

May 27, 2018
Sermon for Trinity Sunday
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Isaiah 6:1-8

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Isaiah 6:1–8 (ESV)

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “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!” 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. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” 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.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Some of us may still remember the television commercial from the 1970s that featured a guy finishing his morning shave in front of a mirror by splashing on some aftershave lotion, vigorously slapping himself in the face, and saying,

“Thanks! I needed that!”

The commercial’s message was that everybody needs a good waker-upper, a good slap in the face to be ready for the day. The aftershave lotion company wanted viewers to know that it had just the product.(Mennen Skin Bracer)

In much more important circumstances, the prophet Isaiah at the time of our Text needed his own attention getting moment if he was going to be ready for the rest of his life on earth and the ministry before him as God’s prophet to the kingdom of Judah and ultimately the fallen world.

As Isaiah found forgiveness and strength in his call, we as Christians receive these same blessings for our own calling in Christ.

Isaiah had a tough assignment to be God’s prophet, God’s official spokesman, at the time the nation of Judah was on its way to destruction and captivity.

He was to speak the Message of God and His will, applying the Law to their circumstances. To the godless, he would proclaim God’s wrath and inevitable destruction, overwhelming in its force—not a popular message.

During his initial years of service, Isaiah prophesied to a kingdom that was flourishing (2 Ki 14:21–15:7). But who wants to hear about destruction and strife when things are going so well?

But it was also a kingdom that was disintegrating and decaying, turning to gross idolatry, human sacrifices, and temple desecration, and turning away from God's help, preferring worldly help from the Assyrians and Babylonians (Is 1:4–6).

In addition, Isaiah was supposed to unveil the future, also not a popular message (1:7–8). It was a future of "*your country lies desolate,*" "*foreigners devour your land,*" and after which there would be only "*a few survivors*" (1:9).

Isaiah was also called on to foretell a greater future, the survival of a remnant (1:9), with many promises of a coming Messiah (for example, 7:14; 53:1–12) and the glories of the messianic period (2:1–5).

To prepare him for this task, Isaiah had his own "slap" in a vision. In his vision, Isaiah saw the Lord in all his power and glory (vv 1–5). The vision validated the message from God delivered by Isaiah, such visions and dreams were a common and accepted means by which Old Testament prophets received the messages they delivered.

Isaiah was overwhelmed by what he saw and despaired of his "*unclean lips, [dwelling] in the midst of a people of unclean lips,*" having seen the "*King, the Lord of hosts!*" (v 5).

In his vision, Isaiah is concerned most of all about his unclean lips. In his vision, those lips receive forgiveness via a means of grace (vv 6–7).

The seraph obtained a burning coal from the altar in heaven. As Isaiah's lips were touched, the seraph explained what this meant: "*Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for*" (v 7).

Can you imagine Isaiah jerking his head back? If you've ever touched a burning coal, you don't have to touch it and you jerk your hand back. (Nena and the pretty white rocks?)

Isaiah knew how hot coals were. He probably jerked his head back. First in fear of the burn and second as the coal touched Isaiah's mouth.

Although he expected the burn of fire, he received a blessing as his guilt was taken away and his sin atoned for, it delivered even more.

It provided Isaiah with the one attribute to best equip him for the task now before him, the experience and relief of the forgiveness of his own sins.

Having had his "Thanks! I needed that!" moment, Isaiah was ready to be sent as the spokesman of the triune God to a fallen people and world: "*Here I am! Send me*" (v 8).

On this Trinity Sunday, this Old Testament Reading provides us with the opportunity for our own "Thanks! I needed that!" experience.

God is still the holy and almighty God, and we live every moment with "*unclean lips*" among people of "*unclean lips*" before the Holy One of Israel.

Contrary to what people may think and say in our day and to whom or what they may look for safety and deliverance, the same almighty and all-powerful God that Isaiah saw in his vision remains omniscient and omnipresent and judges by the same Ten Commandments. And we fare no better.

Isaiah probably lived a pretty good life, as we probably believe we do, but he and we can only say, "*Woe is me! For I am lost*" (v 5).

The same almighty and all-powerful God that so severely judged Israel and then Judah must also judge our nation and the nations of this world among whom we live. And when He does, it isn't and it won't be pretty.

But God is still a merciful God, our God not only of power and glory but of grace. By grace, God "*left ... a few survivors*" at the demise of Judah (1:9), and through the ministry of Isaiah, He showered those survivors with a overabundance of promises of the one who would come out of Judah to save those who remained faithful.

By grace, God kept those promises and made possible the salvation of all mankind by sending the Messiah, His Son, to atone for the guilt of their sins, as is so clearly announced in today's Gospel in words spoken by that very Son (Jn 3:16).

By grace, God still sends spokesmen to carry His message of Law and Gospel to those who worship Him as the only true and triune God, still providing visible means of grace, the bread and wine that touches our lips to give assurance of forgiveness (6:6–7).

By grace, God sends all of us to "tell the love of Jesus," with those all around us. Starting with our families and going out to the neighborhoods and the world!.

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is and will always remain a mystery of three in one. We will never truly understand it this side of heaven. It will all become clear when we join our Savior, Jesus Christ in glory for all eternity.

But for now, this is still the God of mystery, who sends those who have experienced repentance and forgiveness to proclaim His Law and share His Gospel of forgiveness to all mankind.

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” continues to be His call today for prophets, pastors, teachers, and everyday witnesses.

If we have been truly paying attention to this Spirit-laden text and have been reminded again that God is still God, we will also be ready not only to admit, “Thanks! I needed that!” but also to respond, “Here I am! Send me.”

May God bless us all and give us the power to share His Gospel, not only in our words but in our actions each and every day of our lives until He greets us in heaven, welcoming us home with the Words:

“...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

Sermon Outline

Thanks! I Needed That

Isaiah 6:1-8

- I. Isaiah had a tough assignment to be God's prophet.
- II. To prepare him for this task, Isaiah had a "slap" in a vision.
- III. Trinity Sunday provides us with the opportunity for our own "Thanks! I needed that!" experience.