

Sermon Isaiah 6 1 & Holy Trinity Series B

Sermon: Holy Trinity

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8 (v. 3)

Theme: A very special Service!

Goal: Our worship is really God's worship: He enables us to worship Him!

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Imagine yourself coming to the Service and in a glimpse God appears to you in all His splendour and majesty! Are you dreaming? Is it a vision? It is real? What is happening?

This is what Isaiah experienced when he went to the temple to worship God: He saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted and being worshiped by the archangels!

Let us think a little bit about our Service: Is it not an encounter with God as well? Do we not hear His voice? Do we not sing praises to Him? Can we see Him? Does He touch us to forgive our sins?

I – The vision

The vision of Isaiah is very similar to a vision the Apostle John had in Revelation (4:1-11): “At once I was in the Spirit and there before me a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.” And John describes all the splendour and worship he saw there, like Isaiah saw. Angels and archangels flying around praising God and “at the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke”.

II – The worship

The song the archangels and seraphs sang in Isaiah's vision says: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The song in John's vision says: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

The song we sing in our worship says: *“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna, Hosanna,*

Hosanna in the highest...” – Can you feel that this vision begins to make sense to us? We are not that far from Isaiah’s experience...

Many scholars say that the triple “Holy, Holy, Holy” is a reference to the Holy Trinity; and therefore this text is chosen for this Holy Trinity Sunday. It appears many times in the Bible, and it is not supposed to be just a repetition, but must mean that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are worshiped and glorified, as we sing: “*Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the hosts of heaven we honour and glorify your name, evermore praising you and saying: Holy, Holy, Holy...*” – Besides this, we sing lots of Gloria and Alleluias several times in our Order of Service (as I highlighted it on the screen), several times in a triple way.

We have to be aware that our Order of Service is not merely a mechanic repetition; but it was set up by the Church to be a special moment of adoration and praise to our God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

III – The contrition/Repentance

Isaiah became terrified with this vision. It was too much to him, a poor and miserable sinner. He confessed: “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the king, the Lord Almighty!”

Blessed is the one who has the reaction of Isaiah when he meets God in His house. The Service is not a place for proud and haughty people, - like the Pharisee at the temple in one of Jesus’ parables. Therefore we begin our Service “*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*”, and immediately we confess our sins to him, in humbleness and confidence: “*O almighty God, merciful Father, I a poor sinner, confess to you all my sins with which I have ever offended you and justly deserve your punishment now and forever.*”

The sinner cannot stand before the “Holy, holy, holy” God; unless he is made holy as well. How does this happen? Can we stand before God?

IV – The forgiveness

In the case of Isaiah, God came to his aid in his desperation and sent one of the angels “with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’”

God doesn’t send angels anymore with living coals to touch our lips to forgive us. He already sent His one and only begotten Son to do atonement for our sins on the cross (as we heard in the Gospel, John 3:1-17). And He sends His messengers, the pastors, with the Gospel, with the water of the Baptism, and with the Bread and the Wine of the Holy Communion, to forgive our sins and to declare that we are Holy! - The Absolution pastor gives, forgiving *“you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* is God taking away your guilt because Jesus had done atonement for our sins on the cross. – The water pastor pours on the head of the child is not simply a nice ceremony; but it is God touching the child, washing away the sins of the child born sinful, and declaring that from now on that child is His beloved child. - The Bread and Wine pastor gives you is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which touch your lips to cleanse you; because it was *“given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.”*

Can you feel how close we are to a similar experience Isaiah had at the temple? We are so used to coming to the Service and to worshipping in the traditional way, that some time we are not aware anymore of the glory and majesty of this moment, that we are in God’s house and that He comes to us to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness and makes us ready to worship Him in His temple and to serve Him in our daily life. Our Order of Service and our hymns cannot be just whispered, but they have to be sung loud with happiness and energy to the glory of our merciful God!

V – The commission

Isaiah became so impressed with the good experience he had not only with God’s glory and majesty, but with His mercy and love, forgiving his sins, that when God asked, “Whom shall I send? And

who will go for us?" - he didn't think twice, but answered immediately and said, "Here I am, Lord. Send me!" And God said to him: "Go and tell this people" my Word.

Isaiah volunteered himself to proclaim God's Word to his people and to do God's will. – Volunteering: It's a nice word, but not many practice it. Many come to the church (not just to St. Thomas...) thinking: What can the church do for me? They want only to enjoy the benefits of the church. The right question should be: What can I do for God's church? Because God has already done everything for me; He gave me life and whatever I need; He gave His Son to die for me and to forgive me; He gave me His Holy Spirit to live in me and to guide all my paths. What can I do to serve Him, to serve His people and to serve the needy community around me? How can I preach/testify His message through words and deeds?

Conclusion: Isaiah was transformed by that touch into a totally different person. Where he had been trying to hide under the furniture lest he be observed, now he was eagerly volunteering. God has also brought us today into the very centre of his kingdom, his very heart. We are in the presence of the Holy God here. Like Isaiah, we should be afraid to be here. But we are not. For we have learned something. God has not come to destroy but to save. Jesus' words in the Gospel lesson have been taken to heart. God has come to render us holy... An unclean people of unclean lips is cleansed and made holy. (Phil Brant)

Don't miss the opportunity to meet our God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to enjoy His presence, to receive His blessings of forgiveness and peace, and to serve Him according to the skills you have. He is a God who wants our best. He loves us! Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, 31 May 2015