

Pick Me!! Pick Me!!

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

Many organizations are bemoaning the challenges involved with finding people to volunteer for service. Wouldn't it be nice if people would immediately say "Yes!" when asked to fill a position of leadership in the church? Wouldn't it be even better if people would actually volunteer for service in the church even before being asked?! It makes me appreciate all the more the excitement of young children when you ask them a question or tell them you need a volunteer to help. Many times hands will shoot up into the air and you'll hear the voices saying "Pick me! Pick me!" Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Lord heard us say "Pick me! Pick me!" when we encounter His call to serve Him?

I suspect we could easily come up with all kinds of reasons why we might refuse to serve the Lord when asked, such as fear, feelings of inadequacy, insecurities, anxiety, having fulfilled my duty already, being "priority challenged" and simply not wanting to serve. However, what do you think are the dynamics **which motivate a person to serve** when asked? {Allow the participants to share their ideas of what motivates a person to serve. Motivations could be: ① To serve because Christ served us so we could be saved (cf. Mark 10:45); ② Love is usually a strong motivator, either from the perspective of a strong feeling for the person you're serving or because you've experienced the unconditional love of someone (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 John 4:19) . . . or both; ③ A sense of personal fulfillment, purpose and accomplishment (e.g. *Helping others makes me feel good.*); ④ Guilt—some people go through too much guilt when they say "no" to service requests; ⑤ Personal recognition or attention. It looks good on a resume when you can list all your service activities. It is a strong self-esteem builder when others recognize you for such service.}

Maybe people need some other kind of motivation for serving in their lives—like maybe a pill? {Show the video clips entitled: "Serve On!" You can purchase it from "sermonspice.com"}

1. Let's read Isaiah 6:1-8. Here the prophet Isaiah received a vision of the LORD in His heavenly glory. What is his initial reaction to such a vision according to Isaiah 6:5? {In the presence of the LORD's holiness Isaiah is immediately struck with an intense awareness of his own sinfulness, even to the point of wondering if he'll survive the experience! *Woe is me! For I am lost* is equivalent to saying *Oh, oh! I'm toast!!* He is also struck with an intense awareness of the sinfulness of the people around him. Basically, his conclusion is: *We're all doomed!!* (cf. Exodus 33:18-23; 1 Timothy 6:16) (NOTE: Many times when someone experienced the LORD revealing Himself in all His glory they felt like it was "curtains" for them or they may have even thought *the Day of the LORD* had come with the end of the world. (cf. Luke 2:8-9; Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11))
2. What happened next according to Isaiah 6:6-7? {Immediately upon the confession of his sinfulness an angel took a *burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar* .

. . . touched Isaiah's mouth with it and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." Fire is pictured as used for spiritual purification in the Scriptures (cf. Malachi 3:2-3). The *burning coal . . . taken . . . from the altar* pictures the sacrifices made on the altar which were consumed by the LORD's fire (cf. Leviticus 9:24) and made atonement for the sins of the people and looked forward to Christ's final atonement for the sins of all people. The significance of atoning or cleansing his lips from sin is appropriate in light of his upcoming prophetic work—a work which would mainly involve proclaiming the LORD's Word and Will to people.}

3. Isaiah 6:8 is a very peculiar verse. The response of Isaiah to God's "contemplation" is probably very familiar to most people: *Here am I! Send me.* However, as this "call of Isaiah" into the prophetic ministry unfolds it is much different than the "calls" which the LORD extended to others in Scripture. Read the following accounts of God "calling" these people in to His service. What do they all have in common?

Abram in Genesis 12:1

Simon Peter & Andrew in Matthew 4:18-19

Moses in Exodus 3:1-10

Zacchaeus in Luke 19:5

Gideon in Judges 6:11-14

Philip in John 1:43

Jonah in Jonah 1:1-2

Ananias in Acts 9:10-11

Matthew in Matthew 9:9

A certain man in Matthew 26:17-18

{There are many common "threads" with these "calls" into service. However, notice in each instance the LORD never asked anyone to do anything—**He told them what to do!** "How impolite!" you say? God does not ask anyone to do anything. He tells them what they will do and no matter how many excuses, no matter how much reluctance, even in the midst of rebellion, guess what? **They end up doing what He told them to do in the first place!!** I used to tell my boys as they were growing up: "Remember: The LORD will put where He wants you one way or another. So listen to Him the first time because the scenic route may not be too fun!" **God always gets His way!!**}

4. So, how is the "call" of Isaiah into the prophetic ministry different than these other examples? {The picture given to us in Isaiah's "call" is that of the LORD sort of "thinking out loud" with Isaiah overhearing the conversation amongst the three persons of the Trinity (i.e. *Who will go for Us?*) In the midst of this "thinking out loud" Isaiah "pipes up" with *Here am I! Send me. I'll go for You!! Pick me! Pick me!!* It's an example from Scripture of someone actually volunteering to serve the LORD!!! So, it is possible that people could actually volunteer for ministry rather than wait to be asked, begged and pleaded with!}
5. Look up the following Scripture passages. What thoughts might each passage give concerning our willingness and desire to serve our Lord Jesus Christ?

Ephesians 2:8-10 → {Notice the relationship between *grace . . . faith* and *good works* in this verse. *We are saved . . . by grace*—God's undeserved favor and love—which is ours as we trust completely in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ—*through faith*, which also is the *gift of God*. Living in this forgiven state moves us to do those *good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*. **Service for the LORD (i.e. good works) flow naturally from a forgiven life!!** (cf. Galatians 5:22-23)}

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 → {Notice what “compels” or *controls us—the love of Christ*. It is this experience of the unconditional, free love and grace of God in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ which moves us to service—that is, moves us to the conclusion that we *might no longer live for ourselves but for Him Who for our sake died and was raised*. Notice clearly that service is not about living for ourselves with selfish motivations (e.g. *I do it because it makes me feel good!* or because it looks good on a resume or brings me attention somehow, etc.). This is why dying to ourselves and our own selfish desires in Christ’s crucifixion is so important. (cf. Romans 6:11-12; 14:7-8; Galatians 2:20) We keep the focus on Christ in our service, not on ourselves and the uncomfortable, unfavorable, inconvenient and difficult dynamics of service which the devil uses to get a foothold in our lives to stop our service for Christ.}

Romans 12:1-2 → {Based upon God’s wonderful forgiveness and grace in Christ’s sacrifice for our sin and resurrection from the dead, we desire to live as offerings! That’s right! Offerings are not just something you put in the plate at worship. Our bodies are living offerings or sacrifices before God day in and day out! Notice verse 2 tells us about the importance of having a transformation in our minds and attitudes. Instead of conforming *to this world* we should *be transformed by the renewal of our mind*. Yep, that’s right!! When it comes to our service for the Lord we need an attitude adjustment!! (cf. Psalm 51:10; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10; Titus 3:5) **We need an attitude that’s been adjusted by God cleansing our hearts from sin through the power of the Holy Spirit connecting us to the Person & Work of Jesus!!**}

6. What do you think it was that brought Isaiah to express such a desire to serve the LORD? {Allow the participants to share their thoughts. The text reveals to us that this desire came from experiencing the absolution of God in the midst of the confession of his sin! Having been renewed in this wonderful forgiveness which the LORD provided so freely in His grace, Isaiah is further given a desire to live for the LORD!!! In other words, grace experienced in the midst of intense awareness and confession of sin brings the absolute forgiveness of sins through faith in the Person & Work of Jesus **and** a new perspective on life in service to the LORD! **Because he experienced the love, grace and forgiveness of God he couldn’t wait to be picked for service!!!**}

It is very important that the focus of our service is motivated by the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The response to Isaiah by the LORD demands such a focus! Who would want to be picked to go for the LORD with the task of making *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?!* (cf. Isaiah 6:10) When we serve the LORD we will encounter many struggles because . . .

... we are sinners ...

... who are serving sinners ...

... to help them deal with their sin in Christ!

7. What challenges does Jesus say we will face in connection with serving Him according to Matthew 10:17-25? {Jesus describes the persecution which will accompany bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people: being arrested, being beaten, family betrayals even to the point of death, being hated by people, accusations of being evil. While these dynamics may not describe the challenges we face in most of our serving, yet there are other negative dynamics which hinder our serving motivation.}
8. What promises does Jesus give in connection with serving Him according to Matthew 10:17-25? {The promises are: ① The Holy Spirit's guidance and working through us to give us the right words to speak in these witnessing opportunities (cf. Matthew 10:19-20). **He will do the work through us!** (Zechariah 4:6); and, ② If we remain faithful to the Lord Jesus to the end we will be saved (cf. Matthew 10:22). It is important to remember that no matter what it looks like to us at the moment **God is producing His results through us!!** (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:58; Romans 8:28)}

“Pick me! Pick me!” Forgiven, cleansed of all our sin, renewed by the Holy Spirit, we too desire to be “picked” by the LORD in our vocations as God’s people to go **together by faith** and serve the LORD as we strive to share with others God’s choice of them in Christ’s forgiveness! {Show the video segment entitled “Where, What, Who.” You can purchase it from “sermonspice.com”}

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