

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (C)

Isaiah 6.1-13

Psalm 138

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Luke 5.1-11

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**Isaiah 6.1-13**

1. The narrative of the call of Isaiah stands at the beginning of the section of the book which relates the unpopularity of his message.
  - a. The function of the call narrative is to justify to his contemporaries the unpopular teaching of the prophet.
  - b. Uzziah's death was in 742 B.C.
2. The LORD is not depicted as a national deity, but as God over all the earth.
  - a. Nonetheless, the hand of the LORD falls most heavily on His own people.
  - b. God is depicted attended by seraphim. The name for these angelic being derives from the word for "fiery".
    - i. The angels veil their faces and "feet". The latter term is a Hebraic euphemism (*cf.* 7.20) for private parts.
  - c. Their cry of "Holy!" may reflect the liturgy of the Temple.
3. The prophet is dismayed that he has looked upon God, for to do so is to die (Exod. 33.20; Judg. 13.22).
  - a. The text implies a meeting of the heavenly council ("... who will go for us ...," v. 8)) to decide who will go to spread God's message to Israel, and the fact that the message is to "this people" (v. 9) implies reproach.
    - i. God's desire is not to prevent that people turn and repent, nor did Isaiah attempt to prevent this. Failure to be converted results from a failure to "hear".

**Psalm 138**

1. An individual hymn of thanksgiving, used traditionally at Vespers.
  - a. vv. 1-4: thanksgiving for deliverance
  - b. vv. 5-6: prayer that all nations will acknowledge the LORD
  - c. vv. 7-9: statement of confidence in salvation.
2. The reference to the "kings of the earth" has been taken, traditionally, to be a reference to the awe inspired in other nations that Israel:
  - a. Has subdued those whom she has supplanted, and
  - b. Has returned from exile, and been restored to her land.

**1 Corinthians 15.1-11**

1. Paul tells us that he wrote this letter during the Spring, from Ephesus (16.8), but in which year is not clear. The accepted range is *A.D.* 52 to 57, *i.e.* about 25 years after the resurrection of Jesus.

- a. The Good News being thus proclaimed is one which has been current from the beginning. It is a message which Paul has received.
2. The basis of Paul's response in faith is the Church's belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Resurrection is not a possible theory but an accomplished fact.
    - a. Paul's letter reflects here a creedal statement, made about four decades before the first use of what came to be the Apostles' Creed.
      - i. And this is a creedal statement that Paul received. From the beginning the Church was proclaiming this content.
  3. Jesus died "in accordance with the Scriptures". Paul recites the interpretation of Jesus' death as foretold at Isa. 53.5, an understanding that probably goes back to Jesus Himself.
    - a. That Jesus was buried guaranteed that He was really dead.
    - b. That He rose on the third day may be a reference to Hos. 6.2.
    - c. Paul emphasizes that at the time of his writing there are available eyewitnesses who can testify to the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus, of the reality of the living Lord.
      - i. We are each an heir to these witnesses!

### **Luke 5.1-11**

1. Luke's narrative now passes from the hostile reception of Jesus in His hometown (ch. 4), to the first account in this gospel of a positive response to Jesus' call.
  - a. Having related Jesus' preaching of what the kingdom involves, Luke now turns to Jesus' enlistment of helpers in kingdom activity, of those to live in the kingdom.
  - b. Those who respond here do so totaling, abandoning all that has come before. This is taken as the paradigm for Christian response.
  - c. Peter is here depicted favorably. Later in the gospel it will become plain that Peter's missionary success, like his great catch of fish here, is not his doing, but God's.
2. Luke focuses the Christian message in the teaching of Jesus Himself. He refers to the people coming to "hear the word of God". Luke will use this phrase 14 times in Acts (*e.g.*, 4.31; 16.32).
3. Similarities between the accounts of miraculous catches of fish found in this passage and at John 21.1-11 ( a post-resurrection appearance) must be noted.
  - a. Jesus is recognized as Lord in His works, and then in His Person.
  - b. Once recognized, the Lord calls the disciples to do His work (to be "fishers of men").