

# Scripture Readings and Sermon

*February 10, 2019 by Rev. Mark Brechin*

## **Commentary on Isaiah 6:1-13** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

Typically referred to as the "call of Isaiah", the call comes at a critical time in the history of Israel and Judah. Following the death of Solomon, the ten northern tribes known as Israel separated from the two southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah. The people of the covenant was now divided and with each passing generation the division grew deeper. While Judah often had problems with Egypt, Israel had to deal with Syria and Assyria. As Assyria grew more powerful, Israel formed an alliance with Syria and asked Judah to join. Judah's refusal to join eventually led to an increase in hostilities to the point that Judah joined Assyria against Israel. Israel's defeat at the hands of Assyria would end the story of Israel. This is where the legend of the ten lost tribes of Israel comes from. It is during this time of conflict known as the Syro-Ephramite war (735) that Isaiah receives his call. The message Isaiah is to proclaim is not one of freedom but of captivity. With Israel as a northern buffer, events would slowly move to the point where Judah would fall in less than a century later.

## **Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:1-11** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

The lectionary skips over chapter 14 which deals with speaking in tongues versus prophecy and the role of women in worship. This probably has more to do with the thematic connection of Paul's call story with Isaiah and the disciples than it does to the controversial issues in chapter 14. Paul defends his role as an apostle not simply based on Jesus' appearance to "one untimely born" but more on the basis of the message he proclaims. The word apostle simply means one who is sent. Just as disciples or students are called and taught the message of a master, the master then sends those who have mastered the message as apostles to go and teach other students. The message for Paul is nothing more or less than Christ crucified and raised for the salvation of the world. This is the "good news" or the "evangelion" in Greek. Originally, an "evangelist" is simply one who proclaims the good news. The word "apostle" became reserved for only those who were personally "sent" by Jesus. For Paul, however, there is no difference since all have the same message given by the grace of God.

## **Commentary on Luke 5:1-11** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

The lectionary jumps from Jesus leaving Nazareth to the calling of the disciples. It should be noted, however, this passage is not the first time that Jesus and Simon meet. After Nazareth, Jesus went to Capernaum where he cast out demons and healed the sick. Based on his sermon in Nazareth, Jesus was already well known in Capernaum. While there, he was brought to the home of a woman with a high fever to heal. This was the home of Simon's mother-in-law. It is therefore not surprising that when Jesus wanted to go out on the lake in one of the boats, Simon would offer him a ride. Simon had probably already heard Jesus preach in the synagogue in Capernaum and had no problem allowing Jesus to use his boat as a pulpit for the crowds on the shore. What Simon was not expecting was a fishing lesson. Despite his hesitation and against his better judgment as a fisherman, Simon did as Jesus directed and once again witnessed the power of God. It was at this point that Simon began to catch a glimpse of who Jesus was. Luke will continue to grow this relationship between Simon Peter and Jesus as a model for discipleship and later, in the Book of Acts, for apostleship.

## **Sermon Summary** (*Youtube [Sermon Video](#)*)

It doesn't take long in life to learn that you can not always judge a book by its cover. There is usually something going on below the surface that motivates and drives people to act in certain ways.

In Matthew 15:19, Jesus says "For out of the heart come evil intentions". It is also out of a relationship with God that good intentions come. This is the reason that the first commandment is love of God which enables us to then love our neighbors as ourselves.

Just as there are two commandments, there are two calls in our lives as Christians. The first call is to come home. Jesus began his ministry preaching repent, believe, the kingdom of God is at hand. This message is illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son where the young man had to turn away from the life he choose, believe that his father would welcome him home, and then begin the journey home. No matter where we are in life, we are continually be called home to a loving relationship with God through grace. Paul proclaims that this is the good news that he has been called to preach. This call is universal and it is from this call that we begin to hear the second call.

Isaiah in the throne room of God and Simon Peter in the boat with Jesus both heard that call to come home. In the light of the call, they both realized how unworthy they were of God's precious give of love crying out "Woe is me" and "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" They both received assurance that God's grace is freely given to all who truly turn their heart over to God. Once they had received this good news, they heard the second call.

Once we are filled with the love of God, we are called to proclaim that love to those who are still lost. That love gathers the lost like fish in a net so that they may be brought home. That same love, however, does not allow us to live in our arrogance and pride but proclaims the need for true humility and repentance of heart. We can not go and make disciples until we have first experienced the love of God in our own lives. It is from that love that we are able to love our neighbors and share with them the good news we have found. The church has often been described as the place where one beggar tells another beggar where to find food. Our food is the grace of God which God has prepared. The only question is who will go and share the news of this feast with a starving and hurting world.