

TAKE TIME OUT - Pastoral Retreat

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Monthly Message – November 2020

Reverend Janice A. Morgan MA. BSc.

Isaiah 6:1-9 ⁸Then I 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!'

The year of King Uzziah's death was approximately 740BC see *2 Chr 26*. Although Uzziah was generally a good king with a long and prosperous reign, his people were increasingly turning away from God. Isaiah's vision was his call to proclaim God's message and bring His people back. This was a particularly difficult mission for Isaiah as God's message was one of destruction because of their disobedience. The people at that time believed they were blessed by God; things had been going well and they had become comfortable, but also complacent and inattentive to God's will and purpose. *How easily do we give way to complacency when we are comfortable with the way things are? How attentive or inattentive are we to God's will and purpose? Might we be in a place of disobedience?*

Isaiah's vision gives us a sense of God's greatness, mystery and power. He sees Seraphs; a God created order of angelic winged beings, sent to commission Isaiah. These awe-inspiring and powerful creatures shook the Temple with their worship, while hovering round the Lord seated on a lofty throne. At a time when moral and spiritual laxity had reached its peak, this was an important demonstration of God's power and holiness. Listening to the praise of the angels, Isaiah realised that he was sinful and unclean before God, with no hope of measuring up to His Holy standards. *How do we measure up? Do we need to rediscover God's holiness? How great, mysterious and powerful is our glimpse of God?*

The more clearly Isaiah saw God, the more aware he became of his own powerlessness and inadequacy both in terms of moral purity and capability to deliver God's message alone. The more we know God, the more we will see how impossible it is to do anything without God. However, when Isaiah's lips were touched with a burning coal, he was told that his sins were forgiven. It wasn't the coal that cleansed him, but God's refining fire, and in response, Isaiah submitted himself wholly to God's service. No matter how difficult his mission or how painful his task, Isaiah surrendered his all saying, "Here am I, send me!" *Do we recognise God's grace at work in and through us? Are we willing to submit our will to God's service? Have we surrendered all or are we holding something back?*

Before we can accept God's call to speak His message to others, we, like Isaiah, must be cleansed. Isaiah's recognition of his sinfulness before God encourages us to confess and repent of our wrongdoing. This spiritual act of forgiveness reminds us that we too are forgiven. Although God's purifying process may be painful, like lancing an open wound with a red hot knife, we are asked to submit to its work before we can truly represent the holiness of God. To acknowledge how great God is, and recognise how sinful we are, opens the door to realising the extent of His forgiveness. When we attain a state of acceptance we are able to submit ourselves entirely to God's service and receive the energising power of the Holy Spirit. *Have we been cleansed by God's refining fire? Might our wrongdoing be hindering the miracles of faith? Are we allowing the Holy Spirit's power to energise us into God's service?*

When God used this Scripture to call me into service, I did not even know the book of Isaiah existed, let alone whether it had six chapters! Even before I reached the end I was on my knees in tears of repentance echoing the complete submission of Isaiah to go and to do whatever the Lord might ask of me. His hand has steered me through many a battering storm, fiery trial, gale of tribulation and roller coaster ride of emotions. Yet, I have never looked back and by the grace of God I never shall. *What path will your journey with God take? What will your answer to His call be?*

Yours in Christ Jesus, Janice

Poem: I THE LORD OF SEA AND SKY SF 830:

I the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry;
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
I will speak My word to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
If You lead me;
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them –
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone;
I will speak My word to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them –
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts are satisfied;
I will give My life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Advent Reflections: Wednesday: 18th & 25th 12:30 & 7:30pm

Seats **must** be booked for the ½hr lunch & evening sessions **6** people maximum

November Calendar:

Sunday 1st All Saints' Day
Monday 2nd All Souls' Day
Sunday 8th Remembrance
Sunday 22nd Christ the King
Sunday 29th First in Advent
Monday 30th St Andrew's Day