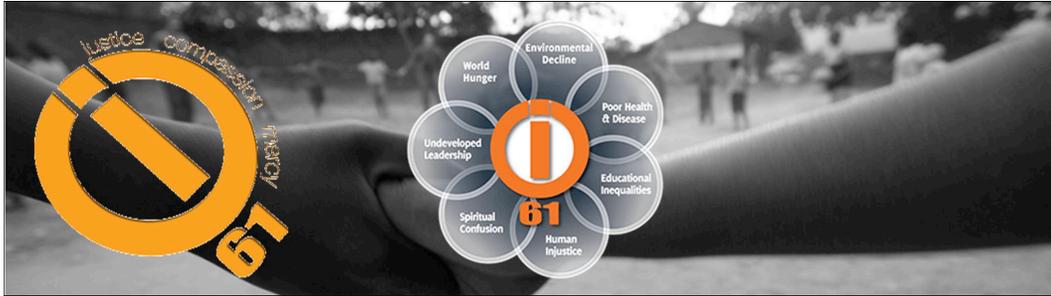


## **Week Nine: Here Am I, Send Me!**

Just as we began with the passage from Isaiah 61/ Luke 4, which began the ministry of Jesus, we will close with the calling of Isaiah in chapter 6, when he responds with “Here Am I Lord, Send me!” This week is a week to reflect on all that God has spoken to you these last two months and prepare yourself for what your response will be. Will you go where He is calling you to go? God is responsible for the results, but we are responsible for being obedient to do what He is asking us to do. Seek Him and go!

# Daily Reflections | i61 | Here am I, send me!



MONDAY

## Send me!

### Reflect

Then one of the angel-seraphs flew to me. He held a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with the coal and said,

“Look. This coal has touched your lips.

Gone your guilt,  
your sins wiped out.”

And then I heard the voice of the Master:

“Whom shall I send?  
Who will go for us?”

I spoke up,

“I’ll go.  
Send me!”

Isaiah 6.6-8 |MSG

### Receive

הִנְנִי שְׁלַח־נִי

(he-nee sh’lah-chay-nee)

“Here am I. Send me.”

It’s the guttural, enthusiastic response of Isaiah to the divine invitation he experienced. “Who will go for us? Whom shall we send?” asks God, already knowing. Of course Isaiah had to be undone by the immensity of it all at first. Then his lips and life needed a purging, cleansing, divine touch.

And then, confronted with the need, Isaiah says, “Look, it’s me!” or “Behold, I!” The word translated “behold” is a pointer word. In fact, the trilateral Hebrew root in its ancient Semitic form paints a picture of a man with his arms lifted up in excitement next to a budding seed. The image of excited discovery brackets the sprouting seed of new life.

Suddenly Isaiah becomes aware of himself, of the budding possibilities within himself, right here and now, in this time and place. “Look, me, look!”

Contained within Isaiah’s experience is a fine summary of the path followed by anyone stirred to move as a mender of the world:

Divine encounter → self-encounter → divine cleansing touch → self-awareness → mission launch

This is the better way. It's the way of Isaiah's "Behold I!" moment. It's the way of an enduring sense of call – a call that endures right through the hardship and persecution that Isaiah faced.

We can't orchestrate such divine encounters, such moments of epiphany. "You know not where it comes from or where it is going," says Jesus of this whole Spirit-life. All we can do is put ourselves in a posture of being ready for anything, of allowing ourselves to be shamelessly undone when it happens, and then to go.

### **Relate**

What has been your "behold, I!" moment through this two-month journey? How have you encountered God? How has this undone you? How has that clarified who you are? And, just where are you going as a result?

### **Respond**

*Lord, here am I, send me. I invite your presence and encounters with you. I don't want to move before you, but I want to follow your lead. I say, "Yes," to wherever you want to take me.*

Take a few minutes to write down what God has been saying to you as your calling, and respond to him.

## TUESDAY

# What is success?

### Reflect

He said, “Go and tell this people:

“Listen hard, but you aren’t going to get it;

look hard, but you won’t catch on.’

Make these people blockheads,

with fingers in their ears and blindfolds on their eyes,

So they won’t see a thing,

won’t hear a word,

So they won’t have a clue about what’s going on

and, yes, so they won’t turn around and be made whole.”

Astonished, I said,

“And Master, how long is this to go on?”

He said, “Until the cities are emptied out,

not a soul left in the cities—

Houses empty of people,

countryside empty of people.

Until I, God, get rid of everyone, sending them off,

the land totally empty.

And even if some should survive, say a tenth,

the devastation will start up again.

The country will look like pine and oak forest

with every tree cut down—

Every tree a stump, a huge field of stumps.

But there’s a holy seed in those stumps.”

Isaiah 6.9-13 |MSG

### Receive

Nobody spends time working to make a difference that doesn’t matter. To the contrary, Christian activists past and present have tackled some of the world’s biggest problems. In our drive to accomplish great things, it’s easy to get caught up in the idea that we’re called to be heroes. But such a vision misses three things that will undermine us at every step. The first is the way in which our love of heroes can subtly celebrate our fallen condition rather than grieve over it. This leads to the second mistake: our personal discipleship as followers of Christ can take second place to making a bigger impact for our causes. Third, a heroic calling puts us and our concerns at the center of history, when we are actually all minor characters populating the salvation drama centered around Jesus Christ.

**Tyler Wigg-Stevenson**, *The World is Not Ours to Save*

What calling are you after? A heroic one, which Tyler says casts you as the main character of history, instead of the minor character supporting Jesus as the hero? Or are you ready to take the call that God offers his prophets? It’s a call with great meaning, but one that redefines “success.”

In our worldly culture, we often define success as: accomplishing our goals, making a big profit, creating a superior product, or beating out the competition. Likewise in our Christian culture, we see it as: bringing thousands into the kingdom of God, seeing God’s miraculous power transform lives, or getting our chairs filled in our churches. None of those things are wrong; in fact they’re all great! We want to see progress and we want to use our talents for the Lord and see him move in miraculous ways.

But what if success is simply obedience to the Lord? What if success isn’t tied to the result of our actions?

A bleak portrait is painted for Isaiah in his enraptured state, in this midst of his “behold, I!” moment. You

will talk, and talk, and talk and not a soul will listen. Your message will find no traction in their hearts or in the culture at large. You will encounter not receptive hearts but blockheads.

Isaiah swallows. “Okay, that doesn’t sound too promising. Just how long will this ‘blockhead’ response last?”

“Until all the people’s hopes and dreams are dashed and their land lies in ruins,” says God. “*That’s* how long.”

Here is the basic profile of a prophetic calling: God calls, you answer; you speak, no one listens; they kill you, and everything you warned them about happens. The end.

Okay, maybe it’s not quite *that* bleak.  
But God sure didn’t sugarcoat it either.

Being a mender of the world, a seamstress of creation, an instrument of *tikkun olam*, is not for the squeamish. Nor is it for heroes. It’s for those who, having become aware of God, aware of themselves, and aware of their world’s situation, step out in obedience to speak and to act. What they have, they do.

The great men and women of faith who lived this out are recorded in Hebrews, chapter 11. They are referred to as the “great cloud of witnesses” who have paved the way for us to run this race of life with endurance, looking to Jesus throughout our race and, by faith, expecting Him at the finish line.” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Here in Hebrews 11, Isaiah is mentioned in reference to his death, as he was persecuted and sawn in two.

Hebrews 11:36-39 (ESV)

“Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy... And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised...”

You see, Isaiah heard the call, said, “Yes,” and lived his life in worship to God by obeying his word. Was it hard? You better believe it! He was sawn in two! But he finished the race as being “commended through his faith”. He did not see the fruit of the promise; he didn’t see the results of the task God set before him. That came through later generations. But he finished well, looking to the author and perfecter of his faith.

We must never lose sight of the last scene in Isaiah’s vision. Isaiah, at last, sees a field of stumps indicating a leveled forest. But in the midst of all that devastation, in the midst of all those dead-end stumps, there is a little green sprout heralding new life, a new day, a new creation. There’s a holy seed in those stumps. And we must never lose sight of it.

## **Relate**

How do you measure your personal success? How do you instruct others to measure success? Were the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah successful? How were they able to keep living out their calling even when no one responded positively to their ministry? Nothing changed as a result of their actions. What is the hope and the impetus that helped them not quit the race? Was it worth it?

## **Respond**

*Jesus, you are the author and finisher of my faith. Please make your beauty and hope of eternity more real to me than any earthly results. Increase my faith, Lord, and strengthen my spirit to run this race set before me. Train me in obedience, that my responses wouldn’t be based in my emotions, but based on your truth and your word. I pray you help me to not portray myself as a hero in my own story, but that you would be glorified and lifted up through all I do or attempt to do.*

Re-examine past “failures” you’ve had in your life. Ask the Lord to show you where your real successes have been.

W E D N E S D A Y

## You are the watchman

### Reflect

You, son of man, are the watchman. I've made you a watchman for Israel.

The minute you hear a message from me, warn them.

If I say to the wicked, 'Wicked man, wicked woman, you're on the fast track to death!'

and you don't speak up and warn the wicked to change their ways,

the wicked will die unwarned in their sins and I'll hold you responsible for their bloodshed.

But if you warn the wicked to change their ways and they don't do it, they'll die in their sins well-warned and at least you will have saved your own life.

Ezekiel 33.7-9 | MSG

### Receive

There is so much to be done, there is so much that can be done. One person – a Raoul Wallenberg, an Albert Schweitzer, a Martin Luther King Jr. – one person of integrity can make a difference, a difference of life and death. As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need, above all else, is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them; that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours; that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

This is what I say to the young Jewish boy wondering what I have done with his years. It is in his name that I speak to you and that I express to you my deepest gratitude as one who has emerged from the Kingdom of Night. We know that every moment is a moment of grace, every hour is an offering; not to share them would mean to betray them.

Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately.

**Elie Wiesel**, from his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in Oslo on December 10, 1986

I've never been particularly fond of the Ezekiel image of the watchman on the wall.

It tends to assault my conscience with a heavy battering ram of guilt. I end up more paralyzed and overwhelmed with a feeling of responsibility for *everyone* and for *everything*. Or I end up "paying forward" the guilt in the form of far-too-many abortive and less-than-helpful battering ram conversations and attempts at furtively doing something.

Have you noticed that Jesus seldom seemed to be in a hurry?

Have you noticed that sometimes he only healed *one* out of a whole multitude of sick people lying about in one of those temple porticos?

Have you noticed with what ease he could walk away from all of the consuming needs of a town, desperately seeking him to stay and do more, while leisurely hanging out in another town for three days?

It would seem that the only one not suffering from a messianic complex was the Messiah.

Perhaps the unrushed, quiet, "his-voice-wasn't-heard-in-the-streets" pace was the fruit of his own "behold, I!" moment shared publicly in the synagogue in his hometown. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus knew his Abba. He knew himself. He knew where he was. He knew what part he was called to play. And his was the key, centering, dramatic,

climactic role – and still, with what ease (*scholé!*) he hung out in obscure places with undistinguished friends, walking in dusty circles as he “went about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil.”

Keep this key formational element in place as we lean into the watchman metaphor of Ezekiel. Coming out of our own “behold, I!” moment, we realize that, yes, “I am a watchman,” one of many, *many* watchmen on the wall of our generation. A watchman who realizes with Elie Wiesel that, yes, one person of integrity can make a difference; a difference of life and death, even; that every moment is a moment of grace; every hour, an hour of offering; that our lives no longer belong to us alone.

Our lives belong to those who need us desperately.

The secret is not being so very messianic about it all. Just do it the way the Messiah we follow did it:

Taking time to behold the flowers of the field and the birds of the air.

Taking time to embrace little children.

Taking time to pause and ask amidst pressing crowd and urgent summons, “Who touched me?”

Give us such watchmen along these walls, populate these ramparts with their increasing tribe.

Men and women, young and old.

Watchmen who watch.

Who wait.

Who warn.

Who work.

Even as He did.

## **Relate**

On what part of the wall of life do you feel called to stand as a “watchman” in this generation, in this time and place? How will you proceed to do this?

## **Respond**

*Gracious and merciful Father, I thank you that you are on the throne and that your desire is for all people to repent and come to know you. Lord, show me the people you want me to love: the people your eye is on who need to hear the good news. Help me to never stop looking for them and watching on the wall. Through your grace, help me be the one person who can make a difference in their life.*

Share with someone the challenges you’ve faced as a watchman on the wall in your past. There’s a cost to following his call and sharing the word of the Lord. And sharing our burdens lightens the load.

If this doesn’t resonate with you, reach out and be a listener to someone else; or write a note of encouragement to someone who played that role in your life, someone who brought you the truth in love when you needed it most.

## THURSDAY

# Risking themselves totally

### Reflect

I know I distressed you greatly with my letter. Although I felt awful at the time, I don't feel at all bad now that I see how it turned out. The letter upset you, but only for a while. Now I'm glad—not that you were upset, but that you were jarred into turning things around. You let the distress bring you to God, not drive you from him. The result was all gain, no loss.

Distress that drives us to God does that. It turns us around. It gets us back in the way of salvation.

We never regret that kind of pain. But those who let distress drive them away from God are full of regrets, end up on a deathbed of regrets.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10 | MSG

### Receive

**Oskar Schindler:** I could have got more out. I could have got more. I don't know. If I'd just... I could have got more.

**Itzhak Stern:** Oskar, there are eleven hundred people who are alive because of you. Look at them.

**Oskar Schindler:** If I'd made more money... I threw away so much money. You have no idea. If I'd just...

**Itzhak Stern:** There will be generations because of what you did.

**Oskar Schindler:** I didn't do enough!

**Itzhak Stern:** You did so much.

*[Schindler looks at his car]*

**Oskar Schindler:** This car. Goth would have bought this car. Why did I keep the car? Ten people right there. Ten people. Ten more people.

*[removing Nazi pin from lapel]*

**Oskar Schindler:** This pin. Two people. This is gold. Two more people. He would have given me two for it, at least one. One more person. A person, Stern. For this.

*[sobbing]*

**Oskar Schindler:** I could have gotten one more person... and I didn't! And I... I didn't!

Typically it's reported that Oskar Schindler saved "about 1,200 Jews" – more than anyone else during the Nazi reign of terror.

The actual "list of life" kept by Itzhak Stern lists 1,099 names. With the number 1,100 empty, waiting, expectant.

One more name.

One more person.

This is what haunted Schindler after it was all over. He could have done more.

He could have sold more.

He could have saved more.

1088. 1 290 Ju. Po. 76493 ZIMMERSPIZ Lisa 16.12.13 Metallarbeiterin
1090. 1 291 Ju. Po. 76494 ZIMMERSPIZ Jetti 16.7.08 Metallarbeiterin
1091. 2 52 Ju. Po. 68876 ZIMMET Dawid 1.6.14 ang. Metallverarb.
1092. 1 292 Ju. Po. 76495 ZOLDAN Cecilia 29.1.18 Metallarbeiterin
1093. 1 293 Ju. Po. 76496 ZUCKER Fela 20.11.18 Metallarbeiterin
1094. 2 593 Ju. Po. 69450 ZUCKERMANN Chaim 26.3.11 Mechanikergeselle
1095. 1 295 Ju. Po. 76498 ZUCKERMANN Eстера 10.11.20 Metallarbeiterin
1096. 2 585 Ju. Po. 69442 ZUCKERMANN Isak 26.8.16 Bautechniker
1097. 1 294 Ju. Po. 76497 ZUCKERMANN Jetti 10.11.20 Metallarbeiterin
1098. 1 296 Ju. Po. 76499 ZWEIG Bronislaw 28.3.06 Metallarbeiterin
1099. 1 297 Ju. Po. 76500 ZWETSCHENSTIEL Jenta 8.7.08 Metallarbeiterin
1100.

Excerpt from Oskar Schindler's List of Life

Who could have been the 1,100 entry on his list of life?

Like many things, guilt makes a poor servant, but a wicked tyrant.

Timely conviction is better by far.

The conviction that elicits the, “Woe is me, for I am undone!” from our lips so those unclean lips can be purged by divine fire as we encounter God in the moment.

Guilt tends to haunt and hound us over lost moments in the past like a bad after-taste from the meal-of-life. Healthy conviction leads us to the table while there are still people to be fed.

Paul catches the difference well in the passage from 2 Corinthians. As we hear the stories and read the statistics; as we continue to bump into the rough edges of our world that only seem to be getting more raw and desperate; we *should* be upset. As we contemplate the deteriorating conditions of creation and the ongoing fracturing of humanity, we should be distressed.

Just lean into the distress that brings us to God, that leads us into the way of healing and wholeness for ourselves and our world. The aim of considering the crises of the world is not to lead us to a deathbed of regrets over what we haven’t done or what we could have done. It’s to lead us to a platform from which, in ways mostly small and some large, we can now “risk ourselves totally” – we upstream-moving people in this great personal and corporate pursuit of the real religion we know as *tikkun olam* . . .

### **Relate**

It’s all in perspective. What differences have you been able to make for the Lord in the areas of hunger, environmental decline, poor health, injustice, poor leadership, spiritual confusion, and lack of educational opportunities? There’s always more to be done, but thank the Lord for the small and big differences you’ve been able to make.

### **Respond**

*Father in Heaven, you are sovereign and all-knowing and my choices matter. Thank you Lord, for giving me opportunities to play with you in this life, and for the ways I’ve gotten to walk alongside you in your redemptive plan for our world. Help me not miss those opportunities in the future, and help me be content in the “here and now” with the differences I’ve been able to make.*

Write out what you would want on your tombstone or if you’re ambitious: a eulogy for yourself. What do you want people to remember you for? How can you live this life with no regrets; to make that eulogy appropriate?

**FRIDAY**

**Go. Love.**

### **Reflect**

<sup>22-24</sup> Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear!

Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

<sup>25</sup> But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.

<sup>26-27</sup> Anyone who sets himself up as “religious” by talking a good game is self-deceived.

This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air.

Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this:

Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight,  
and guard against corruption from the godless world.

James 1.22-27 |MSG

<sup>16-17</sup> Meanwhile, the eleven disciples were on their way to Galilee, headed for the mountain Jesus had set for their reunion. The moment they saw him they worshiped him.

Some, though, held back, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally.

<sup>18-20</sup> Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge:

“God authorized and commanded me to commission you:

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life,

marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you.

I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28.16-20 |MSG

### **Receive**

James exhorts believers to not just maintain knowledge of the world, but to let it change their very being. God's truth and our understanding of how it relates to the world around us, isn't to fall on deaf ears; but it is to call us to action! That way, we may get up from the seats of Pharisees and the overly religious and get out into the streets of the poor and the destitute. That's true religion, James says.

Then our final word comes from Jesus himself, with of course, the Great Commission. This is our launching pad... our commandment to GO and change lives; even whole nations. The disciples practiced this when they went out two-by-two into the streets, healing all they met, and proclaiming the good news in word and action. Maybe they were feeling nervous when Jesus gave this commission, but they knew through experience that they could do it through his power.

If you were a listener sitting with James as he read you this letter, or standing there with the disciples as Jesus courageously commissioned them to continue on doing the work of the Father, what would you be thinking? Feeling? Maybe a little excited and energized... thinking, “Maybe I could do this!” Or maybe those doubts would flood your brain just as they did Peter's mind when he began to sink into the water instead of walking on it. But in Jesus' mind, the disciples were ready. They had learned the truth of the kingdom; they had experienced the resurrection power bring life where there was only death; and now they knew their purpose on this earth: to make more disciples.

What's your purpose on earth? What kind of disciples are you making? How are you making them?

Jesus looks at you and says, “You're ready.”

You might protest: "But Jesus, I'm not equipped. The problems are too big for me to actually make a difference."

He says, "I'm not asking you to take a magic wand and wipe all the sin away from the whole earth! I'm asking you to love people, one person at a time, bringing them into relationship with me."

It's that simple. We do with what we have.

The Starfish Poem *from Royal Family Kids Camps, inspiration for the founder to start summer, free recreational camps with Christian counselors, to change their lives:*

Once upon a time there was a wise man  
who used to go to the ocean  
to do his writing.  
He had a habit of walking  
on the beach  
before he began his work.  
One day he was walking along  
the shore.  
As he looked down the beach,  
he saw a human  
figure moving like a dancer.  
He smiled to himself to think  
of someone who would  
dance to the day.  
So he began to walk faster  
to catch up.  
As he got closer, he saw  
that it was a young man  
and the young man wasn't dancing,  
but instead he was reaching  
down to the shore,

picking up something  
and very gently throwing it  
into the ocean.  
As he got closer he called out,  
"Good morning! What are you doing?"  
The young man paused,  
looked up and replied,  
"Throwing starfish in the ocean."  
"I guess I should have asked,  
why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"  
"The sun is up and the tide is going out.  
And if I don't throw them in they'll die."  
"But, young man, don't you realize that  
there are miles and miles of beach  
and starfish all along it.  
You can't possibly make a difference!"  
The young man listened politely.  
Then bent down, picked up another starfish  
and threw it into the sea,  
past the breaking waves and said-  
"It made a difference for that one."

## **Relate**

What does it take to live your life loving one person at a time? That's all God is asking you to do: making disciples is simply rescuing people one-at-a-time and connecting them with the Father who will love them for a lifetime.

## **Respond**

*Here am I, send me!*

*God my Father, Jesus my savior, and Holy Spirit my helper, come and anoint me for the calling you have set before me. I know you are telling me to GO... and I will go! Send me to the places and people you have chosen. Let me not pass by one without asking you if I need to pause to help make a difference for that one. I pray that you strengthen your Body of believers around the world to rise up and take a stand of love for all people, guiding whole tribes into your kingdom. I ask all this in the precious name of Jesus my savior.*

Receive his commission for you today and GO make disciples! Don't let this day pass without taking one step of action towards the call God is giving you.