

# Here I Am, Lord, Send Me

## Luke 5:1-11

Epiphany is a season of revelation, of revealing things.

I have something very important to share with you today about me.

I've been waiting for the right time, the right moment to share this... You see, I'm just not really who you think I am, mild-mannered Pastor Neville... but in reality, I am... this was captured on film this week and its gone viral...

[Video of Pastor Neville dressed as Bible Man. Audio from video:]

Be not alarmed nor afraid, congregants... yes, it is I, Bible Man! Bible Man, Defender of decent doctrine; good looking guardian of the good book of God's grace, worthy watcher of the Word, and all round gospel good guy... a true super hero at your disposal... but now its back to that rather meagre, mild-mannered minister. And away!!!



Well what did you think of that? What was that?

Sounds like a bit of babbler to me. What do you think? I mean, how important is it to have a cape and superhero outfit when it comes to being a witness to Jesus in life, to be a sharer of God's news in Jesus? I guess it'd be handy to have super-human powers and to have studied at a seminary or Bible College. But is that what it takes? Do we sometimes think we need to be super disciples, and that we can't do it?

What do you need  
to be a witness to Jesus  
in your life?

As we hear the Word today, what does God say to us? What does he tell us that you and I need to be to people who follow Jesus, who witness to him in our lives, and to be his fishers of people?

Let's pray...

In each of the readings today, we will learn something about the people God calls to share grace and good news in Jesus. In each of the readings, we find people that God has commissioned

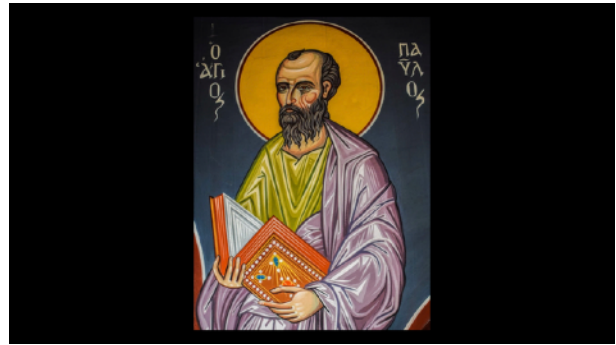
to do his work; to catch people for him. They seem like amazing people, called to do amazing work. And we might think, "Surely I could never be like such a person, or do such things as Isaiah, or Paul or Simon Peter! Could I?" Maybe we even put these and other disciples in the superhero category of the Bible. But as we listen to their stories and their encounters with God, we see their stories and their lives are



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really no different from ours, and our callings are just like theirs.

In I Corinthians 15, Paul tells the story, the Gospel story which he has received and through which he is miraculously saved, the one and only message through which all are saved by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. And as he tells the story, he includes his own. He is the least of the apostles. In fact, he deserves not to be an apostle at all because of his persecution of the church. Not such a super hero then, but a man who recognises so strongly his sin and his unworthiness, and so strongly the grace of God.

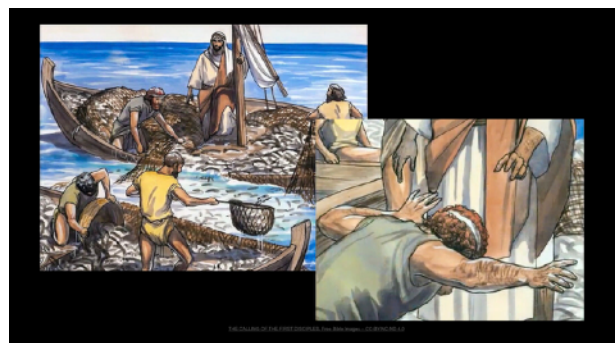


In the case of Isaiah, the prophet is called by God. He has a vision in the temple of the majesty of God on His throne. The Lord is attended by the angelic seraphs who sing and whose voices shook the foundations of the temple. What a sight! What an experience of the awesome display of the power of God! And in the presence of God, Isaiah cries, "Woe to me. 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." Again, in the presence of God we find a human, not a

superhero but a fragile, vulnerable person, just like you and me, who comes face to face with who he is; a sinner, someone out of place in the presence of the King, Woe to me. But God comes through the seraph to this mere mortal, touches his lips with the coal from the altar, and we hear, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." The mere mortal, no, the sinful mortal recognises his hopelessness, but is filled with grace of God.

You know, that's the journey we make to Holy Communion, isn't it? We come to this church and we are met by the same God. We come to this church and find we are the people of unclean lips because of our sin (we sometimes confess together "I'm sinful and unclean"), and we are out of place in the presence of God. But at the table, God touches us with the body of His Son and announces, "Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." My friends, our plight and God's response today to it are no different than for the great prophet Isaiah.

And so the pattern is repeated, as God as Jesus comes to Simon Peter and his mates in the boat. Again the power of God is made evident as Jesus orders the fishermen to put down the same nets which have caught nothing all night. When they put the nets down, they caught such a large number of fish that the nets began to break! They filled two boats with the fish and the boats begin to sink! The great hero Simon Peter falls to his knees — "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man." Sound familiar? Not the response of a superhero but of a sinner, just like you and me. God comes and reveals himself to people; sinful people, ordinary and real life sinners, you and me. We can make no reply on our own except woe is me. Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinner.



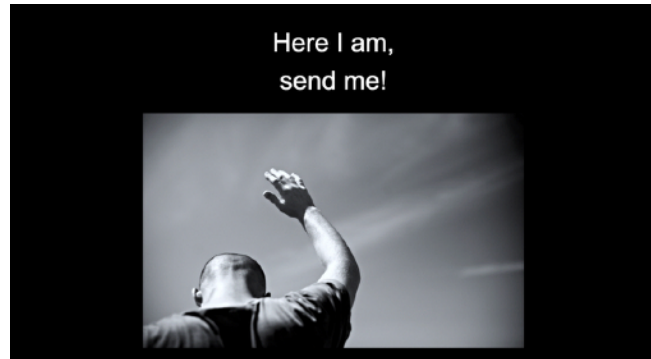
But God comes to reveal His nature and His amazing call. Don't be afraid. I'm here for you. I am the God of mercy and of grace and forgiveness and life. That's what Paul and Isaiah and Simon Peter received. But there is more. God then calls these unclean, sinful people to be holy, just like God, and to go into the world as His messengers to bring the same mercy, grace and forgiveness to other sinners, people just like them... people just like you and me making their way in life. Some people are given the gift and call to be evangelists, and Pastor Nathan and I met this week to discuss this further and to invite some people to discern more about this. But we're not all evangelists, nor do we need to try to be. But we all do hear the call.

Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? And as we gather in the temple with Isaiah, what is our reply? As individuals, as congregation, what is our reply? Sorry, Lord, I'm no superhero. Sorry Lord, can't do it. Who? Me? Sorry Lord, we've tried all night with family and friends, and what you're asking of me, of us... well, it just can't be done. Is that our answer? My friends, we all live in the waters of human need each day of our lives, and Jesus comes and calls us to go as His fisher people. And like the mortals we've heard of today and whom we see in the mirror, the touch of God on our lips with the gospel gives us life to live and life to give... fishers of people... you and me... Bible people.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3: 15-16a)

What's the reason for the hope you have? Why is Jesus and his relationship with you important to you? Today at morning tea, or as you greet us at the door... tomorrow as you wake and work and so on... try to put into a few words or sentences, the reason for the hope you have, and be ready to live and to share that hope in words and actions for others in your life. Text me and share your words! Remember, Jesus has called you by name to be his precious sister or brother, to be a person of eternal life, and to join his family of fishers.

Maybe we're not superheroes or super disciples or evangelists... but don't discount it. We certainly don't need masks and capes (however good we might look in them! ☺). But surely we, all of us who are given the grace of God, can confidently join Isaiah and Peter and Paul, and together in our lives reply, "Here I am, send me". "Don't be afraid, from now on you will catch people." Amen.



Video of the service including the above address: [https://youtu.be/VzC7M9Xu\\_4A](https://youtu.be/VzC7M9Xu_4A)