

Good morning and welcome to Calvary Chapel. I thought all week we'd be continuing our study in Ecclesiastes, but Friday afternoon the Lord was prompting me to go a different direction for this morning's study, so would you please turn in your Bibles with me to Isaiah 6?

Amidst the national outrage over the senseless tragedies that took place this week, I believe the Lord is calling us to remember some very important truths for the dark times we find ourselves in. Isaiah 6 is a short chapter, 13 verses. We're gonna read all 13 verses as we begin.

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.
5 So I said:

“Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because 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 live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged.”

8 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.”

9 And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

10 “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered:

“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12 The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
13 But yet a tenth will be in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is cut down.
So the holy seed shall be its stump.”

BACKGROUND

The title of this mornings message is Lessons From the Throne
Let's pray

Chapter 6 describes the pivotal event in the life and ministry of Isaiah the prophet. The context of this event is summed up for us in just seven words in verse one 1 **in the year that King Uzziah died.**

And those words are intended to do more than just give us the time in which this event occurred.

Uzziah along with King David was just one of eight kings in the entire history of Israel and Judah to be described by God as having done what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Uzziah was a rare, good king.

But even though he was a good king, the citizens of the kingdom were headed into full blown rebellion against the God. But they did so in spite of Uzziah's leadership, not because of it.

And during King Uzziah's reign, as bad as things were going morally and spiritually among the people of Judah, the righteous like Isaiah, never had to wonder where Uzziah stood. Uzziah stood for the things of God.

I mention this because Uzziah's death would have shaken and unsettled the heart of Isaiah. And the death of Uzziah produced two things instantly in Isaiah the prophet's heart:

SHOW SLIDE First, Isaiah would have been filled with a staggering sense of loss.

SHOW SLIDE Secondly, almost immediately after the sense of loss, Isaiah's heart would be flooded with a powerful sense of uncertainty concerning the future. What's going to happen now?

CLOSE SLIDE

What does God say to His servants when we find ourselves in the same place Isaiah found himself in? When we're in that place of grieving over loss, and uncertainty over the future?

This morning I'd like us to notice six things that God ministered to Isaiah and see if they don't have something to say to us in the moment in which we find ourselves.

The first thing that the Lord did with Isaiah is he gave Isaiah a fresh vision of Himself.

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

God showed Isaiah the throne, and it's the throne that is never empty.

And we know from John's Gospel, chapter 12, verse 41 that it was none other than Jesus that Isaiah saw.

God showed His throne to Isaiah to reassure Isaiah that even though the human throne was now empty, God was still on His throne.

God showed Isaiah His throne so that Isaiah would fix his gaze completely upon the Lord in a way that he had never needed to before in his life.

No matter who we may lose on this earth, no matter their impact for the kingdom of God, God Himself is still with us. And He's bigger than all of our problems.

SHOW PIC It's good to be reminded of the fact that He loves us in a way that can only be encapsulated by the cross of Calvary. And He's for us even in the place that we're in. **CLOSE PIC**

But the truth that God is still wonderfully and powerfully and sovereignly on His throne does us absolutely no good unless we fix our eyes on Him.

SHOW PIC When an orchestra comes together, in order to prepare and tune their instruments, the oboist will stand up and they will play the note of A, and the entire orchestra will tune off of that single instrument and that single note.

And as they tune off of that one instrument and that one note, the result is that everyone will be in tune with one another. **CLOSE PIC**

And in the same way as we stay spiritually tuned to the Lord individually, we will then be in tune with one another spiritually. He is the spiritual tuning fork.

So how does that happen, how do we stay in tune with God? It happens through our daily devotional life and our personal relationship with the Lord. As each and every one of us begins our day in some way with our Father who art in heaven, there's the tuning fork now. The gaze is placed upon him. Heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is that spiritual tuning fork.

And so the first thing we see here for Isaiah is that Isaiah needed to fix his eyes upon the Lord like never before. Because Isaiah had never had to look upon God the way that he had to now with the death of King Uzziah, and we need to do the same.

The second thing that the Lord did was God then gave Isaiah a fresh revelation of God's Holiness.

2-3

2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”

Isaiah sees the seraphim above the throne of God. The most important thing about the seraphim is not their wings, not their ability to move, not the uniqueness of their look. But what captures the attention of Isaiah here is the seraphim praise the holiness of God.

And I want you to notice that as they sang that chorus praising the holiness of God, that the heavenly temple shook at the power of their declaration. 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

The whole place shook at the strength of their declaration, a testimony to the energy with which the words came forth from the innermost being of these angels.

And the scene is so strong and so powerful, it is meant to impress upon Isaiah the holiness of God, and to impress it upon him in a permanent way.

The angels praise God for His Holiness. Heaven celebrates the holiness of God. And the Lord blesses a respect for His Holiness with the fullness of His presence. And God's pleasure was manifested in v4 by His filling the house with smoke, a symbol of His presence.

Here's the point. It's only the Christian who respects and celebrates the holiness of God who experiences the fullness of the Presence, the power, and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

At this moment God is calling upon Isaiah to make holiness the standard for His personal life and His ministry, as opposed to what Judaism had become all around him.

And I think it's important for us to be reminded that we need to make holiness the standard for our personal lives as well. This is why we're told in **Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:**

1 Peter 1 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."^[fn]

What's the definition of holiness? Jesus is the definition of holiness. Jesus lived the holiest life that was ever lived. We need to run every definition of holiness through the life of Jesus and if it doesn't fit, then it isn't a genuine mark of holiness.

And it's important to do this because it'll protect us from legalism which is a false definition of holiness. Legalism gives the

appearance of holiness, but is very dangerous and it is very, very destructive.

But holiness will also protect us from carnal Christianity, where we profess the name of Christ but really look to serve ourselves above all others.

If we truly are disciples, followers of Jesus Christ, then our primary goal mustn't be happiness, but holiness.

In a room like this, even among mature Christians, there can be the tendency for people to think this type of thinking is fanatical. Holy living-that's a crazy standard. You know what I'd have to give up in order to do that?

Oh it may be crazy, and it may be fanatical to some, and it will probably be considered fanatical and crazy to an ever increasing number of people that even serve the Lord.

But there would not have been the Apostle Paul that we know and we love and we respect without that standard of holiness in his life.

Heaven celebrates the holiness of God, and the Lord himself is pleased to be holy. And if we are in tune with heaven and want to know its blessing, we must hunger after and embrace holiness.

Jesus' life and teaching, that's the standard for holiness.

#3. In verse 5 we notice that this vision produced a fresh humility within Isaiah, a fresh recognition of his unworthiness to be used by God. **5 So I said:**

**“Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because 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.”**

When Isaiah declares there in verse 5 woe is me for I am undone, he's essentially saying if God isn't gracious to me at this moment, I am doomed.

God is attracted to humility in us and he blesses humility. **Luke 14:11 “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

And surely this reminds us that God is the one who is to captivate our attention, not a great speaker or preacher.

Now don't get me wrong there are a lot of people in the body of Christ who are naturally very charismatic people. They shouldn't change who they are.

But the danger is we get more attracted to the personality of the speaker, than we are attracted to Jesus. It's a lot easier to watch videos of a captivating speaker than it is to get alone with the Lord.

Isaiah would later write in his book the Lord speaking through him
Isaiah 42:7 I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.

Every Christian in this room is an ambassador for God. Can you believe that? I wouldn't pick me, I probably wouldn't pick you either! Why wouldn't we pick us? Because we know everyone of us in this room is a liability!

But God uses us not because we're great, but because He is gracious.

And whenever God makes someone great, He has done so because of His grace, not because that person was actually great.

It's been said that humility is just made-up of just two things.
SHOW SLIDE Honesty and a good memory. So we all have good reason for remaining humble. CLOSE SLIDE

4th revelation to Isaiah 6-7

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged.”

God revealed His desire for sanctified lips in His servants. When Isaiah declared that he was a man of unclean lips, behind that confession was a desire that God would cleanse his lips. And so one of the seraphim takes a hot coal from the altar, touches Isaiah's mouth with it.

And I want you to notice that the coal didn't just come from some campfire somewhere. It came from the altar which tells us that Isaiah's lips and his mouth and his speech were now to be used supremely for God's purposes.

They were fully set aside to declare God's truth.

The single greatest threat to Calvary Chapel today, to Christianity in America today, and I emphasize today it might not be in a month or two.

But the single greatest threat isn't false doctrine. It isn't the world. It isn't our critics, as significant as all of those things might be. The single greatest threat comes from within.

As Christians, using our speech not for the edification of one another, to impart grace to one another, but to attack and slander and devour others. We need to be careful of that.

Galatians 5 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [fn] 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

James 3 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.[fn]

And as His ambassadors, our lips and our speech are to be completely sanctified to God and to His purposes. Our lips aren't to be used as an expression of whatever kind of pettiness or carnality or gracelessness that might be in our hearts, which bubble out of our mouths, especially when we may be hurting. We need to be on guard for this.

#5 The remainder of the chapter, verse eight through verse 13, God revealed to Isaiah that he was heading into a new season of ministry. It would be a season when Isaiah's faithfulness to God's calling upon his life would not translate into popularity, but that his message would be met with rejection and with hard hearts
8-13

8 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.”

9 And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

10 “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered:

“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12 The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
13 But yet a tenth will be in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is cut down.
So the holy seed shall be its stump.”

God broke the news to Isaiah that his ministry will not produce revival, rather his ministry would serve to make unrepentant sinners responsible for their rebellion against God.

I hope and pray for revival. I understand that it is the great need of the hour. I hope in God's will that He would cause every single one of us to lead thousands to Christ.

And I don't know if we're that generation.

But I do know that there will come a generation of Christian ministers who will one day serve the Lord on this earth in the same spiritual context as Isaiah's, where faithfulness to God will translate into persecution and rejection.

And if we are that generation, it means that we're going to have to make sure our definitions of success are biblical.

It's a definition of success that is able to sustain, serving when there is very little money and very few people to show for long years of sacrifice and very hard work.

So what is the Biblical definition of success? **Matthew 25:21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'**

To see our Lord face to face, and to hear those words, that's the definition of success. It's not about the size of a church, or size of a following, it's being fully obedient to what God has called each of us individually to do.

It's our response-what we see from Isaiah in verse 6-Here am I Lord, send me! Whatever you have for me Lord!

We achieve biblical success by being who God made us to be, and being faithful to what God has called us to. That's always been the definition of success, and it still is.

Let me close with a 6th and final point from this last section of this chapter. We must never, ever allow the moral and the spiritual condition of this world to turn our focus inward.

At this moment the nation of Judah was a mess. You read the 1st 5 chapters of Isaiah and you learn how bad the nation was.

And it would have been so easy for Isaiah to respond to God's prompting and say 'yeah God I hear ya, but listen, I'm through with all of them. I don't want to engage with them anymore'.

Cuz that thought comes sometimes right-Lord let's just go into isolation. Let's buy an island for Christ and we'll all just go there. We we would destroy ourselves in two weeks.

Listen, we're made for this. We're made for this very hour that God has called us to serve Him in. And so, as the world gets worse and worse on many, many levels, spiritually, morally, it's never an excuse to isolate ourselves from the world.

God says to Isaiah, I wanna keep you engaged in all of that.

Even as Christians we have to stay engaged with the messiness of this world and bring the gospel to it.

God sent Isaiah forward to a depraved culture with little earthly success. The need was great for the citizens of Judah but listen, the need was great for Isaiah to do it as well.

You'll find when you study history that when the body of Christ turns all its focus inward, they immediately lose their effectiveness. If we go inward, church, we're doomed. We're doomed.

SHOW SLIDE Six lessons that the Lord revealed to Isaiah.

- 1) We need to keep our eyes fixed upon the Lord like never before.
- 2) We must not compromise in the area of holiness. Jesus's life and teaching is the standard. Everything must be measured to Him
- 3) We must each embrace humility, so that God gets all the glory.
- 4) Our mouths are to be completely set apart to God, his message, his purposes.
- 5) we need to make sure our definitions of success are biblical and not borrowed from the world.
- 6) We're not to turn inward, we're to rise to the occasion that the Lord has given us.

CLOSE SLIDE

Something very, very special has been entrusted to us as Christians.