Shifting from Moments to Ministry

Bible Study Guide
Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-9
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Opening Prayer & Welcome

Begin with prayer asking God to give us hearts ready to shift from casual moments with Him to committed lifelong ministry, and to help us see Him high and lifted up regardless of our circumstances

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Introduction: The Context of Crisis

Key Definition: Shifting from moments to ministry means moving from casual encounters with God to committed lifelong service, beginning with authentic worship that leads to conviction, cleansing, and commission.

Scripture Foundation: "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple... Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" - Isaiah 6:1, 8

Discussion Starter: The Condition of God's People

Before we can understand Isaiah's call, we must understand the spiritual condition of Israel described in Isaiah chapter 1. God described His own people this way: "An ox knows his owner, and a donkey its master, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly. They have abandoned the Lord... they have turned away from him."

The Spiritual Application: Isaiah was called to prophesy during a time of social and national unrest. God's people had rebelled against Him, turned their backs on Him, and led themselves into captivity because they wouldn't listen to God. This world we live in, this city we live in, has a very bad sin problem.

Questions:

1. How does understanding the spiritual condition of Isaiah's time help us understand our current world?

2. Why did God choose to call Isaiah during a time of national crisis and uncertainty?
3. What parallels do you see between Isaiah's time and our current social climate?

The Big Idea

Real ministry flows from authentic encounters with God. When we truly see God's holiness, it exposes our uncleanness, drives us to seek cleansing, and compels us to surrender completely to His commission.

Shifting from moments to ministry requires connection with God, conviction of sin, cleansing by grace, and commission without excuses

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Reality #1: Ministry Begins with Connecting to God

Key Scripture: Isaiah 6:1

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple."

Main Points:

- The timing was significant: King Uzziah had died, creating uncertainty about leadership and direction
- Uzziah was a prosperous king who brought Israel to the mountaintop, but pride led to his downfall
- In the moment of national uncertainty, Isaiah sees God high, lifted up, and seated
- God's train (the robe of kings) filled the temple, showing His authority and majesty
- When we're connected to God, we see Him in control even when our world is chaotic

Key Teaching:

"While your world is uncertain, your community is living crazy, when everything around you has gone haywire, just know God is still God sitting on his throne and everything is subject to his will."

"When I'm troubled in life, when I don't know how or when I'm going to come through what I'm dealing with... One thing I know that when I'm connected to God, I'll see my God high, lifted up, and watch this. He's seated."

The Parallel Vision: Revelation 4

John the Revelator saw a similar picture during Roman persecution. Both Isaiah and John, during times of crisis, saw God on His throne surrounded by worship. The 24 elders (representing all God's people) were clothed in white robes and worshiping, saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it significant that Isaiah saw God "seated" during a time of national uncertainty?
2. How does seeing God "high and lifted up" change our perspective on current problems?
3. What does it mean that God's "train filled the temple"?
4. How can we maintain connection with God during chaotic times in our lives and community?

Truth Bomb:

God is still on the throne. God is still ruling and God is in control.

Application:

When facing uncertainty, focus first on connecting with God through worship. Remember that the same God who was in control during Isaiah's crisis is in control today.

Reality #2: Connection Leads to Conviction

Key Scripture: Isaiah 6:2-5

"Seraphim stood above him... And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.'... Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'"

Main Points:

- The seraphim's worship ("Holy, holy, holy") emphasized God's complete holiness
- The temple shook and filled with smoke at God's voice
- Isaiah's immediate response was conviction: "Woe is me, for I am ruined"
- He acknowledged both his own sin ("unclean lips") and his people's sin
- "Unclean" was the word lepers had to declare about themselves
- Seeing God caused Isaiah to see himself clearly

Key Teaching:

"Seeing God caused Isaiah to see himself... when you in light of God's holiness, when it allows you to be exposed and you really in light of who God is, it really as a mirror, it shows and exposes what you really look like."

"You need to have a spirit of humility to know you ain't got it all together... On your best day, you unclean. And your uncleanliness should... compared to the righteous standard of God. And every time you compare your best day to the righteous standard of God, guess what it does? Humble... to know I'm still unclean."

The Mirror Effect:

"It's like looking in a mirror, seeing God. Cuz you know how it is when you get up first thing in the morning and you glance by that mirror. You don't like what you see in the morning... when you in light of God's holiness, when it allows you to be exposed and you really in light of who God is, it really as a mirror, it shows and exposes what you really look like."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does authentic worship of God's holiness always lead to conviction of our own sin?
2. What does it mean to have "unclean lips" in our current context?
3. How does acknowledging our own sin differ from pointing out others' faults?
4. Why is humility essential before God can use us in ministry?

Truth Bomb:

On your best day, you unclean. And I'm still in need of the saving blood of Jesus.

Application:

Allow God's holiness to expose areas of your life that need cleansing. Don't focus on others' sins until you've acknowledged your own need for God's mercy.

Reality #3: Conviction Requires Cleansing

Key Scripture: Isaiah 6:6-7

"Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven.'"

Main Points:

- Before commission comes cleansing
- The coal came from God's altar—representing His provision for forgiveness
- God touched Isaiah's mouth (his area of "uncleanness") specifically
- God declares complete forgiveness: "iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven"
- Notice: God uses Isaiah in spite of his sin, not because he was sinless
- God never brings up Isaiah's sin problem again

Key Teaching:

"Before family, before Isaiah could be commissioned to do what God sent would send him to do, he had to be cleansed. And then before he came to being cleansed, he had to be convicted."

"Notice what God never did. He never brought up Isaiah's sin problem. He never brought up Isaiah, his own people's sin problem. He just said, 'Who am I going to send?'... Isaiah just needed to come to the resolve that God was going to use him in spite of."

God's Grace Despite Our Past:

"Many of us, we make excuses. Well, 'I don't think I'm capable.' God says I know. That's why you need me. 'I don't think I know enough.' God says I know. That's why you need to carry my word with you, your testimony with you. 'You just don't know, Fred, where I've been. You don't know the stuff I've done.' God has said that I know. But the fact that I'm still allowing you to live and breathe my air signifies the fact that I have you here for a reason."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why must cleansing come before commission?
2. How does God's complete forgiveness free us from making excuses about our past?
3. What does it mean that God uses us "in spite of" rather than "because of"?
4. How should God's grace motivate us to serve rather than make us complacent?

Truth Bomb:

The fact that I'm still allowing you to live and breathe my air signifies the fact that I have you here for a reason.

Application:

Stop making excuses based on your past. Accept God's complete forgiveness and allow Him to use you despite your imperfections.

Reality #4: Cleansing Leads to Commission

Key Scripture: Isaiah 6:8-9

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' He said, 'Go and tell this people: Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand...'"

Main Points:

- God's question was rhetorical—He had Isaiah in mind all along
- Isaiah didn't ask for details about the assignment
- He didn't make excuses or hesitate
- He simply said, "Here am I. Send me!"
- God warned that some would reject the message
- Isaiah was to preach faithfully regardless of the response

Key Teaching:

"Isaiah, God didn't tell him where he was sending him. God didn't even give him the complete assignment... He just says, 'I'm so convicted because I'm undone. Yet God still allows me to live... God, here I am.' Without hesitation. He doesn't make an excuse. He doesn't shrink back... Here I am, God. Use me."

The Reality of Rejection:

"Isaiah, you are actually going to send a message to my people that some of them are going to reject... Some of them will not hear you, Isaiah. But I want you to share it anyhow... Some of them I already know is going to have a hardened heart."

Moving Beyond the Building:

"Jesus didn't say make disciples when they come to you. He said, 'Go make disciples.'... Why don't we have church in the park? Why don't we take church to them? The young adults are already... going many times to the square right downtown... feeding, giving the homeless clothes, giving them what they need, ministering to them, praying with them."

Discussion Questions:

1. What excuses do we make about why God can't use us?

2. How can we move ministry beyond the church building into our communities?
3. Why should we continue ministering even when some reject the message?
4. What would it look like to have ministry groups throughout our city?

Truth Bomb:

Here am I, God. Use me.

Application:

Say "Here am I, send me" without waiting for perfect circumstances or complete details. Begin ministering where you are with what you have.

Practical Application: Making the Shift Today

The Four-Part Shift Challenge:

1. Connect with God Through Authentic Worship:

- Move beyond casual, routine worship to reverent encounters with God's holiness
- Remember that God is seated on His throne regardless of world circumstances
- Let worship transform your life beyond Sunday morning

2. Allow Conviction to Humble You:

- Acknowledge your own sin before pointing out others' faults
- Accept that even on your best day, you need God's mercy
- Let God's holiness expose areas that need His cleansing

3. Receive God's Complete Cleansing:

- Stop making excuses based on your past
- Accept that God uses you "in spite of" your imperfections
- Live in the freedom of complete forgiveness

4. Answer God's Commission Without Hesitation:

- Say "Here am I, send me" without waiting for perfect conditions
- Take ministry beyond the church building into your community
- Continue faithful service even when some reject the message

Ministry Opportunities:

- **Senior Homes:** Visit and minister to elderly residents
- **Downtown Ministry:** Join young adults feeding and serving the homeless

- **Hospice Care:** Comfort those facing end-of-life issues
- **Neighborhood Groups:** Start small ministry groups throughout the city
- **Church in the Park:** Take worship and ministry to public spaces

Self-Examination Questions:

1. **Am I truly connected to God?**
    - Do I see God as seated on His throne during chaotic times?
    - Is my worship authentic encounter or routine ritual?
2. **Have I been convicted of my own sin?**
    - Am I humble about my need for God's mercy?
    - Do I acknowledge my "unclean lips" before criticizing others?
3. **Have I received God's cleansing?**
    - Am I making excuses based on my past?
    - Do I believe God can use me despite my imperfections?
4. **Am I answering God's commission?**
    - Am I saying "Here am I, send me" or making excuses?
    - Am I taking ministry beyond Sunday morning?

Group Prayer & Commitment

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **Connection:** Ask God to help us see Him high and lifted up during uncertain times
2. **Conviction:** Pray for humble hearts that acknowledge our need for His mercy
3. **Cleansing:** Thank God for complete forgiveness and freedom from past mistakes
4. **Commission:** Request boldness to say "Here am I, send me" without hesitation

Commitment Challenge:

This week, identify one specific way you can take ministry beyond the church building. Take concrete steps to serve in your community, remembering that God uses us in spite of our imperfections.

Reflection: "Real ministry flows from authentic encounters with God."

For Further Study

Additional Scriptures:

- Isaiah 1:3-6 (The condition of God's people)
- Revelation 4:1-11 (John's vision of God's throne)
- 2 Chronicles 26:16-21 (King Uzziah's downfall)

- Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission)
- Acts 2:36-38 (Response to God's call)

Discussion for Next Week:
How can our congregation develop more ministry opportunities throughout our city while maintaining faithful biblical preaching?

Closing Prayer

Pray that God will help us shift from casual moments to committed ministry. Ask Him to show us His holiness so we can see our need for cleansing. Thank Him for complete forgiveness through Christ's blood. Request courage to answer His commission without excuses, and wisdom to minister effectively in our community. Pray for hearts ready to say "Here am I, send me" in whatever capacity God calls us to serve.

Remember: "When God speaks, the shift begins." Our encounters with God should move us from moments of inspiration to lifelong ministry that transforms our communities and glorifies His name.

For those ready to make the shift: If you need to come to Jesus in faith, repent of your sins, and be immersed in Christ for the forgiveness of sins and to enter into covenant relationship with God, we invite you to come forward. Prayer is also available for those seeking to deepen their commitment to ministry and service.