

Ready For God's Use? (Part 3) – Isaiah 6:8b-13

Fitting finale to a good week and a great weekend – Anna & Bettendorf state champs Anniversary Weekend – 8 years; God has done quite a work, and I'm pretty sure he's not finished

It's on these even year anniversaries that we want to revisit/renew our membership commitments to one another; Stand if on list
Admire and thank God for you – that you take your involvement in this church so seriously, you're willing to make public commitments to it, and stick with them
Commitments to grow in your walk and further the work of ministry right here
Thank you for that; God bless you

• Is 6:8-13 – p.571 (Review)

This is Part 3 of a message series on how to be ready for God's use in your life
Which is critical for accomplishing his work, seeing his glory, and fulfilling your calling

We found in Part 1, that you first need to . . .

See God for who he is (v1-4)

See yourself for who you are (v5)

And then, in Part 2, it was . . .

Receive God's grace for all it is (v6-7)

- **An act of favor in coming to *you* (v6a)**
- **An act of sacrifice on your behalf (v6b-7)**
- **The relief of guilt due to your sin (v7)**
- **The reconciliation you desperately need (v7)**
- **The renewal you can't do without (2 Cor 4:16)**

Receive God's grace for all it is, and . . .

Hear God's call for what to do (v8a)

- **By focusing your attention on the things of God**
- **By removing distractions that interfere**

That was Part 2 (Summary)

Which brings us to Part 3 and v8-13; The point of which is to . . .

Be God's servant for whatever he wants (v8b-13)

After being overwhelmed by God's holiness, undone by his sinfulness, renewed by God's grace, and attentive to his call, Isaiah said – "*Here I am! Send me.*"

V8 – *I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"*
Then I said, "*Here I am! Send me.*"

And notice there are no caveats, and no strings attached

Like – "I'll do whatever you want Lord, just don't send me to Africa

Or – "I'll go into ministry Lord, just wait about 10 years so I can be financially independent first"

That's what somebody said to me one time as *I* was going into ministry

He was like – "Dude; I think God's calling me to do the same thing you're doing; I'm just going to wait about 10 years or so, to make some more money"

And to my knowledge he's still is; He's still making money, and still serving himself

- Not good; In fact, it's really bad

B/c whether you *completely* miss out on being used by God, or open yourself up to the discipline of hard times . . .

You don't say *no* to God and get away with it; Not for long

Whether it's a call to go around the world, or go across the street

When God calls, you ought to be the *first* to step up; The *first* in line; The *first* to make yourself available; That's how you become his servant for whatever he wants . . .

• **By making yourself available (v8b)**

That's what Isaiah did; Having just heard God's call about who to send, he said – *Here I am! Send me*. Send *me*; Kind of like, why not? He made himself available

It's like that old TV show "Welcome Back Kotter" and the kid in his class named Arnold Horshack, who wanted to answer every single question, first
And did so by raising his hand, bouncing up and down, and yelling – Ooo-Ooo-Ooo
Take a look (**YouTube – Welcome Back, Mr. Kotter Clip; Segment :15-46**)
He made himself available

- It's the very thing some of the people in our church have done through adoption
Like the **Myers**; And **Saunders**'s; And **Koster**'s; And **Martinez**'s; And a whole bunch of others in our church
When God said who's going to do this for me, they said – "Here *we* are; Use us; *We're* available"*****

Others of you have made yourself available recently by joining the Satellite Launch Team
Like the **Baileys**, who cleared their schedule before it ever came up, so that they *could* be available; They just felt God leading that way
And as soon as it was mentioned – bam; They were in; Ready and available

And yet others of you have made yourself available in replacing them*****
Not enough yet, but some; You've stepped up and said . . .
"Here I am Lord; Use me; Send *me* into the Children's Ministry

- So let me ask you something – Is that something you've *ever* said?
Have you ever said – "God, I'm totally available for your use anytime, anywhere, for any reason, whatever you want"
Have you ever verbalized that to the Lord?

Or, are you like I was before I got on my knees back in 1999 and said . . .

"God, I'm done; I'm done fighting you; I'm done being squeezed by you; And I'll do whatever you want, no matter what it is, just show me"

Previous to that, I'd never expressed such a thing to the Lord; And maybe that's you

Maybe you're scared to death to utter those words for fear of what he might require of you; Or expect you to give up
Like your status; Or your popularity; Or your time; Or your leisure; Or your job; Or your home; Or your friends; Or your reputation; Or your security
Are you scared to death of what God might expect or require of you?

- If so, the only solution is to take the plunge; And I'm not talking about baptism
I'm talking about making yourself wholly available
I'm talking about loosening your grip on the things of *life*, and opening your heart to the things of *God*; Saying – “Here I am, Lord; Send me”

Then and only then will you be God's servant for whatever he wants
Then and only then will you experience his *provision* like you never have
Then and only then will you know his *peace* that exceeds your understanding
Then and only then will you receive his *strength* in the fullest

Strength and provision and peace to do things like – start a Backyard Bible Club; Or a workplace Bible study; Or minister in a cross-cultural setting
Or settle down right where you're at; Or get involved with those in your community
Or serve those within these walls; Or the least of these *outside* of them

If you're going to be ready for God's use, you have to be God's servant
And to be God's servant, you have to make yourself available

But that's not where it stops; You also have to do what he says
Be God's servant for whatever he wants . . .

• **By doing what he says (v9-10)**

And this is where the rubber meets the road; B/c it could include some very difficult, very uncomfortable tasks

When you become God's servant, when you place yourself under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, you don't have the luxury of choosing your assignments
Just like when you join the military; They pretty much own you, and you do what they say; The difficulty of the assignment is of no consequence

Just like it wasn't for Isaiah; Look at v9-10 – *And he said, “Go, and say to this people: “Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.” [10] Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”*

God tells Isaiah what to *say* in v9, and what to *do* in v10

And it's a good thing he was all in, b/c it was a very difficult assignment

- B/c in v9, he basically says – “Just say it like it is”
Just say to the people – you're *already* deaf and blind to spiritual things; You've already made your bed of sin and rebellion and rejection . . .
So you might as well lay in it, and reap what you sow; Go ahead
Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive (9)
That's the idea; It was a message of judgment; And not an easy one to deliver

He tells him what to say in v9, and then he tells him what to *do* in v10; As in – *Make the heart of this people dull, and [make] their ears heavy, and blind their eyes*
IOW do nothing that would counter my sovereignty in judging them; That's the gist
They don't *want* to hear from me and heed my words, and neither do *I* want them to
In which case they don't *deserve* to see and hear; And they're not *ordained* to see and hear; They're not a part of God's plan; That's the idea

- It's the very thing Jesus conveys in the gospels, regarding his use of parables
And cites this passage to support it
Like in **Mt 13:11** where he says to his followers – *To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the people at large, the curiosity seekers] it has not been given.*
They don't *deserve* to see and hear, and they're not *ordained* to see and hear; Both*****

And the Apostle Paul comes to the *same* conclusion in Acts 28

After trying to convince people about Jesus, and meeting unbelief on the part of some . .
He basically tells them that they're an example “par excel lance” of what the HS said through Isaiah in this passage
They don't *deserve* to see and hear, and they're not *ordained* to see and hear

And then he cites the passage again in Rom 11, to emphasize the *ordained* side of the coin
That God indeed hardens some people for punishment; He's explicit about it (Rom 11:7)

3 instances where Is 6 is used to support and reinforce the principle that . . .
Some people don't *want* to see and hear, don't *deserve* to see and hear, and are not *ordained* to see and hear

- Which in no way is contrary to God's desire that all should reach repentance (2 Pet 3:9)
God *desires* that, but not at the expense of his justice, his plan, and our freedom; Our freedom to reject him

It's kind of like our desire that all convicted criminals would once again become productive members of society; We desire that . . .
But not at the expense of their punishment; Or, our plan to keep society safe
We still think they should be *penalized* for their crimes, *and* that it's a good idea to imprison them

And in the same way, while God desires that no one should perish, he doesn't *elevate* his desire over his *justice*, his *plan* for the world, or the *freedom* he gives us to reject him

- The point being, coming full circle – is that God tells Isaiah to tell the Israelites they're in trouble, and to do nothing that would counter his sovereignty in judging them
Otherwise, as v10b says – they might turn and be healed; They might turn and be forgiven; Once again, something they don't *deserve*, something they don't *want* . . .
And something *God* doesn't want

A difficult assignment to say the least; But something he *did*, b/c he had made himself available as God's servant, to *do whatever he wanted him to do*
He followed through; It's the most difficult *part* of being used by God

- Like when he says, go door to door in your neighborhood and pass out door hangers to invite people to church, and you don't want to
Or when he prompts you to talk to someone about a sensitive issue – and you'd rather do anything but
Or when he calls you to let go of something in your life – like a situation, or a person, or a desire, or a job, or a hobby, or a boyfriend, or a girlfriend

Not easy; But if you're going to be used by God instead of passed up by God – you have to do what he says; Anybody can say, "Here I am" . . .
But only the committed, only the servants, do what he says

And then last, be God's servant for whatever he wants . . .

- **By trusting him for the results (v11-13)**

It's something Isaiah had to do big time; Look at v11-13

[11] Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" [How long am I going to have to say this and do this?] And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, [12] and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. [13] And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

How long do I have to convey such a difficult message Isaiah asks – a difficult message, in difficult circumstances, to difficult people I call my own?
Until the disaster has run its course, God says; Until the punishment is completely done
Until the destruction is over; *That* long God says

And about the time you think it's over, it's not; It's going to continue; That's v13
Even the remnant he says, the tenth, the survivors – will suffer
Including *the holy seed* – the lineage from which the Messiah would come
Just like the stump of a tree was burned in those days to clear the land after it was cut down – so too would the stump of God's people, the remnant, continue to suffer

- All of which happened by the way, in 586 BC when the Babylonians attacked and laid waste to the houses, cities, and land – including the capital of Jerusalem . . .
And then took a bunch of the Israelites into captivity
In fact, since this happened at the beginning or near the beginning of Isaiah's ministry, the Assyrian Overthrow of 722BC could very well have been in God's mind as well

Whatever the case, the prophecy's been fulfilled; A small number of people remained in Jerusalem under heavy duress, and continued to suffer
Exactly like Isaiah described it in chapter 1:7-8; Speaking to the people he said . . .
Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. [8] And the daughter of Zion [the remnant, the survivor] is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. All alone/unprotected; They suffered

And it didn't end with the *return* of the captives from Babylon
God's people *continued* to suffer, right up until the time of Christ and beyond
And we still do; That's not to say this *prophecy* is for us – it's not
But the example and warning is

All of which Isaiah had to trust God for

He had to trust that God knew what he was doing, and would make something good out of it; Especially so when the people who were going to get it, were *his* people

- And we're no different; If we're going to be used by God, if we're going to be his servant for whatever he wants – we have to trust him for the results

Like Abraham did when he moved to Canaan
And Moses did when he spoke to Pharaoh
And Rahab did when she hid the spies
And Joshua did when he entered the Promised Land
And David did when he fought Goliath
And Jeremiah did when he warned of sin
And Esther did when she approached the king
And Nehemiah did when he rebuilt Jerusalem
And John the Baptist did when he preached repentance
And Peter did when he got out of the boat
And Paul did when he went to the Gentiles
And Isaiah did when he spoke the truth
And Jesus did when he died on the cross

They made themselves available, did what God said, and trusted him for the results
And look what happened
If you're going to be God's servant, ready for God's use, you have to trust him for the results (**Summary**)

- For me, it was trusting his call to mentor ex-cons; And go into ministry; And go back to school; And move here; And start this church
Those are some of the things *I've* had to trust God for in my life
And the list continues

What about you? Is God calling you to *do* something, *say* something, *give* something, *love* someone, or *live* somewhere?
If so, make yourself available, do what he says, and trust him for the results
He'll be glorified, and you'll be satisfied

Pray – God, break through our fears; Break through our pride; Break through our busyness and find us increasingly available to you – individually, and as a church; Give us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to receive, and wills to submit – even as we *give* of our tithes and offerings; Find us doing what you want in that respect too; Trusting and obeying your every word