



Christian Resources for Your Journey

DEVOTION FOR JULY 2010

“Then 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!” Isaiah 6:8

The hymn “Here I Am, Lord” is based on this scripture passage from Isaiah. Usually we sing this hymn when there is a confirmation, and certainly at ordinations. This hymn reminds us of new beginnings, and people being sent on ministries. Yet this hymn was sung recently at the funeral of a friend.

Why sing this hymn at a funeral? Because “Here I Am, Lord” was one of our friend’s favorites, and he had the blessing of being able to specify what he wanted in his funeral service. While at an ordination, we see people responding to God’s call to be sent to start their ministry in this world. In contrast, we might see a funeral as an ending. Why would we sing about being sent by God, when the person’s life on this earth is over?

As I reflected on this, I saw three different ways the message of this hymn (and the message from Isaiah) is a perfect fit in a funeral service:

- 1) The hymn is a statement of celebration. In looking back at the person’s life, we celebrate their obedience in being available to God for ministry through their entire life. In our friend’s case, we could clearly see the many ways that he responded to God’s call with ‘Send me!’, and the blessings to himself and to so many others that came from that response.
- 2) The hymn is a reminder to all the rest of us still alive that God continues to need people to step up and volunteer to be sent and used in ministry. We don’t know how much time we have left but obedience to God’s call is the right action for us at any age or stage of our lives.
- 3) The hymn is a proclamation of faith that life is not over just because the sojourn here in an earthly body is ended! God continues to call and prepare us for ministry. What ministry could we have after death? We don’t know, but without a doubt, God does. After all, God calls us to our heavenly home and surely he has purposes for us there that we cannot even imagine.

Therefore, in faith we respond in death as well as in life, that we are available for God to send us. As the hymn says: “I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.” We have occasions for ministry and service

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right here and now; and there is no telling what wonderful opportunities for loving ministry God has in store for us after we pass from this fleeting life on earth.

Praise you, Lord, for being with us, calling, strengthening, equipping, and blessing us, in this life and in the next, to be your faithful followers. Amen.

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