



DATE: November 15 (Christ the King Sunday)
SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 6:1-8
TITLE: The calling of Isaiah

John Wesley was a priest for 13 years before he attended a Bible study that forever changed his life—and perhaps the course of Western Christianity. It is known as his “Aldersgate Experience.” After a Bible study at a house on Aldersgate Street, John Wesley had an experience with the living Christ. He wrote later that it was the first time he actually *felt* the grace of God. Describing the experience, he said that his “heart was strangely warmed.”

Why do I bring this up? Because John Wesley had been a priest for 13 years when he had this God-moment. This was the spiritual birth of our Church, but he had already been a “Methodist” for years when it happened.

The story we shared today is known as the calling of Isaiah. Isaiah has a profound vision of God and is overwhelmed by his own sense of inadequacy. In the end though, he is cleansed and renewed by God’s attendants and is able to step forward. When God asks, “Whom shall I send?” The dramatic conclusion to this passage is Isaiah saying, “Here I am. Send me.”

I compare Isaiah and John Wesley because of one significant fact: The calling of Isaiah occurs in chapter 6. In other words, Isaiah had already been working as a prophet. He had already started the work of speaking truth to power. He had already started preaching the Word of God to the people, imploring them to turn away from idols and to care for the widow, the orphan, and the alien among them.

Isaiah 1:16-17 reads “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean... Learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow.”

Like Wesley, Isaiah was already doing the work of God when he had his spiritual rebirth. For Wesley, the turning point was a small-group

Bible study. According to Isaiah, his vision of God occurred “In the year King Uzziah died.”

In other words, Isaiah’s call occurred in the midst of anxiety and transition.

The King was dead, but Isaiah saw the God was on the

Throne. Uzziah was king for over 50 years. As a King, he had mixed results. He was a good king, but ended his reign in isolation because God struck him with leprosy “when he had become strong he grew proud, to his destruction.”

Whether or not the king was good or bad; regardless of your feelings about the results of an election, transition is a time of anxiety. In the midst of anxiety, Isaiah was called to speak the truth of God’s desire for love, compassion, and justice.

No matter who is in charge, God is on the Throne. No matter who is our leader, we are called to prophecy—to remind whoever needs to be reminded, that God wills justice in our land.

Chapter 6 was a pivotal one in Isaiah’s life. It came in the midst of social anxiety and transition. Perhaps this time of social anxiety and transition is our own chapter 6. God is on the Throne, and we are called to speak truth to power.

No matter who is in charge, God is on the Throne. No matter who is our leader, we are called to prophecy—to remind whoever needs to be reminded, that God wills justice in our land.