirit's call? The story of our faith is not a personal individualistic story it is a story of community, of sharing, of lifting up one another.

the prophetic truth telling we are often called to speaks on behalf of the other - and that is not an easy task. It first requires a lot of awareness and listening so that we might recognize where the light needs to be shone. So that God may speak through us still. And unfortunately or confusingly I think God speaks most loudly when we believe we are inadequate for the task at hand. When called the prophet Isaiah said "Woe is Me." And Peter fell in terror wondering who this Jesus was and why he had come to them.

Let's face it we are all inadequate in the face of the holy. By that I mean we are not Gods ourselves. It is God that uses us, and shines through us. It is God who cleanses us and makes us fit. It is in the presence of the Holy in whom we live and move and have our being as Paul says. We are within God and yet at times we are completely unaware of that God just as we are unaware of the air we breathe.

Just as in our scriptures today Isaiah is called out in the midst of people. Peter is called as Jesus is surrounded by crowds. Hearing is a part of call. Knowing what God is calling you to in the midst is a part of the faith journey. And accepting the call rather than accepting your unworthiness is the next step in the journey.

In this season of Epiphany we celebrate the manifestation of the gospel. It is the calling out of the least of these. It is the being open to God's call for your life what ever it may be. That call may require something new of you and yet that call may not mean a job change, or a new volunteer opportunity. That call rather may be a rediscovering of yourself. An acknowledging of the abundant person God has created you to be.

In a world where power, prestige and money convey worth we might be tempted to call ourselves or others unworthy. Or in a church where those things are often looked down upon perhaps if we have them we may also feel shame. And yet this Epiphany season has revealed to us a God who chooses the least expected, those who would seem unqualified in our terms. And so perhaps the message is that we are to recognize the God light within us and share it with others.

Sharing the good news is going to look different for each one of us. And yet I believe we are all called to see ourselves as beloved of God. Worthy of love. And as we worship we are to discover more of that truth. Worship comes from the old English word Worth Ship. We do not worship a needy god we worship a God who sees us as worthy and precious, beloved and honoured. To be called by God is to be who you are. Frederich Bueckner wrote our call is where "the world's deep hunger and our deep gladness meet." and Clifford Williams said "Discipleship simply means life which springs from grace."

God is calling you - as God calls us all. Listen for your name. Listen for your hunger and your gladness. Listen to who you are and then listen to where you are called to shine the light of Christ this day.

You are chosen and beloved - do we believe it?