

WHO WE WERE MEANT TO BE

Isaiah 6:1-8

Introduction:

We've all been there at one time or another. We've all been in the "the moment" - the instance when where we are and what we're doing is perfect. It's just right, just so. It couldn't get any better. In that moment we were who we were meant to be.

Maybe it was our first kiss or the moment when we said, "I do." Maybe it was finding our stride in a long distance run or finding our groove in a song we'd just sung. Maybe it was when we held our newborn baby, or when we were held by someone we loved. Maybe it was finding peace by ourselves alone in the forest or finding joy when surrounded by family friends.

Or maybe it was when we believed that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and by through that believing we had "life in his name." (John 20:31) Or perhaps it was when we said "Yes" to God's call, what ever that meant, where ever that led.

In that moment - what ever it was - we were who we were meant to be.

Let me suggest that we are made for those moments of clarity, those moments of wholeness. They give us glimpses of who we were meant to be. Even though they are rare, they are not supposed to be the exception. They reveal our lives as they were meant to be.

My hunch is that not all of us are there now. We remember being “in the moment,” but it’s been a while. We’re somewhere in between.

So, how do we get from where we are to where we’re meant to be? If we listen to the words of Isaiah 6, we’ll see.

[Read Isaiah 6:1-8]

WHAT

To begin, the passage tells us some marvelous things about God. For example, it tells us that God is a God who cares. He is a God who is interested in His creation, involved the lives of His children, concerned for the welfare of His people.

If God doesn't care, why did he bother with Israel? By this time in their history they were not the nation God had in mind. They were a disobedient, ungrateful, self-serving lot. They wanted their way on their terms in their time. But God continued to call to them, continued to warn them, and encourage them. God spoke to Israel through the prophets, hoping they'd hear His voice as He spoke through those men.

God's care for His creation is also seen in His interaction with Isaiah. Why did the God of the universe make time for this itinerant preacher? Why did God keep him from being consumed by the vision - especially when Isaiah admits he's not any better than the folks around him? Why did God make it possible for Isaiah to serve as a prophet to His chosen people? Because the God whose glory was revealed in the vision is a God who cares about His creation: He is a God who cares about you and me.

The passage also tells us that God is holy. In the fact, the story stumbles over itself trying to capture all that happened that day. First, the train of God's robe fills the temple like cosmic wall-

to-wall carpeting. Then there are the angels - flying angels - flying angels with six wings. They're calling out to one another as they soar about the room: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." (v.3) And the place is shaking in its boots - from the foundation to the ceiling - and it's filling with smoke and there's fire on the altar and . . . it's all a way for the prophet to say, "God is holy. There is none other like Him - no one. He alone is God."

So, the passage tells us that God is holy and that God is a God that cares for His people.

The passage also tells us something about those people, about humanity in general. It's true that Israel is the focus of the prophet's warnings, but they act just like every other group of people of the planet. It's true that Isaiah is the key person in this story, the only living man mentioned in the text. But he's also a "stand-in" for all of us. Isaiah is human just like us. His strengths and his weaknesses are just like yours and mine. We can see ourselves in him.

It's also in this passage that we see people who are not who they were meant to be.

Israel was meant to be a blessing to the world, but they can't even get along with each other. They were meant to be a light to the nations, but they are so self-absorbed they're about to lose their nation and their home. They were meant to be the people of God, but they insist on being like their neighbors. They were meant to be pure, holy, set apart - but they are as polluted as the rest. Israel was meant to be more than who they had become.

You see that in the words Isaiah uses to describe them: unclean; guilt; sin. There's something wrong here, something's not right. People aren't supposed to be dirty - they are meant to be clean. People aren't supposed to be guilty - they are meant to be innocent. People aren't supposed to be sinful - they are meant to be holy. These people are not who they were meant to be.

It is in God's response to Isaiah's confession that we see the remedy for the situation. God has to do something, because Isaiah and the Israelites can't undo what has been done. God

has to make the first move, because Isaiah and the Israelites can't undo who they've become. So God acts.

He makes Isaiah who he was meant to be. He doesn't make him a prophet. He already is one. No, God makes him holy, whole, complete. And the implication is that what was available to Isaiah will ultimately be available to Israel, and is available to all humanity. God makes a way for us to be holy, for us to be who we were meant to be.

So what does that look like? Who were we meant to be?

SO WHAT

We were made to have life, to be free. We were made to be whole, to be fulfilled, to be holy. We were made to be like the first Adam or Eve before they sinned. We were made to be like the "second Adam" - Jesus - who has never sinned.

In fact, you can hear who we're meant to be in Jesus' words to the people:

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt. 11:28)

I am the living bread . . . if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever. (John 6:51)

I any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37)

I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

We were made for life, not death; freedom, not bondage; health, not disease; wholeness, not illness; fulfillment, not emptiness. That's who we were meant to be.

About 400 years after Jesus, St. Augustine described who we are meant to be when he said something like this:

*You have made us for yourself, O Lord
and our hearts are restless
until they rest in you.*

Back in the 1600's, Pascal put it another way:

*There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man
which cannot be filled by any created thing,
but only by God the Creator
made known through Jesus.*

I even think who we were meant to be was described in country song from a few years ago:

You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching

*Love like you'll never be hurt
Sing like there's nobody listening
And live like it's heaven on earth.*
(William Purkey)

We were made for life, not death; freedom, not bondage; health, not disease; wholeness, not illness; fulfillment, not emptiness. We were meant to be free.

So if that's who we're meant to be, how to get there? How do we make that happen?

NOW WHAT?

We follow Isaiah's example. We admit who we are, what we've done, what kind of shape we're in, and that we need God to restore us to who we were meant to be.

Our confession is needed. Our admission of guilt is necessary. Our repentance from sin is required. We have to own who we are and what we've done if we're going to become who we were meant to be. Now I know we are telling God what He already knows, but we must tell him.

One writer put it this way:

*People who do nothing and presume on God's forgiveness
... fail to experience it ...*
(NIBC - Goldingay)

Another said this:

*Sin and guilt are dealt with because they exist
and because those in whom they reside
cannot have fellowship with God,
a condition contrary to God's desire.*
(NICNT - Oswalt)

So getting to be who we were meant to be begins with you
and me.

Isaiah's confession led to God's action. Our confession will
lead to God's cleansing. Our repentance will result in our
restoration. Our openness to God will lead to Him making us who
we were meant to be.

One final thing that must be said:

First, God's restoring us should not be thought of as a one-
time cure-all, but as an ongoing reality. Remember, Isaiah was
already serving as one of God's prophets when he had his vision
of God. And he would continue to be God's prophet long after the
vision was over

But while the vision and the moment were all that he could have wanted, they were the just the beginning of a lifetime of holy living. In the same way that Isaiah was aware of God's holiness and his sin, there is a need for ongoing reflection and repentance in presence of a holy God if we're going to be who we were meant to be.

CONCLUSION

Luke is my wife's third cousin. He's five years old, sweet, precocious, insightful. One day he was playing a game with his great-grandpa and the game was not going well for Luke. So, Luke began to change the rules as the game went along. His great-grandfather didn't say much for a while, but finally protested a bit. He said didn't that the rules to the game were that. Luke thought about it for a minute and then said, "It's my game. It's my house. It's my rules."

We can live our lives that way: "It's my life. It's my house. It's my rules." And we'll wind up where we are. Or we can say to

God, "It's your life. It's your house. It's your rules." And when we do, we'll become who we were meant to be.