

Here I AM
Sermon Bible Notes by Pastor O. Cary Rodgers, Jr.

Introduction: Story of mother who went into the fire to save her baby.

One day as six-year-old Susan paused from her play, she stared at her mother's hands as she was sweeping the floor. "Momma," said Susan, "Why are your hands so, so, ah, uugggly? I am not trying to be mean." "You're right Susan, they are pretty ugly," said her mother. Susan asked, "So, what happened to your hands, Momma?" Putting the broom aside, Susan's mother motioned to her to sit with her on the couch. "I will tell you all about it, Susan." With great eagerness and curiosity, Susan sat next to her mother in anticipation of what she would say about what happened to her "ugly" hands. "Susan when you were 6 months old, you were fast asleep in your crib while I did chores around the house. While I was outside hanging clothes on the line. I started smelling smoke and looked back at the house and noticed that flames were rapidly spreading throughout the house. The flames moved so fast it was hard for me to get back into the house. In the meantime, the fire department got here pretty fast, I told them that you were sleep in your room and that I had to go back in to get you. He said, "Maam, the flames are too much..." I didn't even hear what he said next, without hesitation I prayed to God, "help me save my baby." I was so determined to get you out of the flames nothing else mattered to me, but getting you. While the door was burning I was able to push the door opened, but the flames where intense and hot. The hallway to your room was engulfed in flames. I covered my face and decided to go through the hallway. When I got to your room, the door was on fire. Without even thinking about it I opened the door with my hands. You were crying and screaming when I came in, but I was able to pick you up and cover you up as God led us out of our burning house. I noticed after I was able to get you out of the house that my hands were burned pretty bad. But it was all worth it because I was able get you out of the burning house." Susan's eyes now filled with tears, looking and holding her mother's hands, "Momma, you have the most beautiful and pretty hands that I have ever seen. I am so very sorry." Susan and her mother hugged each other tightly. "I love you Susan" said her mother. "I love you and your hands too." said Susan.

Jesus came through the fire of persecution and spilled His blood on the cross to save his children from the flames of sin. He will forever bare the scars of being crucified for you and I with his nail print hands and feet, wound in his side and scars in His forehead. Young children who died and were resurrected at the Second Coming of Jesus while in Heaven will look at the hands and scars of Jesus. They will ask him how they got there. He will give them the testimony of redemption, and the cross. After hearing His testimony I can imagine them saying, "those are the most beautiful hands and feet!"

How much work needs to be done for the kingdom of God in saving souls out of the fire of sin?

Matthew 9:37, 38

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers (Gk: Toiler/Worker) are few (Gk: puny);**

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

What does Jesus commission His workers to do?

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should **go** and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Matthew 28:19,20

19 **Go** ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you *always*, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

But what is the problem?

Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few (Gk: puny) *are* chosen

Why are a few chosen to do this work?

Matthew 8:19 - 21

19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, **Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.**

Luke 14:16 – 20

16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade **many**:

17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make **excuse**. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Excuses, excuses, excuses!!!

Why so many excuses?

(Parable of the sower)

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, **go forth**, and (the reason why “go forth” is choked out) are **choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life**, and bring no fruit to perfection.

In other words, your fire and desire to do God's work is killed or choked out with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life!

Cares (Gk: (through the idea of distraction); solicitude)

Solicitude – a state of anxiety or concern (worry!)

an attitude expressing excessive attentiveness

What does Jesus say that we should do with our cares (worries, anxieties, etc.)?

Matthew 11:28 – 30, 33 and 34

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

But what is true pleasure according to God?

Psalm 103:21 Give praise to the Lord, all you his armies; and you his servants who do his pleasure.

Psalm 147:11 The Lord takes pleasure in his worshippers, and in those whose hope is in his mercy.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Who are chosen to go into the “fire”?**Isaiah 6:8, 9**

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will **go** for us? Then said I, **Here am I**; send me.

9 And he said, **Go**, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Matthew 4:18 - 22

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Do you want to raise your hand and say “here am I send me”? Do you realize that you are volunteering to be thrown into God's gold refining fire?

What is the solution to get rid of our excuses and self sufficiency?

Get in the fire! Laodicea

Revelation 3:16 – 18

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Take up the cross of Christ daily!

Luke 9:22 - 24

22 Saying, **The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.**

23 And he said to *them* all, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily (sacrifice), and follow me.**

24 **For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.**

When you accept the call and say Lord “here I am send me!” what does God do to reveal your true character and motive as a professed soldier for Christ?

Abraham's call to sacrifice his son – the promise

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [HW=test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

Why does God test His soldiers?

Deuteronomy 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

1. God wants to reveal what is truly in your heart.... who you truly serve

1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried** with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

2. So God can get the glory when you pass the test!

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath **tried** me, I shall come forth as gold.

3. To refine your character into the character of Jesus Christ

James 1:2 – 4

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing *this*, that the **trying** of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

4. To develop patience. In order to be a resident of heaven you must have it (Revelation 14:12)

God's test prepares you and I for the final crisis!

“When the testing time shall come, those who have made God’s Word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.” Great Controversy p. 602

Do you know that when the Lord calls and you say, Here I am, you are connecting with the Great, “I am”? What is God's response when you answer “here I am”?

Isaiah 58:6 - 9

6 *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*

7 *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, **Here I am**. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

When you say “here I am”, God will respond “here I AM.” Jesus the great I AM.

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

Genesis 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

Exodus 3:4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

1 Samuel 3:4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Acts 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, **Ananias**. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

God is calling you? What is your response to the “ I AM”?

Are you still willing to accept God's call? He is only looking for workers. All will be tested. The only way to pass is to daily take up the cross of Christ.