Discussion Leader Notes

Lesson 2 The Call of a Prophet

In biblical times, prophets often played key roles in the history of God's people, taking powerful and crucial positions in the life of the community. However, being a prophet was a difficult calling, and their lives were often filled with sorrow, rejection, misunderstanding, and frustration. God called these ordinary, sometimes flawed people to realign humanity with His messages for a fallen world.

Opening Poll What do you think would be the hardest part about being called as a prophet? A. Facing rejection and ridicule from people I care about. B. Delivering warnings of judgment to powerful leaders. C. Enduring physical hardships or imprisonment. D. Overcoming my own feelings of unworthiness. E. Waiting patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Opening Engagement Story Imagine having a job where your success meant almost everyone would be angry with you. Prophets were essentially covenant prosecutors, delivering unpopular warnings to wayward kings and nations. It was a terrifying, lonely calling, yet those who answered left an eternal legacy of pointing the world to Jesus.

Day 1 Sabbath Afternoon: The Call of a Prophet

Main Idea Prophets were individuals specifically chosen by God to serve as His spokespersons in difficult times.

Poll If God called you to deliver a difficult message to your community today, how would you likely respond? A. I would look for someone else more qualified. B. I would step forward, but with a lot of fear. C. I would immediately say, "Here am I, send me." D. I would ask God for a miraculous sign first. E. I would quietly decline the offer.

Opening Illustration When you need to send an urgent message, you pick a reliable messenger. God chose specific, often reluctant messengers to deliver the most important news in history.

Set the Scene Let's look at the memory text for this week, which captures the profound moment a prophet is commissioned by God in a heavenly vision.

Read the Text "Also 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.'" (Isaiah 6:8, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- The Lord initiates the call and asks who will go.
- God asks a question rather than forcing obedience.
- The prophet responds with immediate, willing surrender.

Guided Discussion

- Why do you think God asks for a volunteer ("who will go for Us?") instead of just commanding someone to go? (Allow discussion)
- What kind of preparation of the heart is necessary before someone can genuinely say, "Send me"? (Ask follow-up)
- Why were God's prophets often ignored, ridiculed, beaten, or jailed? (Invite multiple responses)
- How is God calling us today to be messengers of hope in a generation flooded with greed and immorality? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Often, God's prophets did not readily accept their call to the prophetic office because they were strongly opposed by those who should have welcomed their messages. Today, the prophetic voice is still often rejected or simply ignored.

Christ Connection Jesus is the ultimate Prophet and the Word made flesh who perfectly answered the Father's call to be sent into a hostile world to save us.

Life Response Ask God today to give you the courage to be His faithful messenger in your own sphere of influence, regardless of the popularity of the message.

Encouragement Bridge Even when God's call seems daunting and leads to misunderstanding, He promises to give you the strength and the words you need.

Day 2 Sunday: Abraham, Defender of the Covenant

Main Idea God calls flawed but faithful people to stand as defenders of His covenant in a world of apostasy.

Poll What aspect of Abraham's life do you find most inspiring? A. His willingness to leave his home for the unknown. B. His deep faith when asked to sacrifice Isaac. C. His trusting God for a child in his old age. D. His role as a peacemaker with his nephew Lot. E. His simple belief that was counted as righteousness.

Opening Illustration It is incredibly hard to be the only person in the room going against the flow. Surrounded by moral ambivalence, Abraham did this on a global scale.

Set the Scene Years after the dispersion from Babel, God chose Abram to be an example of covenant faith for all future generations.

Read the Text "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness... just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-7, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- Abram's belief was the foundation of his relationship with God.
- God accounted his faith for righteousness.
- The true sons of Abraham are those who live by faith.

Guided Discussion

- What about Abraham's character qualified him for God's service, even though he was clearly a flawed man? (Allow discussion)
- How does Genesis 15:6 powerfully reveal the promise of the gospel? (Ask follow-up)
- In a world where competing ideologies try to marginalize faith, how can we faithfully reflect God's image today? (Invite multiple responses)
- What hope can you take for yourself knowing that God justifies us by faith, just as He did Abraham? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight God communicated the terms of the covenant to Abraham and showed him how humanity's salvation would be accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ. Abraham proved faithful to God's call, surrounded by apostasy.

Christ Connection Abraham's faith anticipated the gospel of Jesus Christ, the true Seed through whom all nations are blessed and justified by faith.

Life Response Identify one area of your life where you need to trust God's promises more deeply, and choose to believe Him today just as Abraham did.

Encouragement Bridge God does not require a flawless record for you to serve Him; He simply asks for your faithful belief and willingness to follow where He leads.

Day 3 Monday: The Elijah Message

Main Idea The prophetic voice fearlessly challenges idolatry and calls people back to a faithful relationship with God.

Poll If you had to confront a large crowd about a difficult truth, what would you rely on most? A. Solid logical arguments and facts. B. A deep sense of God's presence. C. A trusted friend standing beside me. D. Passion and emotional appeal. E. Scripture verses memorized perfectly.

Opening Illustration Imagine a lone man standing against hundreds of hostile religious leaders, supported by the king. That was Elijah on Carmel, calling a nation to make a choice.

Set the Scene Under King Ahab, Israel was deeply entrenched in Baal worship, and God sent Elijah to announce a drought to turn His people back to obedience.

Read the Text "And Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.' But the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- Elijah confronts the entire nation directly.
- He demands a clear choice between God and Baal.
- The people are initially hesitant and silent.

Guided Discussion

- Why did Elijah need to force a confrontation on Mount Carmel rather than just preaching a quiet sermon? (Allow discussion)
- What kinds of idols exist in our homes, hearts, and churches today that we need to turn away from? (Ask follow-up)
- How does the prophetic office work to restore people to faithfulness and warn against apostasy? (Invite multiple responses)
- What choices do we need to make today so that we don't succumb to our carnal nature? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Not all prophets were called to warn of impending doom; they were called to restore the people to faithfulness and warn against the violation of the covenant. Elijah's message on Mount Carmel was a Spirit-filled appeal to denounce false gods and return to the Lord.

Christ Connection Just as Elijah called Israel back to the true God, Jesus continually invites us to turn away from the empty idols of this world and find our true salvation and peace in Him.

Life Response Examine your heart for any divided loyalties or modern "idols," and make a conscious choice today to follow the Lord completely.

Encouragement Bridge God is a God who answers by fire and transforms hearts. When you stand up for Him, you never stand alone.

Day 4 Tuesday: Isaiah, the Gospel Prophet

Main Idea Experiencing the holiness and grace of God transforms us into willing messengers of the gospel.

Poll Which part of Isaiah 53 brings you the most comfort? A. He was a Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. B. He was wounded for our transgressions. C. By His stripes we are healed. D. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. E. He made intercession for the transgressors.

Opening Illustration You can't truly see your own dirtiness until you stand in the brightest light. Isaiah experienced this in the throne room of God, which prepared him to prophesy about the Savior.

Set the Scene Overwhelmed by a vision of God's majesty and his own unworthiness, Isaiah was purged of sin and empowered to write the clearest prophecies of the coming Messiah.

Read the Text "He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:3, 5, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- The Messiah is despised and acquainted with grief.
- He is wounded and bruised for our sins.
- His suffering brings us peace and healing.

Guided Discussion

- Why do you think Isaiah 53 is considered the most powerful prophecy depicting Christ's death? (Allow discussion)
- How does understanding that Jesus was our Substitute, bearing the penalty for our sins, impact your daily faith? (Ask follow-up)
- Why did people in Isaiah's time find his dire predictions preposterous, and how is it similar today? (Invite multiple responses)
- What great hope can you take for yourself from what Isaiah revealed about what Christ's death has done for us? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Isaiah's prophecies foretold the Messiah's purpose, explaining how His atoning sacrifice saved His people from their sins. The substitutionary aspect of Christ's death is explicitly depicted, showing the universal nature of sin and its solution.

Christ Connection Jesus is the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, who willingly took the penalty for our transgressions so that we might be perfectly healed and restored.

Life Response Write down Isaiah 53:5 and place it somewhere visible today as a reminder of the incredible price Jesus paid for your peace.

Encouragement Bridge Because Jesus carried your sorrows and bore your sins, you can live today in the absolute assurance of His healing and grace.

Day 5 Wednesday: Daniel, the Faithful Seer

Main Idea Uncompromising faithfulness in small things prepares us to be God's witnesses to the highest earthly powers.

Poll What do you think is the hardest part about standing up for your faith in a secular environment? A. Fear of losing my job or status. B. Not knowing the right words to say. C. Feeling completely isolated and alone. D. The subtle temptation to just blend in. E. Not wanting to offend others.

Opening Illustration A mighty oak tree doesn't grow strong in a day; it weathers small storms first. Daniel's courage in the lions' den started with a decision at the dining table.

Set the Scene As a captive in Babylon, Daniel modeled unwavering integrity, beginning with his health habits, leading pagan kings to acknowledge the true God.

Read the Text "The king answered Daniel, and said, 'Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.' Then the king promoted Daniel..." (Daniel 2:47-48, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- A powerful pagan king acknowledges Daniel's God.
- God is declared supreme over all earthly rulers.
- Daniel is exalted because of his faithfulness and God's wisdom.

Guided Discussion

- How did Daniel's faithfulness in a small test (diet) prepare him for life-threatening tests later? (Allow discussion)
- What kind of witness was Daniel to the pagans around him, and how can we emulate that today? (Ask follow-up)
- Daniel's prophecies predicted the rise and fall of world empires. What should this tell us about trusting God's eternal kingdom? (Invite multiple responses)
- How can our daily lives serve as a reminder to others of the power of God working in us? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Daniel foretold the rise and fall of nations and the consequences of their disobedience. Through his prophetic visions, Daniel revealed God's plan and the ultimate victory of God's kingdom, demonstrating that God is the true judge of history.

Christ Connection Daniel points us to the coming Son of Man, Jesus Christ, whose everlasting kingdom will soon replace all the broken empires of this world.

Life Response Commit to being faithful in one "small" area of your life this week, trusting that God uses everyday integrity as a powerful witness.

Encouragement Bridge When you stand firm in your convictions, God can use your life as a bright light in the darkest of places.

Day 6 Thursday: John the Baptist, Preparing a People

Main Idea God's prophets prepare the way for Jesus, pointing others to Him even through their own seasons of doubt and suffering.

Poll When you experience a season of deep doubt or hardship, what helps you the most? A. Reading stories of biblical heroes who also struggled. B. Reassurance and encouragement from friends. C. Reviewing how God has led me in the past. D. Spending quiet time in prayer. E. Looking at the evidence of Jesus' love in the Gospels.

Opening Illustration A herald's job isn't to be the king, but to make sure everyone knows the king has arrived. John the Baptist fearlessly prepared the way, yet even he faced a dark night of the soul.

Set the Scene John came preaching repentance in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Messiah, but later faced a severe crisis of faith while locked in Herod's dungeon.

Read the Text "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see...'" (Matthew 11:2-4, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- John, the great prophet, struggled with doubt while in prison.
- He took his questions directly to Jesus.
- Jesus didn't rebuke him, but provided evidence of His healing ministry.

Guided Discussion

- Why was Satan so eager to have John the Baptist imprisoned and discouraged? (Allow discussion)
- How did Jesus gracefully reaffirm John's faith while he was in prison? (Ask follow-up)
- Have you ever been in a position where you could not understand why bad things were happening to you? How do you maintain trust? (Invite multiple responses)
- Why is it important to proclaim a message of repentance and point people to Jesus today, just as John did? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight John's imprisonment hurt Jesus, but it was Satan's way of trying to break John while emotionally burdening the Savior. Despite his terrible conditions and confusion, John received encouragement from Jesus and stayed faithful unto death.

Christ Connection Jesus meets us in our darkest dungeons of doubt, not with condemnation, but with the gentle, reassuring evidence of His love and healing power.

Life Response If you are struggling with a doubt today, take it directly to Jesus in prayer, asking Him to show you the evidence of His love in your life.

Encouragement Bridge God has promised us power to do His will, and He will answer us when we reach out in faith, whatever our circumstances may be.

Day 7 Summary

Main Idea God calls messengers to speak His truth in times of crisis, pointing people back to faithfulness and forward to the ultimate salvation found in Jesus Christ.

Poll What is your biggest takeaway from this week's study on the call of a prophet? A. Even flawed people like Abraham can be mighty defenders of faith. B. We must make a clear choice for God, like Elijah demanded. C. Isaiah's vision shows that God's grace transforms us for service. D. Daniel proved that integrity in small things is a powerful witness. E. John the Baptist shows us that it's okay to bring our doubts to Jesus.

5 Weekly Takeaways

- Being a prophet was a difficult calling, often met with rejection and sorrow, yet crucial for realigning God's people.
- Abraham demonstrated that true qualification for God's service is faith that is accounted for righteousness.
- Elijah's ministry shows that prophets are called to confront apostasy and boldly call people back to God's covenant.
- Isaiah 53 stands as a monumental prophecy revealing the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins.
- Daniel and John the Baptist proved that unyielding faithfulness—whether in a royal court or a dark dungeon—is a powerful witness to the truth of God.

Final Reflection Question How will you answer the Lord today when He asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" (Pause for responses.)

Closing Appeal We live in a world desperate for truth and hope. God is still looking for messengers who will stand for Him with uncompromising integrity. Whether it is in your home, your workplace, or your community, you are called to reflect His image and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Let us embrace the courage of Elijah, the faith of Abraham, the integrity of Daniel, and the willingness of Isaiah, saying, "Here am I! Send me."

Closing Prayer Father in Heaven, thank You for the faithful prophets who endured rejection and hardship so that Your Word could be preserved for us today. Give us the faith of Abraham to trust Your promises, the courage of Elijah to stand for truth, and the willingness of Isaiah to answer Your call. Purify our hearts and send us out as messengers of Your grace to a world that desperately needs Jesus. In His holy name we pray, Amen.