

# **Isaiah 6:1-8 +1 Mission Challenge**

**04/02/17**

*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the trail of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said:*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

*<sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”*

*<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”*

*<sup>8</sup>And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”*

*(Pastor prays)*

I am now in my 8<sup>th</sup> year at Hickory Grove and the 7<sup>th</sup> as your Senior Pastor. (Let me just say, you people have aged me.) But looking back, I can tangibly see and physically feel the shifting of our identity and the strengthening of our resolve. I see men and women who have always been faithful to church start to get intentional about the mission. There is a growing seriousness about Christ and a growing awareness of our call to mission. There is a growing desire for depth in our students and a texture in our worship that says, “this church is about the Glory of God and the pretenders won’t feel comfortable here.”

We believe it means something to follow Jesus and to claim to be a Christian. In addition to that, we believe it means something to call yourself a member of Hickory Grove. In joining this church, you join a mission, a Gospel mission that demands our

attention, our focus and our sacrifice. If we're not careful, it would be very easy to spend all of our time and energy and resources right here at Hickory Grove and nowhere else. It takes a lot just to keep this church going. But God didn't build this church just to keep this church going. We are designed for so much more than that.

From the very beginning, God designed the church to be inwardly strong and outwardly focused. It is the God-given missionary impulse. It is the church doing the work of the church in the name of Jesus. We are not a rich church of multi-millionaires. We are a working class, meat-and-potatoes people bound together by the gospel of grace and we are called to live our lives as those sent by God with the liberating truth that Jesus saves sinners.

To live on mission. It's our identity – not a slogan but a lifestyle. We are to live every day and every moment for the Gospel. At Hickory Grove, **Plus One** is the funding mechanism for the mission. Here's what I mean: As church members living obedient to God, we give at least one-tenth of our income to the Lord. It's where you start financially. If you make \$30,000 a year, then \$3,000 goes to the Lord's work at the church. The **Plus One Mission Challenge** is you and me giving an extra one percent of our annual income directly to missions to fund the Gospel work that Hickory Grove is involved in locally, nationally and globally.

And there is so much more to be done. With radical Islam on the rise around the world and the sexual revolution landing in our own backyard, now is not the time to retreat. Now is the time to give ourselves with abandon to the work of the Gospel.

Just imagine, by God's grace, what we could do as we commit to pray more and give more and lead more in Gospel Kingdom work. God has given us multiplied opportunities to be a part of Gospel mission. We are helping plant New Testament churches in Pittsburgh and Toronto, in Washington, D.C., and Boston. We sent out more than 150 people on short-term mission trips. Here at home we partner with more than 30 local ministries to meet the physical and spiritual needs of our community... Hickory Grove ministries like Hearts and Hammers, the Clothes Closet and Food Pantry. We had more than 500 people from our church volunteer this year for our first-ever church-wide Operation Charlotte.

We did all that and gave a million dollars to missions as a church. Every one of us has a role to play in this mission. I'm thankful for those of you who have accepted the **Plus One Mission Challenge**, and today I want to invite those of you who haven't to accept the challenge, to join the mission.

It's the same work and mission it has always been. But Gospel work means sacrifice. It means giving up something you love for something you love and cherish *more*. It means giving up sleep to *pray* more. It means giving up luxuries to *give* more. It means giving up leisure time and vacations to *go* more. This church and the Gospel work can only succeed if each one of us reaches out and touches, sacrificing for the Gospel.

A good way for you to think about your involvement in the Gospel mission of Hickory Grove is in the form of a pointed personal question: "If everyone *prayed* and *gave* and *went* at my personal level of sacrifice, would God be honored and would the Gospel move forward?" Let me say that again: "If everyone *prayed* and *gave* and *went* at my personal level of sacrifice, would God be honored and would the Gospel move forward?" There is a built-in missionary impulse that shows up when you really meet God. It's a universal Biblical truth.

## **Meeting God Moves You to Mission**

That's at least in part what Isaiah 6:1-8 is about.

### **First You Meet God**

What happens when someone becomes a Christian? Do they just make a decision or just ask Jesus into their hearts? I think Isaiah 6 gives us an Old Testament picture of a New Testament truth. In verses 1-4, Isaiah sees God as he never has before.

*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the trail of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said:*

*"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory!"*

*4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.*

In verse 5, Isaiah responds to seeing the Holiness of God. *And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"* Woe is me, I deserve to die!

God deals with his sin in verse 6-7. *6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."* Atoned for – God removes sin. God takes the initiative throughout this entire passage. It's revealing, convicting and converting. That live coal coming from the altar represents the New Testament idea of atonement found at the cross of Jesus: Jesus Christ, dying in the place of sinners, taking the wrath for sinners so that we might have the life and love of God. That's where we take people, to the cross where Jesus died to save. It's where men and women of all races are made equal. At the cross. It's where men and women of all sins become forgiven, where wayward children are reconciled to God, where the filth of sin is washed in the blood of Christ. But that's not the end – that's the beginning. First you meet God and...

### **Then You Join God**

Here's what I mean. The immediate effect of atonement and being reconciled to God is to live sent by God. It's in verse 8. In verse 8 something happens. Isaiah couldn't hear God until his sins were dealt with, and in verse 8, for the very first time, God speaks.

Follow the sequence of events. Verse 1, Isaiah's life is turned upside down and he sees the Lord far off. In verse 2-4, God draws him close and he feels the holiness of God. In verse 5, he is in the presence of God's holiness and Isaiah is aware of his sin. Then in verse 6-7, God deals with his sin and cleanses him. He is convicted of sin and converted. Now in verse 8, He is near enough to hear a divine conversation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We see a hint of the Trinity here. He was once silenced by his sin and not useful to God but now he is a redeemed sinner and he can hear God call. He can speak and respond.

The God that shuts you out because of your sins is the God that brings you home through Jesus Christ. You are bought in order to serve. Being joined to God means joining a missionary society. In verse 8, *who will go for us?* And Isaiah answers, “*Here I am! Send me.*” Send me. Send me.

A sick world needs a healthy church and a healthy church creates people who have been changed by the Gospel to hear the voice of God calling and answer with a forgiven joy... Ready to serve their King. Redeemed sinners– that’s what we are. Living sent – that’s what we do by God’s grace through the cross of Christ.

Today, you should join us. There are several ways to join us. You have an awareness of sin and want to talk to a pastor, you make a commitment to give to the regular and ongoing ministry of the church. Some of you already give but today you take up the **Plus One Mission Challenge**. You find a ministry you can contribute to. Or maybe today you respond to God’s call on your life to enter the full-time mission field or ministry. We want to talk to you about that.

*(Pastor prays)*