

## **“Whom Shall I Send?”**

### **Trinity Sunday Sermon**

#### **Isaiah 6:1–8 & Matthew 28:16-20**

There are moments in life when a simple sentence carries the weight of a calling. Moments when words spoken in pain and exhaustion reveal a deeper truth about purpose, commitment, and mission.

Kenya and Tanzania are neighbouring countries in East Africa. Though separated by colonial borders drawn long ago, the people share much of the same culture, traditions, and spirit. Kenya is famous for producing some of the world’s greatest long-distance runners, but Tanzania too has raised athletes of remarkable endurance and courage.

One such athlete was John Stephen Akhwari.

In the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, Akhwari represented Tanzania in the marathon. During the race, he suffered a terrible fall. His knee was badly injured, his shoulder dislocated, and by the time most runners had finished and the stadium had nearly emptied, he was still struggling along the course — bruised, limping, and in obvious pain.

He had no chance of winning a medal. There was no applause waiting for him at the finish line. Many would have understood if he had simply stopped.

But hours later, as darkness approached, John Stephen Akhwari entered the stadium and crossed the finish line.

Afterward, a reporter asked him a question many people were thinking:

“Why didn’t you quit?”

Akwari answered with words that have echoed around the world ever since:

“My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me to finish it.”

Church, those words sound strangely close to the voice of Isaiah saying,

“Here am I; send me.”

They sound close to the words of Jesus in Matthew 28 when He sends His disciples into the world.

God does not merely call people to begin well.

God calls people to finish faithfully.

Isaiah was sent into a difficult world.

The disciples were sent into an uncertain mission.

And like Akhwari on that marathon road, they discovered that calling is not about comfort, applause, or easy victories.

Calling is about faithfulness.

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

The question still echoes today.

And the answer God seeks is not from the strongest, the fastest, or the most successful. It is from those willing to say:

“Lord, You did not send me merely to start. By Your grace, I will finish.”

Friends, Trinity Sunday invites us into the mystery of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the God who exists in eternal relationship and eternal mission.

The Father sends the Son.

The Son sends the Church.

The Holy Spirit empowers and sustains the mission.

And our two readings today reveal this sending God.

In Isaiah 6, we witness a prophet standing before the holiness of God.

In Matthew 28, we see disciples standing before the risen Christ.

And in both passages, God sends ordinary people into extraordinary mission.

### **1. The Call Begins with Encounter**

Isaiah tells us:

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty.”

King Uzziah had reigned for a stable, prosperous 52 years. His death around 740 BC heralded immense political instability and the looming shadow of the aggressive Assyrian Empire.

The earthly king had died.

The nation was uncertain.

The future looked unstable.

But Isaiah discovers something powerful:  
human thrones may crumble, but God’s throne remains.

The temple shakes.

Smoke fills the room.

Seraphim cry out:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The holiness of God overwhelms Isaiah.

And notice something important:

Isaiah does not begin with confidence.

He begins with honesty.

“Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips.”

Before Isaiah can speak for God, he must first see himself truthfully.

That is what happens when we truly encounter God.

Pride melts away.

Pretence disappears.

We stop comparing ourselves to others and suddenly see ourselves standing before divine holiness.

And yet the story does not end with guilt.

A seraph takes a burning coal from the altar and touches Isaiah’s lips:

“Your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”

Brethren, Grace comes before mission.

Forgiveness comes before sending.

God does not call perfect people.

God cleanses and calls broken people.

Some of us think God only calls the exceptionally gifted, spiritually strong, or morally flawless.

But Scripture tells a different story.

God calls forgiven people.

God calls ordinary people.

God calls people who know they need grace.

The church has never been built by perfect people.

It has always been built by forgiven people saying yes to God.

Church, that is good news.

Because many of us feel unworthy.

Too old.  
Too tired.  
Too uncertain.  
Too wounded.  
Too ordinary.

But God has never waited for perfect people.

God called Moses who stuttered.  
Jeremiah who felt too young.  
Peter who failed.  
And disciples who still doubted even after the resurrection.

The call of God is not built on human perfection.  
It is built on divine grace.

## **2. The Call Requires Faithfulness**

Then comes the question:  
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

And Isaiah responds:  
“Here am I; send me.”

Notice:  
Isaiah does not yet know how difficult the mission will become.  
He does not know the rejection he will face.  
He does not know the loneliness ahead.

But he says yes anyway.

In Matthew 28, the disciples stand on another mountain.  
They see the risen Jesus.  
Matthew tells us:  
“When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.”

What honesty from Scripture.

Even at this sacred moment, there is still uncertainty.

Yet Jesus sends them anyway.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”

The mission is enormous.

The disciples are small.

The world is dangerous.

The future uncertain.

And yet Jesus sends them.

Why?

Because the mission does not depend on their strength.

It depends on His authority.

Church, that matters deeply today.

Sometimes we imagine God only uses the fearless and confident.

But Scripture tells another story.

God uses people who tremble.

People who doubt.

People who feel inadequate.

People who limp across the finish line like John Stephen Akhwari.

Faithfulness matters more than applause.

The kingdom of God is filled with people who simply kept going.

People who prayed when they were tired.

People who served when nobody noticed.

People who kept loving difficult neighbours.

People who continued believing through grief and disappointment.

The Christian life is not a hundred-metre sprint.

It is a marathon of faithfulness.

And God did not call the Church merely to start well.

God calls the Church to finish faithfully.

### **3. The Call Is Sustained by Presence**

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives one final promise:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

That promise changes everything.

Isaiah was not sent alone.  
The disciples were not sent alone.  
And neither are we.

The God who calls is also the God who accompanies.

That is the beauty of Trinity Sunday.

The Father who creates us.  
The Son who redeems us.  
The Spirit who empowers us.

We are held within the life and presence of the Triune God.

And perhaps that is what some of us need to hear today.

Some among us are tired.  
Some are discouraged.  
Some are carrying burdens nobody else sees.  
Some wonder whether their service still matters.

Hear the promise of Christ:  
“I am with you always.”

Not occasionally.  
Not only when life is easy.  
Always.

In hospital rooms.  
In grief.  
In uncertainty.  
In aging.  
In loneliness.  
In acts of quiet service.  
In moments when faith feels fragile.

The presence of Christ sustains the people of God.

#### **4. The Question Still Echoes**

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

That question still echoes through history.

It echoes into churches.  
Into homes.  
Into workplaces.  
Into retirement communities.  
Into schools.  
Into neighbourhoods.

God is still sending people.

Not all are called to cross oceans.  
But all Christians are called to witness.

Some are called to encourage.  
Some to teach.  
Some to pray.  
Some to serve quietly.  
Some to welcome strangers.  
Some to care for the lonely.  
Some to speak hope into a fearful world.

Some to give to the needy

Mission is not reserved for a few extraordinary saints.  
Mission belongs to the whole Church.

And perhaps the greatest challenge today is not whether God is calling.  
The challenge is whether we are listening.

## **Conclusion**

John Stephen Akhwari crossed the finish line long after the crowds had gone home.

Why?

Because he understood he had been sent.

Church, we too have been sent.

Not merely to begin.

Not merely to attend worship.

Not merely to admire Jesus from a distance.

We have been sent to live faithfully.

To love courageously.

To witness boldly.

To endure graciously.

To finish well.

And so today, the question comes again:

“Whom shall I send?”

May our answer, by the grace of the Father, through the love of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, be this:

“Here am I, Lord. Send me.”

Amen.