Dangerous Prayers – Part 3

# Send Me

# (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. Today we are in the third and final week of our series Dangerous Prayers and we’ve been talking about prayers that aren’t safe, that are unpredictable and that are risky. In fact, I’ve heard from some of you this week and this series is actually stirring some of you to pray like never before. And so, today I want to challenge you once again, stretching you, as we look at an experience that was formative in the life and calling of the prophet Isaiah.

If you’d like to follow along in your Bible, we’re going to look at Isaiah chapter six, beginning at verse one. Isaiah writes:

*“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

*“At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” (Isaiah 6:1-7).*

And so, Isaiah saw this amazing vision of God in all of his glory and he was undone because he recognized his own sinfulness. He saw the vast contrast between the holiness of God and his own unholiness and it totally broke him, exposing his soul and leaving him crying out in despair, “Woe to me!”

Instantly, God lovingly responded with grace, seeing Isaiah’s repentant attitude, and he covered his sin taking away his guilt.

Now, I want you to notice what happened next in verse eight; Isaiah tells us, *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”* And Isaiah responded with this dangerous prayer, a prayer of availability, praying, *"Here am I. Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).* Which is basically to say, “God whatever you need, whenever and wherever.” Today, I’d like to encourage you to make that prayer or some variation of that prayer part of your daily prayers because when you do you may be surprised to discover just how much he really has for you to do.

Last week, we talked about being broken and poured out recognizing that there is an emergency in the world. Even now, all of creation is groaning in anguish, there is an urgency in the air, the time is short, and so we should be broken over the lost souls around us. In fact, not only did God feel that anguish, but at just the right time he sent his son Jesus Christ to die for the ungodly. In Romans chapter 5, the Bible says,

*“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).*

Now, I wonder if any of you have ever got an Amber alert on your phone, maybe an urgent message on Facebook that someone is missing? And maybe you saw that, and you felt the urgency, because you had compassion, you could identify with the pain of knowing that somebody somewhere was missing a loved one. You may have even found yourself caught in the emotion of the situation because you recognized that they were in great danger. You know, they were last spotted here and now nobody knew where they were. You see, they were lost, they were missing, and they needed to be found.

## 1. There is Somebody Who is Missing

You see, the reality of this situation is very close to home, because there is somebody that is missing, they’re not where they’re supposed to be. In fact, you should just look around for a moment because there is somebody who is not here. As a matter of fact, that’s why there are still empty seats in here, because somebody is missing, they’re out there somewhere and they’re lost. There are people, your friends, neighbors, and loved ones, who are lost, they’re missing and no one has gone to get them.

I wonder if there’s anyone in here that is courageous enough to pray a dangerous prayer? If there’s anyone who cares enough to pray, “God, hear am I, send me.” You see, the problem is that many of us are so holy that we can’t even have a conversation with a person that doesn’t know Jesus. In fact, many of us are surrounded by people that are lost, who don’t have any hope, and yet we don’t tell them what we know about our Savior.

One of the things that I love about Jesus is that he was never content with leaving the lost stay lost. In fact, one time, Jesus was having dinner with a bunch of people who weren’t even saved, but some of religious people saw what he was doing and they began grumbling and complaining that he welcomes sinners and even eats with them. Jesus responded to them by telling them a story which is recorded in Luke chapter 15. In verse three and four he said,

*“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?” (Luke 15:3-4).*

I wonder if any of you can remember when you were that one? In this parable Jesus said, I’m leaving the 99 to go get that one that is lost. In other words, he’s leaving church, he’s going out where the real people are, and he’s not going to stop looking until he finds who he’s looking for. And so, Jesus searched relentlessly all the way to the garden of Gethsemane where he was sweating drops of blood wrestling with the calling of the Father on his life. But he didn’t give up, he pressed on, and for the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame.

Jesus lived with this purpose, this kind of passion for the lost for the totality of his ministry because there was a day when that one was you. And yet, there are many of us who don’t have a desperation for even a single lost sheep, because it doesn’t apply to us, it doesn’t apply to our family. But what if they told you when you went home or when you went to get your kids from children’s church that they weren’t there, that they were missing? Maybe then you’d leave the 99 righteous, holy, saved people? Maybe then you would leave church and go out where the real people are looking for that one that was lost?

Jesus said, “I came to seek and to save what was lost.” In other words, there was something missing, something valuable, something of great worth, and if that was your child, if they were out there, if they were in danger, you’d be shouting and screaming asking everybody, you’d be checking everywhere, doing whatever it takes to find that lost one. Some of you have seen a mother panic in a store when their child wandered off. Some of you have been that one running up and down the aisles, shouting, screaming, calling the name of your loved one. And until you and I have that passion, that desperation for the lost, we don’t have the heart of Jesus.

You see, there are people out there who are headed to an eternal hell. And so, I imagine that most of know how to play hide and seek, but is there anybody who doesn’t know how to play hide and seek? Okay, so someone hides and what do you do? You go look for them, right?

Well, this morning, God is looking for a church that will pray a dangerous prayer. “God send me.” He’s looking for a church that will go, for people who are passionate, people who will go out on the street screaming, shouting, calling, looking for the lost.

## 2. We Need to Have a Sense of Desperation

You see, when you lose someone, when you know they’re in danger, you become desperate, and you don’t care what people think. The problem is that some of you were saved, you were healed and you were delivered from that whatever, but today you don’t have a desperation for the people that are outside, that are still lost, and who’ve given up hope. You’ve forgotten that it was once you who was lost, it was you who was going through hell, but you were found, you were saved. And until you and I get desperate for the lost, seeking that which is lost, we’ve missed the whole point of the gospel, and we’ve missed the heart of God.

This was Jonah’s story; you see, Jonah felt like he had exclusive rights to God’s mercy and love. And so, when the word of the Lord came to him,

*"Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me” (Jonah 1:2).*

The Bible tells us that, Jonah ran away from the Lord, he refused to go to those sinful people, and he sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord (Jonah 1:3). And so, Jonah responded just like many of us do, he felt prompted to do something, he knew he was supposed to reach out and help this person, he knew he was supposed to say something, but he refused.

Today, God is calling us, the redeemed, the blood bought church; he’s calling the body of Christ to go to those outside that are lost. The Bible says that not only has he reconciled us to himself through Christ, but he gave us the ministry of reconciliation, committing to us the message of reconciliation. The apostle Paul tells us,

*“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20).*

In other words, as ambassadors we have the full legal diplomatic backing of whom we represent. And so, we’re not walking into enemy territory in our own authority, but under the authority of heaven, the authority of the King of Kings and Lord of lords. We’re taking back what the enemy has stolen, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and releasing the oppressed.

There is somebody missing and today we need a sense of desperation, seeking that one who was created in the image of God, looking for those who are lost, and just as the Bible tells us, we need to be merciful to those who doubt, snatching others from the fire and saving them (Jude 22-23). And so, we need a sense of desperation, because they’re lost, they’re in danger and don’t even know it. Like firefighters, medics, first responders, we’ve got to find them, snatching them from the fire; but the thing is that they’re not in here. They’re not in the church with the 99 righteous, sanctified, Spirit filled saints. And so, we have got to go out just like Jesus said,

*“Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Luke 14:21).*

And if there’s still more room, if there are still empty seats, Jesus said we need to…

*“Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full” (Luke 14:23).*

And so, we’ve got to go and meet some people that don’t know all the worship songs. We’ve got to get to know some people that haven’t read the Bible and don’t know how to worship Jesus.

You see, for far too long the church has been busy pointing fingers and blaming lost people for acting like they’re lost instead of introducing them to Jesus. You know, how can we get all upset and boycott this and that, when they’re just doing what they know how to do. Peter said, you too…

*“were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25).*

And so, “you’ve returned” but how can you and I get upset when the sheep are acting like sheep? What we need to remember is that our responsibility as ambassadors is to love them and preach the gospel, reconciling them to God through Christ.

You see, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. Isaiah said,

*“Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8).*

It’s a prayer of availability and when you begin to pray that dangerous prayer, you’re giving God permission to interrupt you and he’s going to prompt you to do something, to say something, or be something. And so, how do we get to that place of surrender where we’re willing to pray a dangerous prayer like that? The answer is found in our text from Isaiah as…

Number three, He responded to God’s grace.

## 3. We Respond to God’s Grace

You see, it was as he found himself face-to-face with God, it was there in the presence of God that he came to understand the grace of God. He said,

*“I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1).*

It was as Isaiah saw the presence, the goodness, and the glory of God, it was in that moment, that he recognized his own unrighteousness. Suddenly Isaiah became genuinely aware of his own sinfulness in contrast to the holiness of God and in verse five he cried out,

*“Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (Isaiah 6:5).*

This was a pivotal moment in Isaiah’s life, because as he saw the presence of God, as he saw the holiness of God, he recognized that he was done, that he was ruined, that he was a pathetic sinner who had nothing to offer, and it was in that moment that God extended his grace to him. Isaiah tells us,

*“One of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" (Isaiah 6:6-7).*

In an instant, with one touch from God, his guilt was taken away and his sins were forgiven. And some of you understand this, because there was a time when the enemy had taken your dream, he’d stolen your future, and he tried to kill you in the process. You were down and you were bleeding, but you survived that broken relationship, that addiction, the lies and the abuse, because you drew near to God. You responded to God and the Bible promises that if you,

*“Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4:8).*

And so, the devil thought he hit you, but he missed. The weapon formed, but it didn’t prevail; it formed, but it didn’t crush, it didn’t prosper. Because God in his great love came near, he made you alive with Christ, even when you were dead in transgressions; because it’s by grace that you have been saved through faith.

You see, it’s just one touch, the same way that coal touched Isaiah’s lips and took away his guilt, the blood of Jesus covers all of our sins. Every secret sin, those things you’ve never told anybody before, God knows it all and he separates your sin as far as the east is from the west. And so, when you confess your sins to God, recognizing that you don’t have anything to offer, but you draw near to him, and as you sense God’s presence, becoming aware of your own sinfulness, it’s then that you experience the grace of God through Jesus Christ. And even now God is with us and when you draw near to God the Bible tells us,

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).*

In an instant, every sin past, present, and future is atoned for; because Jesus took our sins upon himself, he was the scapegoat, he is the Lamb that was slain and our sins went with him. And so, if you’ve experienced that grace, if you’ve been saved, then you should have the same passion for the lost, because they’re not coming in here, we need to go get them.

In verse eight, Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying,

*“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).*

This is a dangerous prayer, but we don’t want to be a church that plays it safe in here, we want to be a church that reaches out and helps rescue those who have lost hope and given up. Here am I, send me, not because I have got to, but because I’m responding to God’s grace. Because he loved me and gave himself for me, I get to be his hands and feet demonstrating the love that he has shown me. And so, if you’re struggling to have that kind of attitude and you’re not as available to God as you’d like to be, maybe it’s because you haven’t genuinely come near him in a while, because when you experience his presence you will be transformed.

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February 23, 2020

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*Graphics, notes, and commentary from LifeChurch, Ministry Pass, PC Study Bible, Preaching Library, and Sermon Central. Scripture from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*