

“Jesus and Sinners”

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Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 5:1-11

Isaiah is in the temple being called by God to the perilous and thankless task of being a prophet. He is unclean but through God’s cleansing act is made clean and can now speak the Word of the Lord.

Calling the disciples. In Matthew and Mark, identical stories. Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, sees Peter, Andrew, James and John – they are fishermen. He says, “Follow me. Now you will fish for people.”

In John it’s like he’s on an accidental shopping trip. He wanders around and chooses his disciples in a seemingly random way. First, he takes a couple of John the Baptist’s disciples, then finds Andrew and Peter. Then Philip then a very skeptical Nathaniel. You can read about it in John chapter 1.

But today, in Luke’s gospel, we have much more of a story. More detail. Jesus has already met Simon Peter. After being in the synagogue Jesus visited his house and healed Peter’s mother-in-law. Jesus healed people all night long. Then he went away to a quiet place. Then off again to the beach and the nets and the tired fisherfolk. Simon, John and James are named in this version.

Childhood (five years old) memory of sin and repentance...grandmother. Back seat of the car – “Ask Jesus into your heart.”

Confusion about sin and goodness.

Isaiah – “A man of unclean lips.”

Peter – “Go away from me, for Lord, I am a sinful man!”

The message is more important than the messenger.

The people of the OT felt great apprehension at the thought of seeing God.

To be God’s messenger, Isaiah feels unclean, not up to the task of speaking for the Almighty God.

Peter, on seeing the miracle of the fish, also realizes he is in the presence of the Holy. He is immediately overcome by insecurity and a feeling of sinfulness.

Isaiah and Peter both had their own self-awareness of their sinfulness. They were not told by someone else.

Story: My brother's suicide and the unkindness of one person.

Story: A father and son – being called a sinner – by a church...

When we meet the Holy, how do we feel?

Jesus' call to us, and forgiveness of us, is one of kindness not judgment. He says, "Do not be afraid, from now on..."

A message of hope from Jesus Christ. The wrath of love, not judgment.

We are all sinners. That's why Jesus came in the first place. And yet, he calls each of us to do something mighty and powerful and good. WE are called to generosity, to being part of practical good news.

The message is more powerful than the messenger. We are called to be part of miracles every day, to do more than we think we are capable of doing.

"You will catch others in my name."

We just have to decide whether we will take our messy lives, our mistakes, our sins and our fears, and follow Jesus into the miracles.

Whatever we have been taught or told about who we are, Jesus sees disciples.

It doesn't matter how we might believe we have disappointed God, we are called to take our uncleanness, and speak the truth. We are called to let down our nets, even if we are certain there is not another fish to be caught.

Would your five-year-old self be proud of who you are today?

God is.