

### What it takes to have a Passion for Missions Is 6:1- 8

**Intro:** We are approaching our 4<sup>th</sup> annual **Missions Emphasis Month** in October. So we will be taking a little break from our look into the book of Hebrews to prepare our hearts for the messages from our missionaries who will be coming through here next month. Our theme for this year's Missions Emphasis Month is going to be "**Here am I...**" The goal of the month is to challenge every member of this church to be like Isaiah and surrender to God in one way or another. You see, missions' is not an optional thing that churches do; no missions is at the very heart of all scripture.

Every Christian is to either "**Go**" or support those who do...So I will tell you up front is that I am praying that God either call you to the mission field or get hold of your heart to give abundantly to the cause of missions. None of that will happen however until we develop a real **Passion for Missions**. In our text today I believe we see the three elements necessary to develop a **Burning Passion for Missions**.

#### [Ready Isaiah 6:1-13/pray/dismiss Jr. Church]

John Wesley once said, "**Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn.**" One August Saturday two hundred years ago, five students at Williams College caught fire with spiritual passion for the lost people of the world, in an impassioned prayer meeting for the nations, which historians later dubbed "*The Haystack Prayer Meeting*," these young men pioneered the international mission movement in America.

Many American universities during the American Revolution (1776—1783) encouraged dismissive attitudes toward religion and became havens of debauchery, corruption, and blasphemy. This spiritual weakening at many American universities was so intense that Christians were often ridiculed and persecuted. Schools founded on religious ideas—Princeton, William and Mary, Yale, and Williams College had difficulty finding any professing Christians on campus. Christian students met in secret, many keeping the minutes of their meetings in code to avoid discovery.

It was in these centers of spiritual erosion that God kindled the spark of revival known as the Second Great Awakening. God chose to pour out His Spirit and start pocket revivals in colleges like Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Amherst. God also moved in local churches from New England to Georgia. The Haystack Prayer Meeting at Williams College began in the climate of the Second Great Awakening.

5 underclassmen from Williams College in Williamstown, Mass drastically set the course of missions in America that Saturday in 1806. Their names were *Bram Green, Harvey Loomis, Francis Robbins, James Richards, and Samuel J. Mills*. Mills was the undisputed leader of the group and his heart for missions can be attributed to his mother, who dedicated him at birth to be a missionary.

When Mills arrived in April of 1806, the times were right for revival. He got involved in the spiritual community at Williams. On Wednesdays, a group of students met for prayer under some willow trees on campus, Saturday s, the group met by a maple grove. It was here in that maple grove that the power of God fell upon them.

No one knows for sure what happened that day in Aug 1806 since only Green wrote of it and that nearly 50 years later. What we do know is that 5 students – Mills, Loomis, Robbins, Richards, and Green – went to the maple grove to pray and to discuss the spiritual depravity and moral darkness of the continent of Asia since they had been studying Asia in geography. The men failed to notice the storm clouds gathering and as the storm neared, the group realized they were far from campus, so they sought shelter in a nearby haystack.

While the storm raged outside, Mills' passion for the nations raged inside the haystack. Mills insisted the gospel must be taken to Asia. Everyone in the haystack was moved by Mills' passion except Loomis, who said that if they went to Asia they would be killed. Everyone prayed, except Loomis. Mills' prayed last and remembered Loomis' concerns. He prayed, "*God, strike down the arm, with red artillery of heaven that shall be raised against a herald of the cross.*"

Over the roaring thunder of the storm, they sang a hymn and the fiery passion that burned inside of Mills exploded: **"WE can do it if we will."** At that moment, the Spirit of God ignited the hearts of all five. Every man under the haystack reflected that their lives would never be the same after that moment. Later, they devoted themselves to God and to taking the love of Christ to all the nations. And so the fire spread.

**To develop a burning passion for missions we must see some thing the way Isaiah did...**

**1. First, We need See the Lord in All His Glory (Isa. 6:1-4).**

**A. First we see Him in all His Majesty V. 1**

- 1) The "throne, high and lifted up;" an indication of state and majesty
- 2) The "train," to impress the prophet with a sense of the holiness of God and divine majesty
  - (a) Isaiah makes no attempt to describe the Lord Himself; He speaks of the throne, the robe the Seraphim
- 3) Understand that what Isaiah is seeing is a pre-incarnate Christ – John 12:37-41 quotes some of these verses referring to Christ.
- 4) There is enough mentioned to fill our minds with His
  - (a) High moral value and character
  - (b) His Excellence
- 5) there is enough concealed to impress as deeply with a sense of the divine majesty
- 6) Unlike other references to God where He referred to as the "Shekinah," or visible symbol of God
  - (a) It was on the Mercy Seat this view was on a throne;
  - (b) it was also referred to as a cloud, this has no form
  - (c) It was covered by cherubim wings; but over this stood the Seraphim
  - (d) The Shekinah had no clothing; this has a robe
  - (e) All speaks of God's Awe inspiring majesty
- 7) At the fullness of His Majesty "filled the temple" the most holy place of all

**B. Second we see Him in all His Magnificence V. 2**

- 1) The word Seraphim means "to burn" and is likely used here to signify the burning zeal that Isaiah saw as these winged ones served the Lord.
- 2) The Hebrew word for Seraphim is often translated "fiery serpent" as in Num 21:8 and other places.
- 3) But here we see 6 winged seraphim
  - (a) **The wings** were seen as being able to move swiftly and rapidly at the Lord's bidding.
  - (b) Also, in ancient days noblemen and princes were referred to as seraphim to illustrate their noble and excellent character
- 4) The word seraphim are applied to celestial beings no where else, except in this chapter.
  - (a) There is no reason to think that the seraphim described here took on the "form of" the serpent, as the representation seems to be rather that of a man.
  - (b) The idea is one of special magnificence and grandeur.
  - (c) It is derived especially from the customs of monarchs, particularly Eastern monarchs, who had numerous princes and nobles to attend them, and to give magnificence to their court.

**C. Third we see Him as deserving of reverence**

- 1) This is pictured by the seraphim **covering their eyes** with one set of wings.
- 2) When they came into the presence of His radiance and glory they couldn't look upon his face.
- 3) This idea of covering ones face in the presence of God is seen throughout Scripture:
  - (a) When God came to Abram and made a covenant with him the Bible says that **"...Abram fell on his face..."**
  - (b) When Moses approached the burning bush and God called out to him; God said **"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"** and a soon as Moses realized he was in the presence of almighty God the Bible says, **"Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."**
  - (c) John the revelator, when he was in heaven realized just who was speaking to him that, **"when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."** (Rev 1:17)
- 4) They also are **covering their feet**=this actually means they were covering their lower parts.
  - (a) This is another example of showing reverence

- (b) They covered themselves or they were not able to reveal themselves in the presence of almighty God.
- (c) When God passed by Moses on the mountain we are told that he got in the cleft of a rock and that God covered him over as he passed by and he was only able to see God from behind.
- (d) These seraphim covered themselves to demonstrate their complete nothingness and unworthiness in the presence of the Holy One

**D. Forth we see Him in His Holiness V.3**

- 1) **“They cried unto another”** this means one would cry out then the next would kind of like a responsive reading or a follow song.
- 2) They cried out **“Holy, Holy, Holy”** this was a very common thing in Jewish custom; this calling something out three times and it was done to bring emphasis to that which they are crying out.
- 3) In other words they were saying **He is supremely holy!**
- 4) They are crying out just how supremely holy the Living God truly is.
- 5) The fact that the whole earth is full of his glory shows that the Creator God is true all Holy and worthy of our praise.

**E. Fifth we see Him in is Power V. 4**

- 1) We see his power over nature- The very building in which Isaiah was shook as if an earthquake had come
- 2) We see his power over nations –
  - (a) the place was filled with smoke
  - (b) This is a veiled reference to the cloud that stood between the children of Israel and the Egyptians as they came out of bondage.

**F. III:** *In that group of 5 men Mills’ was the leader and his passions for missions was driven by more than is mothers dedication, his spiritual passion came from his own experiences with God. When he was fifteen, sparks of the Second Great Awakening flashed through his hometown in Connecticut. While many of Mills’ family and friends were overcome with emotion, which they claimed as evidence of salvation, Mills’ unaffected emotions left him in private despair. His chief struggle was with the doctrine of election: Why would God discriminate in showing His favor? But when he was 18 and preparing to go off to Morris Academy he had a vision of a Holy God and instantly he knew that God had not withheld salvation from him and he was saved. One year later after returning from the academy Mills told his father that he could not even conceive of entering into a profession but one that would enable him to “communicate the gospel of salvation to the poor heathen.” Mills believe he was to be a missionary so he enrolled at Williams College.*

**To have a Burning Passion for Missions we have to See the Lord in All His Glory ...**

**2. Secondly, We need to take an honest look at our selves (Isa. 6:5-7)**

A. The sight of a holy God, and the sound of the holy hymn of worship, brought great conviction to Isaiah’s heart; and he confessed that he was a sinner.

- 1) Unclean lips are caused by an unclean heart (Matt. 12:34-35).
- 2) Isaiah cried out to be cleansed inwardly (Ps. 51:10), and God met his need.
- 3) If this scene had been on earth, the coals would have come from the brazen altar where sacrificial blood had been shed, or perhaps from the censer of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12).
- 4) Isaiah’s cleansing came by blood and fire, and it was verified by the word of the Lord (Isa. 6:7).

B. Before we can minister to others, we must permit God to minister to us.

- 1) Before we pronounce “woe” upon others, we must sincerely say, **“Woe is me!”**
- 2) Isaiah’s conviction led to confession, and confession led to cleansing (1 John 1:9).
- 3) Like Isaiah, many of the great heroes of faith saw themselves as sinners and humbled themselves before God:
  - (a) Abraham – **“And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes”**(Gen. 18:27),
  - (b) Jacob – **“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant...”** (32:10),
  - (c) Job – **“Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.”** (Job 40:4),

- (d) David – **“Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel”**(2 Sam. 7:18),
  - (e) Paul – **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”**(1 Tim. 1:15),
  - (f) Peter – When Peter and the other fishermen were commanded by Jesus to let their nets one more time and the catch was so big that the boat began to sink the Bible says that, **“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”**(Luke 5:8-11).
- C. James is addressing this issue of self-examination in James 1:19ff  
**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: <sup>20</sup>For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup>Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup>But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. <sup>23</sup>For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup>For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup>But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”**(Vv. 19-25)
- D. Church What this world needs is a group of people who have a **fresh look at just who God really is and a honest assessment of who they are** to ignite the flame of evangelistic zeal and missions around the world.

**To have a Burning Passion for Missions we have to See the Lord in All His Glory, We need to take an honest look at our selves**

**3. This will ignite the Fire in our Hearts for the need (Isa. 6:8)**

- A. The nation needed the Lord, and the Lord wanted a servant to minister to the people.
  - 1) Isaiah volunteered to be that servant.
  - 2) He did not discuss his call with the Lord, as did Moses (Ex. 3:11-4:15) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4ff), but accepted the appointment and made himself available to his Master.
- B. Never underestimate what God can do with one willing worker.
  - 1) There is an even greater need for laborers today, and we have tremendous opportunities for sharing the Gospel with a lost world.
  - 2) Are you one of God’s willing volunteers?

**Conclusion (Vv. 9-13)** The Lord did not give His servant much encouragement! Isaiah’s ministry would actually make some people’s eyes more blind, their ears more deaf, and their hearts more calloused. Verses 9-10 are so important that they are quoted six times in the New Testament (Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:25-28; Rom. 11:8). God does not deliberately make sinners blind, deaf, and hard-hearted; but the more that people *resist* God’s truth, the less able they are to *receive* God’s truth. But the servant is to proclaim the Word no matter how people respond, for the test of ministry is not outward success but faithfulness to the Lord.

God told Isaiah that his ministry would end in seeming failure, with the land ruined and the people taken off to exile (Isa. 6:11-12). *But a remnant would survive!* It would be like the stump of a fallen tree from which the shoots (“the holy seed”) would come, and they would continue the true faith in the land. Isaiah needed a long-range perspective on his ministry or else he would feel like he was accomplishing nothing.

**“Go and tell”** is still God’s command to His people (v. 9; see Matt. 28:7; Mark 5:19). He is waiting for us to reply, **“Here am I; send me.”**

Only one man from the five at the haystack, James Richards, became an overseas missionary. He left in 1815 to do missions in Sri Lanka. After the haystack, Loomis supported missions in America more than foreign missions and his life reflected that. After graduation he went on to pastor 4 churches. Robbins studied theology after graduating from Williams and did missionary work in New Hampshire and Vermont. Sam Mills graduated from Andover with hopes of becoming a missionary, a goal never fulfilled. He did make several missionary journeys into the western frontier of America, preaching and organizing Bible societies as he went. That last few years of his life he spent helping slaves in the South return to Africa to spread the gospel there. Of the 5 men, one, Byram Green did not spend a lifetime in vocation ministry. He spent most of his life as a senator, both for the New York state and US Senate.