

SPREADING THE WORD OF GOD

Isaiah 49 1:6

Monday, March 26, 2018, 35th Day of Lent

The 49th chapter of Isaiah begins by emphasizing the divine calling of the prophet. The prophet is certain that the message he conveys is not his, but God's, for he has no doubt that God wants to make him an instrument – a channel to deliver God's message of salvation to humanity. I suspect that some may want to use this passage to back up their personal views on the abortion issue, but that misses the point of these verses.

The prophet is voicing a strong conviction that God's knowledge of us is not limited by time, that he knows us thoroughly and understands how each of us can fit into his plan for the salvation of his most precious creatures. I see him also acknowledging his willingness to answer the call – to make himself available to be a vessel to convey God's grace to the people.

Contemplating Isaiah's message makes me believe that God has a place for me and for you in evangelism, whether we deliver the word by writing, by speech, or by deed. I don't believe that God has set out an individual step-by-step agenda and all we have to do is place our feet in the steps laid out for us. I believe that God has given us many tools for discerning how we as individuals fit into the divine order. We have our God-given intellect, our church tradition, divinely inspired scripture, the wisdom of our fellow Christians (indeed, God's word may come to us through wise people of other faiths, for God is the God of all creation.)

God uses music, poetry, relationships – the possibilities are endless. It's up to each of us to constantly look for the voice of God speaking in earthquake, wind, and fire, but also in the still, small voice that's sometimes easy to overlook.

But verse 6 contains a point that's even more profound. As we read the Old Testament, it's easy to be caught up in the tumultuous saga of God and the "chosen people", but in Isaiah 49:6 we are reminded of what they were chosen for. God nurtured Israel for many years to prepare the way for their ultimate purpose – the promise of salvation for the whole human race through the Messiah, the promised Anointed One, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Divine Creator and Sustainer, help us be, like the true Israel, servants through which your message of salvation will be brought to light and revealed to the world. Amen.

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