

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Epiphany 5
Saturday, February 5, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 6, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

“Here am I, Send Me”

Luke 5:1-11

It is good to be back. It was good to watch last week and hear Ian preach. It is good to see that even when these old bones are no longer filling a pulpit that the Word of God will still be proclaimed and that the Holy Spirit continues to preserve and enlarge His Church. We pray that more men hear the call to serve and proclaim the Word.

We hear in our readings today two of the more profound calls by our Lord for men to take up the mantle and devote their lives to the proclamation of the Word. Thankfully, seminarians like Ian Hienze did not need a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne with the seraphim and the smoke and the shaking of the foundations for him to answer his call.

Isaiah sees this reality and looks upon his guilt and his unworthiness. He says, “Woe is me? For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” He sees himself as unworthy for his eyes to look upon the King, the Lord of hosts – and he is unworthy. But God immediately

announces that his guilt is taken away and his sin is atoned for. And Isaiah hears his call and says, “Here am I, send me.”

Peter has a similar calling. Now, there is no earthquake or smoke or flying angels, but Peter greets the Lord and his own personal unworthiness to be in the presence of the Lord with the same understanding as Isaiah did: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

How could a miraculous catch of fish so thoroughly convince Peter (and all of his coworkers) to leave their business and become disciples of this rabbi from Nazareth? It wasn’t just the miracle – it was the Word. Luke notes Peter’s specific response to Jesus’ request to “let down your nets.”

Before Jesus gets into Peter’s boat, Peter is washing his nets. If he does what Jesus asks, he is going to have to wash them again. But Peter specifically says, “at Your Word, I will let down the nets.” His response in all of this is a response to Jesus’ Word.

Jesus was in Peter’s boat so that He could preach to the great crowd gathered on the shore – this great crowd that had been following Him around. The acoustics, the sound waves bouncing off of the water, would have allowed the entire crowd to hear Him much better. Peter was there listening to Him preach the Word from his boat.

But this isn’t the first time. Last week, while Ian was preaching, something hit me – a detail that I had never caught before. I had been working on an

exegetical study for our circuit pastor's conference on this text, so I had been thinking about it. While Ian was preaching on Luke 4, if you remember from last week, we heard about Jesus in Capernaum (where Peter, Andrew, James, and John live) and He was healing a multitude of people. All of the people who had anyone who was sick were brought to Jesus and He laid hands on them.

But prior to that, Jesus was there in the synagogue – the synagogue where Peter, Andrew, James, and John would have been that Saturday. And the demon-possessed man announces Jesus as the “Holy One of God” – and Jesus tells him to be silent and to come out of the man.

And we are told, “And they were amazed and said to one another, ‘What is this Word? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!’” It is always about the Word.

And immediately from the synagogue, Jesus left with Simon Peter and went to his house and healed Peter's mother-in-law who had a high fever. That was all before Jesus got into Peter's boat. Peter had spent most of a previous Saturday with Jesus. Peter's brother Andrew, we are told from John's Gospel that Peter's brother Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and spent an entire day with Jesus listening to Him preach the Word. And Andrew went and found Peter and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ) [Jn. 1:41].

Who is the Christ? The Christ is the Son of God. The Christ is God. Peter's response to Jesus being in his boat is not surprising. “Depart from me, for I am a

sinful man, O Lord.” I am a man of unclean lips just like Isaiah. I am unworthy to be in the presence of God. He is right. He is unworthy.

When you come forward to receive the body and blood of the Lord, you are unworthy – if you are simply looking at yourself. The broken body and shed blood of Christ has taken away your guilt, has atoned for your sin. And as Luther writes in his catechism, the Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies” you.

He calls you – not necessarily in the same way He calls prophets, apostles, or even pastors. But He called you to be His own through the power of His Word. He gathers you as His church – as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing. There is an old saying, “You will not have God as your Father if you do not have His church as your mother.”

It is here that we find atonement for our sin in the proclamation of the Gospel. It is here that we are declared to be worthy to stand in the presence of God. God Himself has judged you to be worthy because He looks at you and sees the righteousness of Jesus which covers you. When you hear the words of the Absolution, it is as if the Lord has directed the angel to take the burning coal and touch your lips.

When the body and blood of the Lord touches your lips, I don’t know that any of us can fathom the depth of appreciation or inward groaning of joy that could or should be felt. Perhaps Isaiah does offer the simplest and best response to God’s call to serve Him in His kingdom: “Here am I, send me.” Amen.