

Advent, Day 23
Read Isaiah 6:1-8

Monday, December 24

“Woe is me, for my eyes have seen the King...” *Isaiah 6:5*

DON'T BE AFRAID

- Isaiah when he has a vision of God in the temple.
- Moses, standing before the burning bush.
- Jacob, dreaming in the desert place.
- The shepherds confronted with the chorus of angels.
- Mary seeing the angel before her.
- The group of women confronted with the figure in white before the empty tomb.

In every case they display a distinct response when they realize themselves to be in the presence of the holy - they are afraid.

It's a normal response.

We don't know what to do with God. We are uncomfortable when we consider who we are before God.

Perhaps it's because we're guilty. We know, after all, who we are. We know the things we have said and done in our lives. We know the things we have not said or done that we know we should. We know how we have treated each other even after God told us to love one another. We know what a mess we have made of the things that God has put in our hands. We know ourselves. Isaiah said it well. *“Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people whose lips are unclean as well.”* It makes us nervous to stand before the One who knows all that about us even better than we ourselves.

Perhaps it's because we are confused. We think we know what God expects of us, but what if we are wrong? What if we have lost the voice of God in and among all those other voices that speak to us so clearly in our daily lives? Wouldn't it just be simpler if God would just declare, once and for all, between the good and the evil? Wouldn't it be simpler if there were just blacks and whites but no grays? It's no wonder we're confused. No wonder we're a little afraid.

Maybe it's caution behind our fear. We're afraid of what God may ask us to be and do. We're afraid that to follow God's way will take us so completely from the life-styles we have chosen that there will be no going back. We're afraid of the changes that might be necessary if we are truly transformed.

Moses made excuses.

Jeremiah tried to convince himself that he was too young and that no one would listen to anything he had to say.

Gideon demanded a sure sign, and when he got it, he talked God into going two out of three.

We're not ready to deal with God on God's terms.

But the shepherds got past their fear and couldn't wait to tell the world. Moses showed up on Pharaoh's doorstep staff in hand. The women at the tomb refused to be quiet even when the disciples tried to dismiss them as just being 'emotional women'. Mary told God to use her, whatever it meant.

And Jesus? Jesus just said 'Yes'. All the way to the cross. 'Yes!'

Maybe we can too.

“Here I am, Lord. Send me!”