The Call of a Prophet SABBATH

- This week = examine monumental times in history when God called prophets to realign His people w/ His messages for fallen world

Memory Text: **Isaiah 6:8 "Also 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'"**

- Thru/out biblical history, God called prophets during times of spiritual confusion / moral decline / widespread rebellion
- These men / women = chosen to communicate His truth / **defend His covenant** / call His people back into faithful relationship w/ Him
- Prophetic calling / rarely easy = God's messengers = often ignored /
    - misunderstood / ridiculed / imprisoned / beaten / even killed
- Prophetic voice / not an echo of popular culture
    - It is clear communication = of God's revealed will
- Our world today = also filled w/ violence / greed / immorality / exploitation / spiritual deception
- For that reason = call of the prophets remains intensely relevant
- God still calls His people to listen to His Word
    - then become faithful messengers of hope to a fallen world

SUNDAY = Abraham, Defender of the Covenant

Consider three outstanding truths about = call of a prophet

1: God Calls Ordinary / Imperfect People Who Trust Him

2: God's Messengers Are Called to Defend the Covenant

3: Everyone Who Hears God's Voice Is Called to Respond

- UNPACK #1 = Ordinary/Imperfect Ppl Who Trust Him
- Abraham = identified in Scripture as / prophet **Genesis 20:7**
- Yet when God first called him= not / powerful king
    - Not / trained theologian = not /famous religious leader
- Simple man living in = culture surrounded by paganism / idolatry

Genesis 12:1 God said to him: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you"

Hebrews 11:8 "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going."

- Abraham's qualification for service = not that he was flawless
- Scripture records his mistakes / fears / moments of weakness
- His qualification = he believed God = was willing to respond in faith

Genesis 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

- HEART OF THE GOSPEL = **RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH**
- Abraham declared righteous because he trusted / promise of God

Galatians 3:9 those who are of faith are blessed w/believing Abraham.

- His experience points us to = salvation thru faith in Jesus Christ
- We're not accepted by God because of
    - our goodness / achievements / spiritual accomplishments
    - Only accepted thru faith in Christ / and His righteousness
- **Genuine faith does not remain inactive**
- Abraham believed God = therefore Abraham obeyed God
    - Not an attempt to earn salvation = heart response of trust
- God still works thru imperfect people = does not call only those who feel qualified = He qualifies those who answer His call

<u>Point 2: God's Messengers Are Called to Defend the Covenant</u>

- Not all prophets were primarily predictors of future events
- They were **defenders of God's everlasting covenant**
- Called to reveal nature of God's love / righteousness of His character
    - Promise of salvation by grace found in Messiah
    - And how His covenant people were called to live
- Warned against idolatry / injustice / oppression
    - immorality / apostasy
- Called God's people back to = faithful obedience
- Abraham became / example of covenant faith
- God's covenant w/ him = not limited to Abraham /immediate family

Genesis 12:3 "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"

- Everlasting covenant had = worldwide purpose
- Thru Abraham's descendants = Messiah would come
- Thru Messiah = salvation would be offered
    - to every nation / tribe / language / people
- To test Abraham's faith / illustrate future sacrifice of God's covenant Son= God instructed him to offer Isaac / son of promise = as sacrifice

Hebrews 11:17, 19 [17]By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up **his only begotten son**, [covenant son of promise] … [19]concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- God provided ram [adult male sheep] that day and for us
- John the Baptist pointed to Jesus / declared, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
- Every true prophetic message = must lead people back to covenant
    - and ultimately to Jesus Christ
- Warning w/o gospel = produces fear / despair
- Biblical prophets did not merely announce judgment
    - Also revealed God's mercy / forgiveness / restoration / promise of salvation
- Even when they exposed sin = purpose / redemptive
- God sent them because = He wanted His people to return to Him
- Especially important for those proclaiming God's final message today
- **Revelation 14** contains serious warnings = but foundation of three angels' messages is "the everlasting gospel."
- Our message must never be merely = "A crisis is coming."
    - It must also be = "A Savior has come."
- We defend / covenant when we uphold God's truth
- but we reveal heart of covenant = when we point people to Jesus

Point 3: Everyone Who Hears God's Voice Is Called to Respond

- Jill will cover Isaiah's encounter w/God
- Prophetic call begins w/ hearing = voice of the Lord
- Receiving cleansing / forgiveness
- Making ourselves available to God
- Not everyone / called to occupy = prophetic office
    - but every Christian = called to be a witness
- Every believer has been entrusted w/message of hope for / world

- **Revelation 12:17** identifies covenant keepers as those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
- God's last-day people will hold together what world often tries to separate: grace/obedience = faith /faithfulness = warning/hope = truth/love
- We must never proclaim truth w/ = harsh /condemning spirit
- Neither can we remain silent simply because truth / unpopular
- Prophets teach us to speak courageously / compassionately /
    - and faithfully

LOMACANG = EGW

- The call of a prophet teaches us = three great truths
- **God calls ordinary, imperfect people who trust Him**
- **God's messengers are called to defend the covenant**
    - call people away from sin / back to faithfulness
    - and ultimately to salvation thru Jesus Christ
- E**veryone who hears God's voice = called to respond**
    - every believer = called to communicate God's truth/hope
- "Here am I! Send me."

Join us next week as we study **OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS**