

Pastor Courtney Steitz

Sermon 11/15/2020

Isaiah 6:1-8

When I first came to Colorado, I played basketball for University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. Growing up in Minnesota, I had never really been in the mountains before. And with class and practice, I didn't make it to the mountains for my first several months on campus. The weekend that we played Air Force Academy I climbed on the bus with my teammates. As usual we talked and laughed and took naps on the way to the game. When I stepped off the bus at the Air Force Academy I couldn't believe my eyes. I had never seen mountains like this before. I had never felt surrounded by peaks, and trees, and snow. It was incredible. I literally had my mouth open. Our media staff person laughed as she walked past me, "First time in the mountains?" And all I could do was nod as I took in the splendor all around me.

I was probably feeling on a much smaller scale what Isaiah is experiencing in our passage for today—awe and wonder at the splendor of God. Isaiah doesn't even describe what God looks like, perhaps because he is unable to even look at God's face, but just the description of the periphery is amazing and beautiful. In the midst of this amazing vision, God calls Isaiah to work as a prophet and Isaiah responds.

Most of us probably haven't had the same intensity of vision that Isaiah has in Isaiah 6. I certainly haven't, but God can call us anyway. So today, I'm going to invite you to listen to a story of calling right here in our own congregation. Pat is going to share with us God's activity and calling in her life.

Pat's and Isaiah's stories invite us to some reflection on our own call stories. How has God called you? What has God called you into? Whether you feel like it is something big or small. There are many types of call stories in the Bible: Isaiah's call came as part of grand vision, Elijah heard God in a still small voice, Jonah connected with God in the belly of a fish, and Jeremiah didn't want to hear God's call in the first place. What is true of these biblical people is true of us. God calls us in small ways and big ones, to grand tasks and just to follow. So today, I invite us to take time to reflect--where have you heard God speaking or inviting?

These are questions that Christians have wrestled with throughout the ages. As you consider your own answers, I hope you will be as encouraged and enriched by Pat's answer as I have been.

## Called by God

Pat Mohrbacher – November 15, 2020

I'm sure many of you have sensed Holy Spirit speaking to you at times in your life. Probably none of us had a vision quite like Isaiah's, but maybe some of yours have been even more startling. I first became aware that God might be trying to tell me something when I was about 12 years old.

I lived on a farm in central North Dakota and it was one of my jobs in the summer to walk out to the nearby pasture in the late afternoon and round up the cows and bring them back to the barn for milking. It was a delightful duty and a chance for me to have a little quiet time to myself. (you see, I lived in a rather small house with 7 other people!) During these walks, it seemed to come naturally to start discussing my needs and ideas with God.

Another aspect of my life back then, in the 1950's, was a lot of exposure to the stories and photos, and even personal visits from people who had served as missionaries in other countries, especially Africa. We even had a kids club at church where we made scrap books and regularly prayed for missionary families.

Thus, in some of my conversations with God, I began to sense that he was asking me to serve him in foreign missions. I resisted. Even though that life sounded like a great adventure, it also looked like a really big commitment. The call kept coming, however, so I finally said, "Yes, God, if that is what you want me to do, I'll do it." I was amazed by the sense of peace and joy that washed over me in that moment! I knew I had made a good decision.

As the years went by, various calls kept coming at different times and in different ways. Bob and I married and moved to Lakewood. We joined Holy Shepherd and I became involved in raising our family and doing volunteer work. I especially enjoyed participating at church, BUT, I sometimes thought wistfully of the mission fields, and wondered if I had missed the boat.

I came to realize that God's original call to me was not so much about foreign missions as it was a call to come and follow him wherever life took me. Jesus wants us to become disciples, just like the 12 who followed him around on his earthly ministry. He asks us to put him in the center of our lives and he will be with us every step of the way. I feel so very blessed to be called to serve Jesus, who gives great joy and fulfillment when we say yes to him every day!