

[uriah]

:: isaiah 8.1-2 ::

This week, our one-verse-wonder is a fellow named Uriah, but not the one we know. Ours is found in Isaiah chapter 8.

There are 6 men named Uriah in the Bible.

The most famous, of course, is Uriah the Hittite, one of David's mighty men who was married to Bathsheba before David stole her and had him killed.

The second was a high priest in Jerusalem, who build an altar for King Ahaz in 2 Kings chapter 16.

The third was a priest who helped rebuild the wall of Jerusalem in Ezra 8 and Nehemiah 3.

The fourth was another priest who stood with Ezra as he read the law and addressed the people.

The fifth was a prophet, who was killed by king Jehoiakin in Jeremiah chapter 26.

The sixth is our man, a priest who was with Isaiah as a witness to the writing of a particular scroll.

Here's our text, Isaiah 8, verses 1 and 2:

Isaiah 8.1-2 - Moreover the Lord said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

Isaiah had a difficult ministry of proclaiming the need for repentance, the coming destruction and the future glory that awaited the people of God.

In this particular case, Isaiah was to take a large scroll and write on it with a man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, who we find out in verse 3 of this chapter is Isaiah's son.

When it says the pen of a man there, it simply means that Isaiah's words and inscription were to be simple and plain for any person to understand.

Listen to verse 1 in the Amplified Bible Translation:

Isaiah 8.1a - Then the Lord said to me, Take a large tablet [of wood, metal, or stone] and write upon it with a graving tool and in ordinary characters [which the humblest man can read]:

This scroll was to be a warning to the people and it was to be accessible and understandable.

For this task, 2 men were called upon to join in: Zechariah and Uriah. They were to act as spiritual notaries for this document that Isaiah was preparing.

It says there that they were faithful witnesses who would *record* what God had said and what Isaiah had written.

Uriah is a good example for us this morning, because we too are called by God to be witnesses.

You know the verse:

Acts 1.8 - [Jesus said] ...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Like Uriah, God asks us to be witnesses. And what we can learn this morning is two-fold: The **reputation** of a witness of God and the **operation** of a witness of God.

The first is the most important: Our reputation as a witness of God. What character trait is God most concerned with in the lives of His men?

It's given to us right here: faithfulness.

Throughout the Bible we are reminded that God is primarily focused on our faithfulness to Him. Not greatness, not largeness, not intelligence, not even effectiveness, just faithfulness.

In the beginning of Isaiah God explains to the people that all their sacrifices and rituals meant nothing to Him, because their hearts were unfaithful.

On Sunday, we saw how Saul's power and position and prominence and earthly success was ignored by God in light of his unfaithful disobedience.

As Christian men, our primary goal in life must be faithfulness to God.

Biblical faithfulness is described for us here in these few words.

First, we must be faithful to remember what the Lord has said. That happens as we pour over His word and commit it to our hearts.

Second, we must be faithful to stand beside our fellow Christians. God not only calls us to salvation, but He then calls us to specific areas of ministry and service with other people so that we can work together. Faithfulness then becomes more than *just* knowing the word of the Lord, but also being part of a calling.

In fact, this word has a lot of nuances to it. It can mean supportive, edifying, trustworthy, reliable and honest.

As Christians, we must be men who are supportive. Supportive of God's work in our community. Supportive of the people God has called us to minister with. We must be edifying in our language and in our decision-making. We must build up others by serving them and using the gifts God has given us on behalf of the Church.

We are faithful by being trustworthy. Men who can be trusted for our honesty and our consistency in how we behave and how we speak. That our *yes would be yes* and that we be men who are not rash or blown about by all sorts of doctrines or deceptions that are out there.

We are faithful by being reliable. That we show up to serve God when He's asked us to serve, whether that be in the family, on an individual level, or corporately in the Church. That we be reliable, available, present to do what needs doing to faithfully support the ministry of God and fulfill the calling He's placed on our lives.

Our reputation, our character should be defined by faithfulness. Biblical faithfulness to our wives, in our finances, in our serving, in our devotional life, in every area, being described by those traits we just listed.

That is the standard we are given as men who are set apart to serve God.

Matthew 25.21b - Well done, good and *faithful* servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.

That's what we're going for. Not greatness. Not intelligence. Faithfulness. That is the reputation of a witness of God.

But then, what is the ***operation*** of a witness of God?

Uriah was called to *record* what God had said and what Isaiah wrote.

That recording was to be a testimony to the people of Israel, a retelling of the message that God had sent on their behalf. Uriah and Zechariah were to hear this message, see what God had said and then go and testify, to admonish the people, to tell them what God had spoken.

God's word isn't given so that we can hide it away and keep it to ourselves. God's word is to be a light for the dark world, that those in darkness might be saved. Uriah's name even means *Light* or *Flame of Jehovah*. We remember the song:

*This Little Light Of Mine
I'm Gonna Let It Shine*

*Hide It Under A Bushel?
No! I'm Gonna Let It Shine*

A faithful witness records and testifies not only of what God has said, but what God has done. Going to the ends of the earth as God leads him, no matter the personal, national or global situation, and shining the light of God's love and grace and salvation into a dark and dying world.

2 Timothy 2.2 - And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Faithful Christians take God's word and God's gifting and God's leading and they go out and teach others about their need for salvation and God's provision of a Savior.

This is what Isaiah's ministry was all about, and Uriah had been brought into this calling. To go and tell the people that judgement was coming, deliverance was possible, and that God has a plan for our future, a glorious plan if we turn to Him as Lord.

This calling would not have been easy, but it was very simple. To hear God, support one another and share what the Lord had said and done with people who desperately needed to hear it.

One more devotional thought as we close...

For a while after college my wife worked as a notary and legal assistant at a law firm in Fresno.

She explained to me that, as a notary, her job was to verify who was present at the signing of a document. The focus was not on the document itself, but the verification of the presence of signatories, who she identified.

Uriah, our example, was called to be a sort of spiritual notary. There was a transaction and a document, and Uriah was there to witness the Lord and His word.

As spiritual notaries, if we want to be used, if we want to be faithful, if we want to have a part in the plan God has for His Kingdom and this world, then we must be in His presence. We must hear from Him ourselves, be in His company often, so that He can fill and direct and empower us. Then, and only then, will we be men who are faithful and usable for God's glory. Men who can testify of God's plan because we have been in God's presence.

Be a Uriah. Shine God's light. Be faithful, be useful and be in God's presence today.