

Prayer: O God, You are holy, You wait to meet us, to make us holy with your holiness, to make us loving with your love, to make us hopeful with your hope. In your presence, we bow our heads in shame where we have failed others, failed ourselves and failed you. Touch us with the tenderness of your forgiveness. In your presence, we breathe new life when we dare to be still, to be centered, to be whole, to be holy. Dwell in us as in a holy temple, that we may know stillness and that we may sense the fragrance of your love and bring that fragrance to where life is a stench and putrid and stale, within ourselves and within our world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Holy, Holy, Holy Is the Lord

Did you know that people answer the phone differently in other countries? For example, in Japan they will say, Moshi moshi, “I speak I speak”; Italians will say, “Ready!”; in Spain they say, “Speak!” (Hable!).

Just as there are different ways of answering the phone, there are also different ways to answer a call from God. In the Bible, we have several different examples of how people answered God’s call.

There was Jonah who answered his call by saying, “Here I am. I’m not going.” God said to Jonah, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” (Jonah 1:2) “But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.” (Jonah 1:3). If Jonah had been using a cell phone at the time, he would have blocked God’s number and said, “I’m not taking this call.”

And then there was Moses who answered his call by saying, “Here I am. Send someone else.” God came to Moses in a burning bush and said, “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, out of Egypt.” (Exodus 3:10). But Moses was reluctant to accept that call and he eventually said, “My Lord, please send someone else.” (Exodus 4:13). “Lord, what you’ve got in mind is a great plan; I just don’t think it’s for me. I think someone else needs to answer this call.”

And then there was Isaiah who answered his call by saying, “Here I am. Send me.” And this is going to be our text this morning. Isaiah 6:8, “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’”

This morning, I’d like for us to consider the question, “What would lead a person to fully surrender their life to God like that?” because that’s the kind of attitude we all should desire to have. We should pray, “God I’ve been comfortable for way too long ... I know you want to use me to show your love in this world. Give me eyes to see the needs of others. Give me a heart that is ready to get involved in wherever you’re working. God, my life is yours. Whatever you want, wherever you lead, here I am. Send me!” So how do we get to that point?

People of God, it’s only after we have grasped the majesty of God, our own inadequacy and sinfulness, and the grace of God that cleanses us that we are properly motivated to do the Lord’s work.”

Isaiah saw the majesty of God. “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. Isaiah had an incredible worship experience. He came into the very presence of God, and he had a vision of God that changed his life dramatically. And I believe that our daily walk — our daily service — is directly proportional to our vision of God. I believe that our concept of God determines how much we will love and serve God. I believe how we worship God has a lot to do with how we live and serve God throughout the rest of the week.

Because if we don’t see God for who God really is here on Sunday worship, then we’re not going to be motivated to render God much service Monday through Saturday. On the other hand, if we do see God properly here, then that will change how we live tomorrow. Our worship together has everything to do with who and what we are the rest of the week.

Uzziah's death had a big impact on Isaiah, he had reigned for 52 years. He was the greatest king the Jews had known ever since the time of King David. But now Uzziah was dead. And Isaiah's heart was broken because Uzziah was not only his king, but he was also his friend. And so, in his heartbreak, it was only natural that Isaiah would make his way to the temple to worship God and to find comfort. And that's where that he has this vision of God that changes his life.

He saw that God was in control. It's important that we understand this morning, that in our darkest hours, when things don't seem to be working out, when life tumbles in, God is still on God's throne. God is still in control.

That was one of the things folks struggled with when tragedy occurs, when things collapse in our own lives - "Where is God?" Because it seemed like God is nowhere around. It seemed like God is no longer in control. But blessed assurance reminds us God is still on God's throne; God is still in control. And though we may not always understand exactly how, God is still working out God's plan and purpose for us in the midst of what seems to our lives spinning out of control, we can stand and believe in the Promises of God.

Isaiah saw the fullness of God. The train of God's robe filled the temple. God's glory and presence filled the whole temple. The whole earth was filled with God's glory. The house was filled with smoke. When God fills the room, there isn't room for anything else. So, if God truly fills our lives, there is no room for anything else. God must be first and foremost: God said, "You shall have no other gods before me." There isn't room for anyone else's glory when we come into God's presence. When we worship, there is no room in our worship for any glory other than God's glory. We're here this morning to honor, worship, and praise God. God's glory must fill this worship experience.

Isaiah saw the holiness of God. The seraphim, the angels, are flying around singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord! the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:3).

Why do they sing, "holy, holy, holy"? And no, it's not because that's the way the song is written in our songbooks. That song came much later. So why say it three times? Well, when we want to emphasize the importance of something in English, we may underline words or use boldface or capital letters, -or all of those things all at the same time. We may even follow it with an exclamation point or two.

But when the Jews wanted to emphasize something, they used repetition. For example, if you said a stone was big it would mean one thing. If you said the stone was big, big you would mean it was a really big stone. If it was big, big, big, it would mean that it was a gigantic boulder.

To mention something three times in succession was to elevate it to the highest degree. And so, when the angels say, "holy, holy, holy," they are emphasizing just how great God's holiness is! Incidentally, this is the only attribute of God in all of scripture that is repeated three times. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that God is "love, love, love", or "truth, truth, truth", or "wrath, wrath, wrath". But it does say that he's holy, holy, holy.

Isaiah saw the power of God. It was like an erupting volcano. There was an earthquake. The foundations of the temple shook, and Isaiah is made aware of the omnipotent power of God.

I want to suggest to you this morning that when we come together to worship God, we need to see God as God truly is. We are here to be in God's presence. We are here to worship God. We're here to see God. We're here to be reminded of God's power, love, holiness, and goodness. We're here to adore God, to recognize God's greatness.

Who came here on this Trinity Sunday truly intending to worship God, but all they see is the show of songs, prayers and preaching. They sit in their seats, watching all the activity, and then head home when the closing prayer is said; thinking they've seen the worship, but, in truth, they missed out on worship because they never saw God.

It's important for us to ask ourselves the question, "Are we here to see God?" Because the ultimate purpose of worship is to see God's greatness.

Notice what Isaiah's response was when he saw God. In verse 5 he says, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Isaiah's response was to say, "I am a sinner and I live in the midst of sinners!"

Light will always expose the dirt, the gossip, the grime. And it's the same way with God. The closer we get to God, the more aware we are of the sin in our lives.

Isaiah may have been a confident fellow before this experience. He was probably the most upstanding citizen of his day. Everybody honored him. He was a spiritual leader, the voice of God, a servant of the Lord. But all it took was one glimpse of God's holiness, and Isaiah was a wretch in his own eyes. As long as Isaiah compared himself with other people around him, he was able to think highly of himself. But the moment he measured himself by the ultimate standard, Isaiah realized that he was morally and spiritually inadequate,

Seeing God's power reminds us that we are so weak by comparison. Seeing God's wisdom reminds us that there is so much we don't understand. And seeing God's holiness reminds us of our own shortcomings.

We may look pretty good as a church when we compare ourselves with other churches. But when we compare ourselves to God and God's holiness, we see our sinfulness. When we truly understand who God is, it makes a difference in how we truthfully see ourselves. When we see God for who a God is, we see ourselves for who we really are.

What that means is that true worship forces us to spend time in self-examination. That ought to be part of our worship here every Sunday morning. We ought to be asking ourselves the question, where do I stand with God? Am I truly putting Jesus first in my life? Am I living as salt and light in the world so that people can see the difference that God makes in my life? Is there anything in my life that I haven't been willing to surrender to God?

Furthermore, seeing God as God is should cause us to humble ourselves in complete surrender to God. Have you ever noticed in the scripture what people's posture was when they come into the presence of God, when they saw God for who God really is? Generally, it was face down in the dirt!

When we see God for who God is and we see ourselves for who we are, it causes us to humble ourselves before God realizing our weaknesses, our sinfulness, which in turn causes us to understand our need for dependence upon God.

Notice how God responds to Isaiah in verse 6. "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.'" (Isaiah 6:6-7)

Isaiah received the cleansing of God. One of the seraphim flew to him with a live coal, touched his lips with it and said that his guilt was taken away. Isaiah felt the burning coal, but inside, he felt something even more — forgiveness. God said to Isaiah, "Yes, you are sinful. But I will cleanse you, I will take away your sins, take away your guilt, make you pure." God responded to Isaiah with his amazing grace.

And I would suggest that our worship is not complete until we feel the forgiveness of God. When we come into the presence, it is important that we not only see God's throne, but that we see the altar, the place of sacrifice for sins. It is a time for us to be reminded that God has made a way for us to be forgiven and to be seen as righteous in God's eyes.

In verse 8, we come to Isaiah's response to all of this. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'" (Isaiah 6:8)

It is only after Isaiah sees God for who God really is, and after he sees himself for who he is, and after he is touched by God's forgiving grace, that Isaiah is ready to properly respond to God — to go out and do the Lord's work.

And notice that Isaiah didn't say, "God, where do you want me to go?", or "Thanks but I'm too busy right now" or "What's in it for me?", or "I've done my part for many years, it's somebody else's turn" or "I have more important things to do in my life" or "The church only has a few more years of life, so why bother"?

People of God we should surrender it all to God and be like Isaiah basically signing a blank check on his whole life. He didn't try to strike a bargain with God; he didn't attempt to negotiate a compromise. God called Isaiah answered. God commanded — Isaiah obeyed. And that's the kind of unconditional response that comes only from the heart of someone who has seen God.

So, let me ask you this morning. How many of you are like Isaiah? Ready to go? Ready to live for God daily? Ready to stand up and say, "Lord, pick me! Send me! I want to work in your vineyard! I want to teach a Bible Study class! I want to talk to somebody about Christ! I want to utilize my gifts and talents to lead people to your grace and mercy. Cause a transformation of my tongue so I won't speak words of gossip or anger. I want to minister to the sick and those in need! I want to be involved in meeting the needs of this West Bend community! Here am I! Send me

In our worship, we need to see God as God is. But the result of our worship should be that we see the need to surrender ourselves to God. Surrender means it is no longer my life, my purpose, my plans, my ideas, but God's.

Paul said it so well in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Paul says, it's no longer my life. I'm just here to do whatever Jesus wants me to do. And whenever we see God for who God is, and we see ourselves for who we are, and after we receive God's amazing grace, then we can also, with absolute faith, turn our lives completely over to God.

That's why Isaiah could say, "Here I am! Send me." It wasn't that Isaiah thought he was smarter than everybody else. He didn't think he was more talented or had more ability or had more resources than anyone else. No, the reason Isaiah said, "I'll go" is because he had seen God for who God really is. I want you to know this Trinity Sunday morning, this truth will change your life. You can count on it.

Worship is coming into the presence of God and being driven to our knees by God's majesty. Worship is giving to God the glory and honor and praise that God so richly deserves. And if we will do that, it will move us to see our weakness and sinfulness before God. Worship is an opportunity to take hold of the grace and forgiveness that God offers. And the end result should be that we should be re-energized in our desire to serve God with our lives each and every day.

May we truly enter to worship and depart to serve. "Lord, here I am. Send me!"