Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

**Introduction**

The Grumpy Lobster Boat captain – Bill Belichick – former coach of the New England Patriots, had a constant repeated phrase to his players – “Do Your Job”. Now he might have occasionally sprinkled it with an extra word, but to his players, that was his mantra. NFL films would occasionally catch him saying it mid-game, but otherwise it was a practice mantra. The players remember it, but it wasn’t really for the fans. Nobody following the Patriots was screaming “Do Your Job.” It only came out when someone asked a player to reminisce.

I find that mantra fascinating and worthy of pondering today – in the light of our Old Testament Reading – for a couple of reasons. I think there are two ways that you can hear that mantra – “Do Your Job”.

The first is as a statement of the law. And the way Belichick used it probably leaned heavily on this. You plan and you practice and you map out your steps and communicate with your teammates. And you hone yourselves together into an unbeatable force. If everyone does there job, and sacrifices the personal glory, the promise is you share in the greater glory of victory. And here is the thing about the law – it is good and wise. If you do your job, things will go better for you. You will often find yourselves victorious. The law is the path of wisdom.

But even doing the law – doing your job – at the level of Bill Belichick, has a couple of problems. You can find yourself 18-0 with probably the best team every put together – and you lose the last game of the year, The Super Bowl, to Eli Manning and the New York Giants. The law does not save. Sometimes the 2nd best QB in his own family will flip a pass to a marginal wide receiver who will catch it against his helmet. Because your All-pro defensive back failed at his job for one moment. That’s the law. You’ve got to keep it perfectly to have perfect results – salvation.

And long before you get to perfection, pride will set in. I think that was part of Belichick downfall. He was doing his job – NFL football coach – better than anyone ever has. And he started taking pride in 6th round draft picks and undrafted free agents coached up by him and his staff winning. Of course he always had Tom Brady. And that 18-0 team had Randy Moss. He would cut you as soon as he thought you were too expensive and replace you with a former lacrosse player. And as long as the grace of Tom Brady was there, it seemed to work. But when that grace wasn’t, the doing his job became much harder. He couldn’t overcome the checks and lack of talent his pride was writing. The moment we start to boast in the law, is the moment the wheels come off.

**Text**

 The Old Testament text – if we are looking beyond the “Holy, Holy, Holy” connection to the Trinity – is about vocation. That’s a fancy word, but an important word for Lutherans. Because we don’t just hold to religious roles as vocations. There are lots and lots of vocations. When God asks us to “Do Our Job” that is a vocation. Being a Father or Mother is a vocation. Being a son or a daughter. Being an employee or employer. Being a citizen or a soldier. Those are common large vocations. But there are lots more. There is a third part of the small catechism called ‘The Table of Duties” that gives the general thoughts.

Our text is Isaiah’s call to the vocation of prophet. And part of the problem of any vocation is that if we approach our callings under the banner of the law, the vision can be overwhelming. Most of the prophetic books with a calling start with that calling. Isaiah as a book doesn’t Isaiah goes for 5 chapters working as a prophet before his call. And if you skim those chapters they are quite different from most of the rest. He condemns Judah and Jerusalem mercilessly. The land is filled with idols and the Day of the Lord is coming. The vineyard of the LORD is to be destroyed. It produces nothing but wild grapes. Isaiah is doing the job with the full verve of the law.

And then he sees the vision. The LORD sitting on the throne – high and lifted up. The train of his robe filling the temple. The seraphim covering themselves from the glory. The heavens shaking at the voice. The full weight of the glory.

Doing the job. Checking the boxes. Even if done with full pride in the work, land you there. “Woe is me! For I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips…and I have seen the King.”

**Christology**

And if we don’t know who that King is. If all we are standing there with is boast about how we did the job. That angel flying with a burning coal from the altar is surely the last thing we will see.

But that is when we learn who this King is. The ever burning coal – the eternal prayer of Christ is not that we might be judged, but that we might know him and believe in him and be saved. That the Father might forgive us. And when that prayer touches our lips. “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

Because Christ has done his job. Which was to bear the sins of the world. Which was to create a way past death and the laws perfects demands. Which was to call sinners.

**Moral**

Which leads to the second way I think we can hear “Do Your Job.” “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

The absolute best pros, you can see it in how they play. They aren’t playing because they have to or its something they are good at or they are getting paid a lot. They are playing because they love it. They are playing because they get to play.

And that is the way of vocations. They are these things we get to do. They are how God has chosen to show and share his love. He is asking “whom shall I send, who will go for us?” God primarily works through means. And the care of our neighbor is often in our hands through the means of our vocation.

And we can go do our jobs because it is good and wise. Because if we do our jobs, hopefully when we need it others will do their jobs. And things will typically go better. But that’s a hard road, and it doesn’t always happen. You can do almost everything perfect and the law doesn’t save. Or we can hear the call of vocation. Yes, we should do our jobs, but more importantly, we get to do our jobs. “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” God has called us by the gospel, enlightened us with his gifts, and asked us to play on His team. We get to play.

**Eschatological**

And when we are doing the job out of love. When we are running with that grace. Those old mistakes are meaningless. The score has long been called in. And the original miraculous comeback – the resurrection - happened. We’ve already won. The victory has been given to us. The glory has already been decided. It fills the temple. The whole earth is full of the glory of the LORD. A glory that shall not fade.

Yes, right now, there are people playing the game who still think the score is in question. There is still a world full of people who are worried about not doing their job and who know they are far behind. There are others who think they’ve got the game won by their own merits. And that makes it all interesting.

But what God wants are those who love the game. Who will trust God with the score. Who will “do their job.” Not for any legal reasons, but because they get to. Because they are called. Because it is our vocation.

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”