

Food for Thought: Can I get a witness?



“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom, shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, ‘Here I am, Send me!’”

~Isaiah 6:8

Sunday, I had front-door duty at the Church. I greeted the church goers and got to watch what was going on in the front parking lot. And boy was there a lot going on - we were hosting our annual hot rod car show. It would have been nice if all the people exhibiting their cars were Christians, but they weren't. Although it was hard to tell, most of the people were not interested in attending services. They were more interested in showing off their prized possessions and talking to others who were like-minded.

Perhaps I am being a bit judgmental, but I felt that there were people there who could have benefited more from the conversations going on inside the church than out. Although we did pipe the service outside at a volume that they couldn't ignore, it seemed like we just weren't reaching them. I kept remembering Jesus telling the disciples that He would make them fishers of men. Here we had a whole pond of people, and we weren't getting a single bite, and not because we didn't have fishing poles, apparently, we weren't using the right bait.

While I was looking at all the cars and the people milling about, I felt that God had a task to be performed and was asking “Who will go for us!?” I was looking for someone to begin evangelizing to them but at the same time I was really wondering if it was me he was convicting. I don't remember hearing Matthew West's “Do Something” playing anywhere and I don't remember saying to the Lord, **“Here am I, send me.”** Or was I? Maybe he was saying, **“I did, I created you” and I just didn't want to hear it.**

God had the need for a witness that day. It didn't take a genius to see the people that needed to meet the Lord. I have always admired the story in the Bible about Isaiah volunteering to preach that one day. Maybe it is because I feel like

we are kindred spirits. We often hear pastors say that God called them to ministry.

Although I have many times thought about going into seminary, I never made it, not because I didn't want to, but because I was never sure that I had the calling. It is interesting that God didn't *call* Isaiah to preach; but rather, he heard God asking whom He could send. I believe it is quite clear here that God knew Isaiah would volunteer, but He needed Isaiah to make the choice himself. Was God putting me in that same position?

So, why do I feel so convicted for not doing anything? Many times, I have told Him that I am here to serve Him. I heard a sermon once that every Christian is called to serve in God's army and that we are on-call 24-hours a day just like in the real Army. We are always serving the Lord in how we think, speak and behave. And, we should always be soul-conscious. Was I just not wanting to go out there because it wasn't convenient for me to do so—I had other things scheduled that afternoon?

I know that the world is desperate for help and I could sense it that Sunday. In Matthew we read about Jesus saying to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." I think I am already things to reach others. I also know that the biggest mistake that any of us could make is to think that the efforts of just one person wouldn't make a significant difference. But we fail to understand! One Christian plus God equals a majority! LORD, HERE AM I, SEND ME!!!

Did I say that? I for one, believe that when it comes to having that kind of faith, we're challenged. We're overwhelmed. We're full of doubts. We feel like we're not up to what God asks of us. We try to make ourselves believe that we're not sure God really called us, and we're usually not sure how to respond if He did.

That morning, I had every one of those thoughts racing through my mind. If we can have faith in each other, most of the time anyway, why is believing that God is really calling *us* so hard to comprehend? I am sure that it has a lot to do with thoughts like, "who am I Lord to do your bidding?" It is hard to comprehend that with all of the people in the church more qualified than I to evangelize, why would God call me? I'm starting to think that part of the problem is that we make faith, and specifically answering a call, such a *special, unique* thing in our minds.

It's kind of the same problem we have with prayer when someone puts us on the spot by asking us to pray. Who am I Lord.

But just being a witness to another is not what faith is, or what faith has been through the ages. Jesus tried to warn us throughout His teachings that our faith will likely cause us suffering, persecution, and bad intentions from those around us. Our faith is not a promise of a contented life, at least by society's standards. Never has been, and never will be.

But Our faith does allow us to take those life-changing risks like those of the disciples recorded in the book of Hebrews. They risked home, family, status, all their possession, security, shelter, and even their very lives to follow Jesus. And although I wouldn't lose anything like that I for going out in that parking lot, I still had a lot of reservations about jumping in.

But answering God's call is actually pretty simple. When God says, "Here I am. Where are you?" We should respond: "Here I am Lord."

I know that's new. It's different from what we usually do as Christians. Everyone has been taught to never volunteer. Volunteering is scary. Pastor even covered it a couple of times in sermons. Remember the movie 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade' when Indiana, played by Harrison Ford, had to go through a series of obstacles to reach the Holy Grail? He came upon a large chasm with an opening in the sheer rock opposite him. He took a deep breath and stepped forward. His 'leap of faith' landed him on an unseen bridge that led him to the other side. But the only way he could see it was after he took that first blind step in faith that something would be there, and he would not fall into the abyss. Stepping out into faith takes courage. But we always forget that when take that step of faith saying "*I will go, Lord,*" He will always be there to lead us.

As Christians, one of our primary duties is to share God's love with those around us. That too, is a difficult challenge for many of us because we always search for excuses not to answer that call. We feel as though we are not smart enough to tell others about God, or we don't know the Bible well enough to be able to share its good news with any authority, or that we won't be able to answer the questions that people will ask. But our challenge is to not allow these stumbling blocks to get in the way of sharing God's love.

“Can I get a witness,” Jesus said to his disciples toward the end of the Gospel of Luke, “You are witnesses of these things.” There Jesus tells his disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.” Can I get a witness?

David Dark, Christian author in his new book Life’s Too Short To Pretend You’re Not Religious, said that “religion happens when we get pulled in, moved, called out or compelled by something outside ourselves.” What he is really saying is that to witness is simply to be willing to tell the story of how God pulled us, moved us, and called us to live more lovingly, more compassionately, and more caringly.

Jesus said, “My witness is the sum of everything I do and leave undone.” The words are there, but your actions speak much louder.... It is about giving us an opportunity to tell *our* story of how Jesus and His love have changed us. Our religion is our witness. The shape it takes is the impact that Jesus has had on our lives.

It was like a light went off inside of my head when I read that and began to fully understand what he was saying. How could I have missed that all these years? And why was I making this so difficult? All I had to do was to tell my story and share the love of God as it has been revealed in the Bible and how I have applied that love in my life? It really was simple.

God needed a witness that day. That was all. He just wanted us, me, like Isaiah, to be willing to answer the call. He didn’t say we had to meet any other requirements. All *WE* had to do was be willing to be used and tell people about your journey.

Can I get a witness? Yes, Lord, you can! Here I am.

Just some Food for Thought