

Disciple, Apostle, Prophet

- [Isaiah 6:1-8, \[9-13\]](#)
- [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)
- [Luke 5:1-11](#)

Today's readings are all about God's call. First, we heard the wonderful story of Isaiah seeing the heavenly court and hearing the cry, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And then, in the words that our souls love, he replied, "Here am I; send me!" This is the calling of a prophet, one whose words still touch us today. Then in the second reading, we heard Paul briefly mention his calling, how Christ appeared to him even though he had been persecuting the church of God, and so he became an apostle, one who is sent. And finally, in the gospel reading Simon, James and John left everything to follow Jesus as his disciples.

Disciple, apostle, prophet. How are you called?

My friends, I think we are called to be all three. Disciples first because we must learn from Jesus and in doing so we get to surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit transforming us into the likeness of Christ. As disciples, we listen to the teaching of Jesus, we study his life and consciously choose to follow in his path. Which is why every Sunday morning we always have a reading from one of the gospels. Because Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. In him is everything made new and in him we learn what it is to be truly human and truly God – in him we see how we are to love God with all that we have, and our neighbors as ourselves.

And in that we discover that we are also apostles – we are sent to the world in the name of God's love. We are sent to share our experience of the Christ with others. Most of us are pretty reticent about sharing our faith. But it is part of our calling and it is one of our baptismal vows – we have vowed to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.” I know that Christianity has a bad name among many of our friends and it can be embarrassing to mention that we are Christian and talk about how knowing Jesus makes a difference in our lives. But friends, are we ashamed of Jesus?

We don't face persecution in this country in this time – being mocked in social media does not qualify. Apostles do not have to preach in every synagogue like Paul or on every street corner like Wesley. But we are sent to share our faith in word as well as example. I expect that your friends know you go to church but have you ever talked to them about your faith journey? Have you ever offered to pray with them, or invited them to come to church with you?

People of God, the grace of God is not given to you alone. It is for sharing. Failing to share the grace of God is like hoarding Girl Scout cookies and eating them in secret.

We share the grace of God when we forgive rather than holding grudges. We share the grace of God when we look out for a neighbor. We share the grace of God when we talk of our own spiritual experience. We share the grace of God when we pray and send love to others.

Fellow apostles, we are sent to be a blessing to the world. We are sent to be points of light, clear channels for the Holy Spirit to move in our world.

I think this is at least partly a matter of intention. Our souls cry out with Isaiah “Here am I, send me” and we hope for some heroic task (or maybe some of us hope for some rather comfortable calling that we can complete without leaving the comfort of our homes.) But our sending does not usually come with a label, rather it comes with quiet gentleness as we have the humility to pray every day, “God, use me as you will in your service.” “God, use me as you will in your service.” – this is the daily intention of the apostle. That God's grace will be expressed in our words and in our action and in our prayers and above all in our attitude. Then the world is blessed, the reign of God extended, the beloved community comes a step closer.

Our third calling is to prophecy. The Hebrew prophets spoke truth to power – they confronted the kings and the people of Judah and Israel with the truth. Once the people decided to have a king, prophets were called to remind them that they were

the people of God and particularly to remind them of the importance of ethical behavior.

That is our prophetic calling. To be informed and engaged citizens who stand up for integrity and ethical behavior in our common life as a country. To hold our representatives to a higher standard. You know the saying “the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing” and there is truth in that, yet we often find it convenient to do nothing. We look at the difficulty that our democracy seems to be in, and we say “I don’t know what to do”, “I can’t do anything about it”. My fellow prophets, that is a cop out.

There are many things you can do without leaving home. You can write letters, sign petitions, pray for our representatives and for the causes you care about, and make financial donations. Beyond that you can make your voice heard by calling our representatives, speaking at Supervisors meetings and attending rallies.

Our participation does make a difference. A couple of weeks ago Earthcare drew your attention to a proposal that would have made rooftop solar much more expensive and asked you to take action. It was scheduled for a vote by the California Public Utilities Commission last week but was not placed on the agenda. Why? Because they are reconsidering their proposed rate increases in the light of all the feedback they received from prophets like us.

The recent redistricting in the County means that Los Osos residents will not be voting for a supervisor for another four years and in the meantime will no longer be represented by Bruce Gibson, our elected representative. We have effectively been disenfranchised. Whatever your political stance, this is wrong. I am grateful to those who have organized a lawsuit against the County. If you want more information please talk to Don Maruska who is a named plaintiff in the case.

People of God, we are called. We are called to be disciples, apostles, prophets. Above all we are called as the Letter of Peter puts it, to be “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that [we] may declare the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light.” I Peter 2:9

Recently I saw a t-shirt that proclaimed “The Chosen”. I was not impressed. Yes we are chosen, but so is *everyone* who chooses to respond to God’s invitation however they hear it. When we respond to God’s calling with loving surrender, we are choosing to be part of the royal priesthood. This does not grant us any special status in comparison with others.

We don’t need to be with Isaiah in the court of God to know that we are called, that we are chosen. We have the whole witness of the scriptures and the church of God to tell us that God loves us, each one of us with an unquenchable love. That will never change. God is always calling us into deeper relationship with Godself. God is always calling us to share God’s love and God’s grace with the world.

And when we answer “Here am I, send me” we truly become who we were made to be, disciples, apostles and prophets.