

Isaiah 49:1-6

I Hear The Savior Calling is the title of the **hymn** which we just sang. The Savior **calls** us to bring the Good News of salvation to **all** people, so they can hear that their sins have been **forgiven**, and they can put their trust in **Jesus** to provide them with everlasting **life**. This is **our** calling - this is our **mission**, and it **belongs** to us because we are Christ's **people**. We're His **body**, and He is our **head**. When it comes to **carrying out** our calling we take our cue from Jesus Himself, because **He** received the **calling** and **mission** to accomplish the **salvation** of the world. That's what **His** earthly **life** was all about, and it **characterizes** what His rule from the throne of heaven **continues** to be about.

And that leads us to our text for today. In the 49th chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah our Lord Jesus says. "***Listen to me, you coastlands. Pay attention, you faraway peoples!***" Jesus calls for our **attention**. He's going to **describe** His calling for us, and it's His **prayer** that as we learn about **His** calling we will come to better understand our **own** calling, and carry it out with ever greater **passion**. So it's time to **listen**, and **Hear the Savior's Calling**.

In our text for today He says, "***The LORD called me from the womb. When I was inside my mother he mentioned my name.***" Way back in **eternity**, before the creation of the world, God the Father **called** His Son to carry out a **mission**. The **name** He gave to His Son at the time of His birth **describes** that mission. God named His Son **Jesus**, which means **Savior**. **Saving** His people from their sins, is the **calling** the Father gave to His Son.

And Jesus goes on to tell us, "***He made my mouth like a sharpened sword. He hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me a polished arrow. He concealed me in his quiver.***" Scripture often uses the **sword** as a picture of **God's Word**, because they are both **sharp** and **effective**. The Father gave His Son the ability to speak **clearly** and **powerfully** about the **love** and **truth** of God.

The Bible also uses the picture of an **arrow** as a **prized possession**. In the same way that an **earthly** father might think of his children as **arrows** because they are his **pride** and **joy**, so also the **heavenly** Father beamed with **love** and **pride** over **His** Son. These two aspects of Jesus' calling - speaking **God's Word**, and being **loved** by the Father - became evident at the time of Jesus' **baptism**. Immediately after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, the Father in heaven said of His Son, "***This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him.***" And from that day on Jesus preached **sermons** and taught **lessons** which helped people learn about the **love** and **mercy** of our **forgiving** God.

But there is **more** to Jesus' calling. Jesus continues by telling us, "*(The Father) said to me, 'You are my **servant** Israel, in whom I will display my **glory**.'*" **Interesting**, isn't it? The Father called His Son to be His **servant**, but He also called Him to display His **glory**. It's not that God's glory was ever **hidden**, because we know that "*The **heavens** declare the glory of God.*" **All** of nature with its **vastness**, and its **stars**, and **clouds**, and **snowflakes**, reveal the **glory** of God. They show us that God is **mighty**, and **wise**, and **loving**. But we don't always **see** that glory, because **sin** has messed up our hearts so badly, that we **fail** to see and appreciate the **glory** which is so **evident** in God's creation. In sin we become **self-centered**, and we focus on our **own** glory. We want to play by **our** rules, not by **God's** rules. We strive to do the things which will elevate **our** standing in the world, while the **commandments** which God gave to **shelter** us and to **bless** us end up losing their **luster**, and in our eyes even **God Himself** loses His glory.

We need to ask ourselves, "How does our sinful nature feel about **God's** command to give Him **first place** in our lives?" Is that what He **deserves** from us, or is He just being **bossy**? Already with our view of the very **first** of the Ten Commandments, sin has totally **blinded** us to the **glory** which belongs to our God. So, instead of giving Him **glory**, we get **upset** with God. Instead of **raising Him up** in the world, we act as if God is just a big stick-in-the-mud.

But in spite of all our **ignorance** and **self-centeredness** God called His Son to be His **servant**, and to **display** His glory. It's really not as **strange** as it **seems** to be. God sent Jesus in the form of a **servant** - a **faithful** servant, who would carry out **everything** His Father wanted Him to do. And that's exactly what happened. Everything Jesus **did** during His life here on the earth **displayed** the **glory** of God. Everything Jesus **did**, displayed the Father's **love** us, in **spite** of our rebellion and sin. His **baptism** gave **glory** to the Father. His healing **miracles** - giving **sight** to the blind, giving **hearing** to the deaf, and even giving a **dead** son back **alive** to his mother - these **miracles** all proclaimed the **glory** of our heavenly Father.

And of course Jesus' **suffering** and **death** on the cross **completed** God's plan to **save** us - bringing Him **more glory** than **anything** which had gone before. Think about that whole process. The **Father** didn't spare His own **Son**, but offered Him up as a **sacrifice** to pay for the world's **sin**. The **willingness** of Jesus to **die** on the cross for **sinners**, who didn't even come **close** to **deserving** that gift, brings **glory** both to **Him** and to His **Father**. God's plan for His Son was **accomplished**. Jesus became a willing **servant**, and displayed the **splendor** of God's **glory** in His service. At the **cross** God showed His **love** for the world, as He gave His only **Son** to be the atoning **sacrifice** for our sins. At the **cross** God **forgives** us our sins, and gives us the free gift of eternal **life** through faith in His **Son**.

Once again it seems **strange** that the **humility**, and **suffering** and even the **death** of Jesus, would be God's way of displaying His **glory** to the world. Even Jesus Himself questioned the idea. In the prophecy we have before us today He said, "*I have labored in **vain**. I spent my strength and came up **empty**, with **nothing**.*" And again, during His **prayers** in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked His Father if there was some **other** way to go forward with His plan of salvation - **without** drinking the cup of **suffering**. But at the same time He showed His complete **trust** in His Father saying, "***Your will be done.***" Those words echo our **text** where Jesus said, "*Yet a **just** verdict for me rests with the **LORD**, and my **reward** is with my **God**.*" Jesus trusted the matter to His Father, confident that **good** results would come from His suffering.

Of course, He was **right**. The Father **has** blessed the sacrifice of His Son, and we are **included** in the reward which Jesus received for His suffering. Through Jesus we have been **spared** from the punishment which our sins deserved. Through Jesus we are **forgiven children** of the heavenly Father. And as His children, it's wise for us to put all of our moments of **loss** and **pain** into the caring hands of our heavenly **Father**. **Hear The Savior's Calling**. The Father called Jesus to speak words of **comfort** and **truth** to us, and to reveal His **glory**, His **mercy**, and His forgiving **love** and **power** in our times of suffering, weakness, and pain.

The glory of God which Jesus displayed in **His** life, encourages **us** to carry out **our** calling with sincere devotion. Think back to the **introduction** of today's sermon. The **LORD** has called **us** to **tell others** about Jesus - **their** Savior and **ours**. That's our **calling**. That's our **mission**. How well are we **carrying out** that mission? How many people do we want to **tell** about the salvation which Jesus has won? God's plan for **Jesus** was to tell **everyone**. **Hear** once again **The Savior's Calling**. Isaiah wrote, "*But now the **LORD**, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to turn Jacob back to him, so that Israel might be gathered to him, so that I will be honored in the eyes of the **LORD**, because my God has been my strength - the **LORD** said: It is too **small** a thing that you should just be my servant to raise up **only** the tribes of **Jacob** and to restore the ones I have preserved in **Israel**, so I will appoint you to be a light for the **nations**, so that my salvation will be known to **the end of the earth**.*"

God called **Jesus** to be a light for **all** the nations, and to bring salvation to **the end of the earth**. Jesus lived among the **Jews**, and He preached God's Word and performed miracles in **Israel**. God gave Him **strength** for this mission and **blessed** His efforts, leading **many** of the Jews to believe in Him as the **Messiah** and their **Savior**. But the **overall** mission of Jesus was even **bigger**. He was called to bring salvation to **all** the nations of the world - to Asians and Latinos, to

Caucasians and Africans, to **every race** of people. Jesus spoke about heaven to the **Samaritan** woman at Jacob's Well. He brought forgiveness to a **Roman** centurion. And most important of all, He **died** to pay for the sins of **all** people and **destroyed** death and the grave for **all**, so that **whoever** puts their trust in **Him** will be saved. We don't have to be from a certain **race**, or be a certain **color**, in order to be saved, because the grace of God is **color-blind**.

It's our prayer that God's love for sinners will shine in **every** part of the world - at **home** and **abroad** - in **cities** and in the **country** - in **peaceful** villages and **crime-plagued** neighborhoods. The light of salvation is **available** for everyone, and it is as **close** as God's Word. Christ's command to us is, "*Go into **all the world** and preach the gospel to **all creation**.*" That's our **calling** - to reach out to the **young**, the **old**, the **rich**, and the **poor** - and to bring them the message of **salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Hear The Savior's Calling**, and be **motivated** by Jesus to share the message of His **love** and **salvation** to the end of the earth. Amen.