

Willing Heart – Salt and Light from the Old Testament Part 3

07/26/26

What is your desire in life? What makes you get out of bed in the morning? Sometimes, it's not easy to get out of bed. Mark Twain once said, "Give a man a reputation as an early riser and he can sleep 'til noon." Mark Twain liked to stay in bed. Sometimes, it's not easy to get motivated. The pressure of life can be overwhelming at times. John Heywood, a famous playwright and writer in England during the 1500's once stated this, "Nothing is impossible to a willing heart". This made me think for a moment. A willing heart is needed for us to continue to live in this life. We started a few weeks ago this sermon series about being salt and light in our present time. This means our character will be under light or as we talked about before about the Greek term for light that Jesus used in Scripture – daylight type of light. So, I believe there has to be a willingness of heart to be salt and light in this world for Jesus. In the Walt Disney movie, The Three Lives of Tomasina, a young girl has a cat and her father is a veterinarian in a small Scottish village. The father wanted to be a human doctor, but his father made him become a veterinarian. Plus, his wife had passed away. During the movie, you could tell that he did not have a willing heart to serve the people and their pets in this village. He was not nice to people and he had a negative view of life and of God. Again, he didn't have a willing heart to be a veterinarian. He was forcing himself to do the work. It's just like trying to get up in the morning when you don't have a willing heart to get up – it's hard to accomplish the task. You have to force yourself. We have to understand that we have to have a "willing heart" to be salt and light in this world for Jesus. This is very important. Let's look again to what Jesus tells us in Matthew 5: 13 – 16, "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world – like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise

your heavenly Father. (NLT)” Before this part of Jesus’ sermon, Jesus had stated this in verse 6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied” (NASB). That hunger and thirst for righteousness would help to give a willing heart to be salt and light for Jesus by living out His righteousness. It’s that willing heart to want to be light and salt. We can say as well we need a willing heart to want to serve Jesus. Too many people today serve Jesus because they think they have to. That is not having a hunger and thirst for God that forms a willing heart to serve Him. You may ask and it would be a good question, what does this willing heart for Jesus look like? Let’s look at a prophet in the Old Testament that sets a good example for us because a willing heart will also allow the Holy Spirit to shape and mold your character to be good salt and light today.

Let’s turn to Isaiah 6: 1-13, where we read this, “⁶ In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim were standing above Him, each having six wings: with two *each* covered his face, and with two *each* covered his feet, and with two *each* flew. ³ And one called out to another and said,

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of armies.
The ^[a]whole earth is full of His glory.”

⁴ And the ^[b]foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the ^[c]temple was filling with smoke. ⁵ Then I said,

“Woe to me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of armies.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth *with it* and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your guilt is taken away and atonement is made for your sin.” ⁸ Then 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!” ⁹ And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on listening, but do not understand;
And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge.'
¹⁰ Make the hearts of this people ^[d]insensitive,
Their ears ^[e]dull,
And their eyes ^[f]blind,
So that they will not see with their eyes,
Hear with their ears,
Understand with their hearts,
And return and be healed."

¹¹ Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered,

"Until cities are devastated *and* without inhabitant,
Houses are without people
And the land is utterly desolate,

¹² The LORD has completely removed people,
And there ^[g]are many forsaken places in the midst of the land.

¹³ Yet there will still be a tenth portion in it,
And it will again be *subject* to burning,
Like a terebinth or an oak
Whose stump remains when it is cut down.

The holy seed is its stump." (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)

Let's put ourselves in Isaiah's shoes or sandals for a moment. Verse 1 tells us that King Uzziah had died. He was king of Judah for 52 years (2 Kings 15: 2). Uzziah was a good king even though he had weak moments. When he became powerful, he became proud of himself and he had decided to go into the Lord's Temple and burn incense there. That was the priests' job, not his and God punished him for it. He became a leper and remained that way all his life (2 Chronicles 26). However, he did follow God and he tried to do right as king of Judah. The problem was the people of Judah did not follow in his footsteps. So, Isaiah got to enjoy many years having a good king. Out of the 20 rulers Judah would have, 8 were good, 11 were bad, and 1 turned bad. So, Isaiah was very fortunate to be part of this good period with a good leader because that was the only thing that kept Judah from really going down hill. Look at what is going on at

this time in America. We're starting to hear some people are starting to throw their hat into the ring to be President in 2028. We are one step away from a total melt down on morals and ethics in this nation. The people of this nation have become more pagan than righteous. You better enjoy living now because the American lifestyle can become more pagan very quickly. When I dropped off the diapers last week at Tender Care, I asked how are the abortion numbers since the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade and I was told the numbers have gone up. I looked on the internet and the abortion numbers are going up. The abortion pill is now available for women to take to have an abortion. Planned Parenthood states that it is safe. The Devil will say anything to destroy human life. If the next President is for abortion, just think what will happen to this nation. How can God bless a nation that has no compassion for human life? Isaiah knew what was going on in his nation and now a good king was dead. There would be a good chance the next king would not be a good king. Hebrew tradition also tells us that the king may have been Isaiah's cousin. That, we don't know for sure because the Bible doesn't tell us that. However, if I was in Isaiah's shoes, I would be upset that a good king had died. So, during this bad time, Isaiah has a vision. Isaiah sees the Lord on His throne and there were many seraphims flying over singing, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty! The whole earth is filled with His glory." The singing was so loud, it shook the Temple to its foundation. This is what Isaiah saw and what a sight it must have been. Then Isaiah realizes who he is, a sinful man before a holy God. A seraphim comes over and touches Isaiah's lips with a burning coal and tells him that his guilt and sin had been removed. Right after this miracle, the Lord asks, "Whom should I send as a messenger to my people? Who will go for us?" Then, right away, Isaiah states, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." I believe if that seraphim hadn't touched Isaiah's lips with that burning coal, Isaiah would not have spoken up. He knew he was forgiven by God and he spoke out boldly - Send me! Isaiah was eager, he was excited, or maybe we can say he had a willing heart to serve God. He was a witness to the Lord on His throne and a witness to having his guilt removed and sin forgiven. Even after hearing the negative message that he would have to give to the nation, Isaiah was faithful to that calling. Even with all the negative things we see that are happening around us, we too can have a

willing heart to serve Jesus. Why? Those who know Jesus as their Savior and have asked Jesus to forgive them of their sin have had their guilt removed and their sin forgiven. What a great motivator. This alone should give us a willing heart / a hunger and thirst to be light and salt around us. We can't allow ourselves to be discouraged by what is going on around us. It is easy to stop being salt and light for Jesus. It takes no effort at all. Isaiah could have stopped right there when he got that message from the Lord. However, I think the Lord gave him some understand for the last verse (13) of this negative message Isaiah was to give to the people. It is this, "Israel will remain a stump, like a tree that is cut down, but the stump will be a holy seed that will grow again. (NLT)" The Lord's message to Israel was that better days were coming. Even though they were a sinful nation, God was sending His holy seed – Jesus to make a way for the people to have their sins forgiven. No matter what happens here to us, the war is won. That should give us a willing heart to carry on.

This story of Isaiah reminds me of another story. It is about a man named Peter who did not have a willing heart for the true cause of Jesus. In fact, Peter would refuse to know Jesus three times because he didn't have a true willing heart for Jesus and why He came. It wasn't till he was forgiven that he became the leader of the Church in the New Testament. At Pentecost, it is Peter who stands and talks to the crowd after there was a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit upon the people. Peter stated this in Acts 2: 14-18, "¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the *other* eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, ^[a]know this, and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you assume, since it is *only* the ^[b]third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says,
'THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL ^[c]MANKIND;
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY,
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS,
AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL ^[d]HAVE DREAMS;

¹⁸ AND EVEN ON MY MALE AND FEMALE ^[e]SERVANTS
I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS,
And they will prophesy. (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)

It was because of Isaiah's prophecy that prophet Joel's prophecy came true. Plus, think about this, what Isaiah and Joel told the people of their day is what we are enjoying today. This alone should give us a willing heart to be salt and light today to those around us. Not only do we pray to Jesus to help us to be salt and light today, but we also must ask Jesus to give us a willing heart to be salt and light because if not, we will not be good salt and light. Jesus will tell the Holy Spirit to give us a willing heart to be salt and light. The Holy Spirit can do anything. I like going to the yearly dinner that the Gideons have for local pastors. Don't take this wrong, but most of the people there are old. Yet, those old people have a willing heart to be salt and light by handing out Bibles to people that they don't even know and telling them about what Jesus had done in their own lives. Do you have a willing heart to be salt and light today for Jesus?

NLT Life Application Study Bible. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, 1996