

2015 Summer Sermon Series (Inspiring Songs of *Fresh-Brewed Faith!*)

“Here I Am, Lord” (Collin Raye)

By Rev. James C. Ramsey, Pastor @ East Union Presbyterian Church

Texts: 1 Samuel 3:1-18
Acts 9:10-19

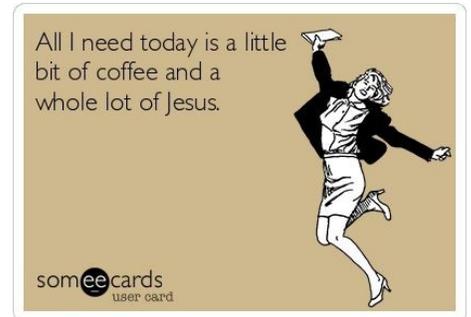
Preached: 6/14/15



This morning we continue our Summer Sermon Series – each Sunday features a song that has been important to one of our members and was highlighted during Fresh-Brewed Faith – our Spring Youth Sunday School Class. The song we celebrate this morning is a familiar hymn, “Here I Am, Lord.” Shari Smallwood presented it to our youth. This morning you can help yourself to some fresh-brewed faith!

The music and text of the hymn were written by Daniel L. Schutte, an American composer of Catholic liturgical music. He was a Jesuit priest and has released nine collections of Contemporary Christian hymns and songs.

(You can listen to the song on YouTube -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSzm7rEkmEU>)



Here I Am, Lord

Sung By Collin Raye, 1996

Written by Daniel L. Schutte, 1981

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in deepest sin
My hand will save

I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

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

2. 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?
Chorus

3. 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

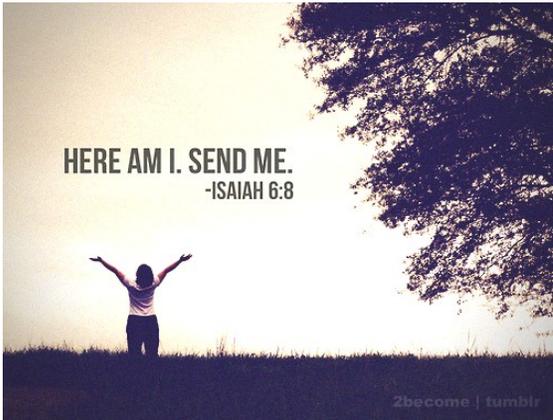


Listening to the song you begin to sense the pattern. The point of view keeps changing, of course. God begins speaking in each verse, first identifying himself,

as in “I, the Lord of sea and sky.” then explaining what he will do, making promises, and finally asking, “Whom shall I send?”

Each chorus, beginning with the words - “Here I Am, Lord”– is you responding, or it might be me! It is some disciple, who has heard God’s call, and answers obediently. In scripture it could be Samuel or Ananias, Abraham or Moses, Isaiah or Jesus’ mother, Mary.

Shari Smallwood first heard the song sung at a Christian funeral.



The words resonated with her, “so simple and true” she remembers. “The Lord of all things is calling for me, to bear his name and do life’s work. I felt by singing it, I was pledging my word to bear his name, hold people up, and speak of God’s power to others.”

“The Lord of all things is calling...” This is what the young Samuel finally came to realize, but it took him awhile! He hears a call in the night, it is direct and personal, urgently calling Samuel by name... and it seems a familiar voice, not frightening or intimidating, which Samuel takes for his teacher, Eli.

Two times the Lord calls Samuel. Two times Samuel runs to Eli, who sends him away. On the third occasion of the voice's calling "Samuel," and the boy's rushing in to Eli's side, the old prophet finally does catch on. Instead of sending his young student away, Eli perceives that it was the LORD who was calling the boy. Eli instructs Samuel on how this "vision" of God must be received:

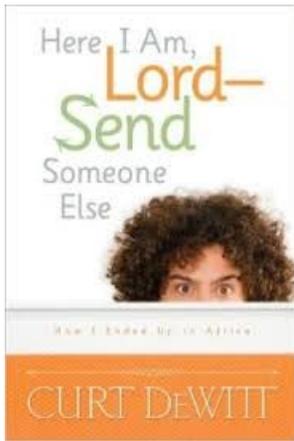


"Say 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening'". Samuel learns from Eli that to be God's prophet first and foremost demands a listening ear. Perhaps it is the same for all disciples.

How good are you at listening?

Author Marjorie Kellogg wrote [Tell Me that You love Me Junie Moon](#). In that book June is consternated with her friend and declares: "*The trouble, Arthur, with you is that you seldom listen to me, and when you do - you don't hear, and when you do hear - you hear wrong, and even when you hear right - you change it so fast that it's never the same.*"

How many of us listen to God in precisely this way? – Seldom really listening, not quite hearing accurately, even when we hear right, quickly trying to wriggle our way out of what we heard!



So that when we finally realize God's call, our initial inclination is to say, "Here I am, Lord; Send someone else."

Ananias heard God's call in a vision – and he responds like a good and faithful disciple, "Here I am, Lord." Once he hears what God is asking him to do, he probably wishes God would have called someone else.

Sometimes God's call is a test of our faith and nerve. Ananias listens as God tells him to seek out the notorious Christian persecutor Saul...not only find him, but heal him, making the blind and helpless Saul once again strong and dangerous.

Ananias did not understand God's motive – could not see the Lord's purpose and plan. But through the obedience of the disciple Ananias, Saul becomes the Apostle Paul, who will "carry" Christ's name to the Gentiles.

When disciples like Ananias, students like Samuel, followers like Shari Smallwood, you and me hear God's call and present ourselves obediently, amazing things happen, healing, transforming, holy things.



Richard Cardinal Cushing writes about the kind of people who could start a revolution if only they would return God's call, he says:

"If all the sleeping folks will wake up,
 and all the lukewarm folks will fire up,
 and all the dishonest folks will confess up,
 and all the disgruntled folks will sweeten up,
 and all the discouraged folks will cheer up,
 and all the depressed folks will look up,
 and all the estranged folks will make up,
 and all the gossipers will shut up,
 and all the dry bones will shake up,
 and all the true soldiers will stand up,
 and all the church members will pray up -
 and the Savior for all is lifted up—then...



You can have the world's greatest renewal."

Saying "Here I am, Lord," brings renewal, to you and to God's world!

