

I Will Pray

I Will Pray Like Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8

February 12, 2023

HDPC

Last week Gordon Fort said *prayer is the most underutilized weapon in our Great Commission arsenal*. The lack of prayer is hindering us from sharing the Gospel with the people of our city, nation, and world. He is absolutely right. But it goes even deeper than just the Great Commission.

Prayer is the most important weapon in our arsenal to resist the enemy, to grow in our relationship with Christ and to live in victory.

Yet, we don't pray . . . not as much as we should or in the ways we should.

Sometimes . . . We don't pray because we are lazy.

Sometimes . . . We don't pray because the enemy distracts us.

Sometimes . . . We don't pray because we don't think it works.

We can do better . . . And we must do better. It is with that in mind that we are examining the prayers of a number of individuals in the Bible. We would do well to learn to pray like these individuals. This morning I want us to learn to ***pray like Isaiah.***

God has chosen to reveal Himself and to communicate with people in a variety of ways. **Audible voice, animals and plants, prophets and preachers, storms and fires.** And always He is revealing Himself through His creation.

But now we have the completed written Word, the Bible. This is His primary method of speaking to us. It is not the only way He speaks, but is the primary way. But in the days before the Bible was completed, it was not unusual for God to appear in a vision or dream. Isaiah had one such experience and it changed his life. He saw God and responded with a simple prayer . . . a prayer that is worthy of us embracing as our own.

Read the text. Isaiah 6:1-9a

Three ways that Isaiah prayed and three ways we can pray.

1. He prayed with a high view of God

Actually, in the first four verses we don't find Isaiah saying anything. One could argue that he is not praying at all as the vision of God unfolds. I would disagree. Prayer is not just about us talking to God, it is also about us experiencing God. Isaiah found himself basking in the presence of God. And it was not a god of his own making, but the God of all creation.

Before Isaiah could pray effectively he needed to experience the presence of God. He needed to see God for who He was. He needed a refresher course on who God was. Interestingly, it would lead to a refresher course on who he (Isaiah) was. Seeing God in the right way always helps us see ourselves in the right way. God initiated this encounter with Isaiah. Two things caused Isaiah to have a proper and high view of God. **First . . .**

God was on His throne and in His temple.

Isaiah is one of only a few who have seen the Glory of the Lord & had privilege of telling the story. John also did. Paul said little about His paradise experience & we have no record that Lazarus ever shared about his.

Isaiah saw God **on a throne**, reminding Isaiah that God is a king who rules and reigns over a kingdom. Let me remind you that God is all powerful. all knowing and ever present. There is nothing that He can't do and nothing that he doesn't know. There is no place that can escape His presence. His power, knowledge and presence are completely unlimited.

Isaiah saw God **in the temple**. What makes this significant is the timing. Year that King Uzziah died. For the most part Uzziah was a good king. He reigned for about 52 years and did a lot of good things. But later in life he allowed pride to capture his heart. He brought incense into the temple and tried to burn it before the Lord. This was a violation of God's law. It was not for him to do. He was struck with leprosy for burning incense unlawfully **in the temple**. Now he is out of the way, and God fills the temple again. The temple was a place to meet God, but we must come on His terms. God was on his throne and in the temple. **Second . . .**

God was worshipped by angels.

Seraphim - One of many orders of angels. They are seen hovering before the throne, one across from the other. They call out praises to God to one

another. Like rounds in a song. Note the focus of their praise - the holiness of God. This may be His most important aspect of his character. **By the way**, there is never a time when God is not being praised by angels. But the praise that He seeks comes from the hearts and mouths of people.

The praise was **so powerful that it shook the foundations** of the temple. Now, that's worship. You might say, "well, that's only OT." Look at Acts 4:31. What caused this? It was the presence of God being worshipped by His people. That is a powerful combination.

To pray like Isaiah, we must have a **high view of God**. When you pray, never forget the one to whom you are praying. It is true that He is a warm, loving, gracious Father. But that does not mean He has ceased to be God.

The reverence with which we come before God is not primarily measured by our words but by our hearts.

Never allow yourself to lose sight of who God is. Look to the Word and what it says about God. Look to the creation around you and see what a complex, creative master designer He is. Remember Him when you see a **sunset, a rainbow or when you see the budding of the trees or the daffodils blooming**. Remember Him when you hear the **geese flying overhead or when you see the humming bird darting about, then hovering perfectly still**. Think of Him as you notice the days getting longer and the breeze getting warmer. These are things that God does! As you pray, do so with a **High View of God**.

2. He prayed with a humble, repentant spirit

What happens when you have a high view of God? You get a proper view of self. That's what happened to Isaiah. One glance at the greatness of a holy God caused him to quickly realize how sinful he was. He was everything God was not. God was powerful, he was weak. God was pure, he was dirty. God was holy, he was sinful. **The contrast was stark!** Notice his response.

He confessed his sin and the sin of his nation.

Someone said there are three people living in each of us.

The person we think we are.

The person others think we are.

The person God knows we are.

When we find ourselves in the presence of God His light shines into the dark crevices of our minds, our hearts, and our bodies, revealing every thought, every deed, every sin. In His presence we are exposed, not to others but to ourselves. As he saw his own sin, Isaiah made three important declarations.

Woe is me - Expression of sorrow, grief, despair, hopelessness.

I am ruined - Means to be cut off (from land of living).

Unclean lips - Way of expressing his total sinfulness. Angelic creatures were praising the Lord with pure lips. He could not.

He also confessed **the sins of his nation** (5). His guilt was doubly felt because not only was he personally guilty, but his people were guilty. We could learn something from Isaiah. We are in trouble with the Lord not only because of personal sin, but because of national sins. Need to confess both.

Isaiah found himself crying out to God not only for himself but for his people. The great need of our time is for serious intercession. We need men and women who will stand in the gap in prayer for this nation. Don't give up on this nation. Pray . . . then pray some more. Not for prosperity or greatness but for a mighty movement of God to sweep through our land. **Our greatest need is not for more jobs, more money, more power. Our greatest need is for more of God.** We don't need for America to be prosperous, but to be holy. That starts not with extolling our greatness but confessing our sinfulness. I love what is happening at Asbury.

He experienced the forgiveness of God (6-7)

This is one of the most beautiful pictures of forgiveness in the Bible. We see Isaiah writhing in despair over his sin, when one of the angels came toward him with a red-hot burning coal. **That got his attention.** Very gently he touches it to Isaiah's lips in a symbolic gesture & declares his forgiveness.

The action was symbolic. Fire points to judgment. Thankfully, Jesus took our judgment for us. The touching of the coal to the lips reminds us that each of us must experience the personal touch of Jesus in order to be forgiven.

The Message - You have been touched, your iniquity taken away, sins forgiven. There may be no more comforting message than this. You are forgiven. The sins that once threatened to drag you to Hell have been lifted from your life and have no more power over you.

A man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust. The tiny mouse had a serious problem on his hands. At any moment he could be swallowed alive. Obviously, the mouse needed to come up with a brilliant plan.

This terrified mouse quickly began covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem.

The solution, however, came from outside. The man took pity on the little mouse and removed him from the cage. No matter how hard we try to cover or deny our sinful nature, it's fool's work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover. **Were it not for the saving grace of the master's hand, sin would eat us alive and bury us in eternal judgment.**

3. He prayed with a surrendered will (8)

Now, watch what happened next. Isaiah has seen God in all His glory. He has confessed his sin and experienced the sweet forgiveness found in God's mercy and grace. But God is not finished with him. There is more that God wants from Isaiah. He wants a surrendered will. And do you know how you demonstrate that you have a surrendered will? Obedience to the call of God for service. That is only sure sign that your will is surrendered to God.

Answer His call. So, God asks . . .

Whom shall I send and who will go for us?

This seems like an odd question. It's just God and Isaiah, yet God offers this general question, as if there were others who might answer the call. There were no others. God wanted Isaiah to take some initiative, to volunteer, to step up. Isaiah responds. People who are truly surrendered to the will of God are ready to respond.

I can almost hear Isaiah responding, *oh, you need someone to go? I'm here, I'll do it. I'll go.* Pick me, Send me, Use me. Isaiah was surrendering his will to the will of God. **To use the phrase we learned from Bethany Davis, he *put his yes on the table.***

God so loved the world, and He wants us to love the world, as well. His love led Him to serious action. Our love should do the same. We are called to serve not to sit. Praying like Isaiah means praying with a surrendered will.

On September 2, 1945 at 9:04 a.m. a representative of the Emperor of Japan signed his name to a document declaring Japan's unconditional surrender to the allied powers. That act of unconditional surrender not only ended WW II but laid the foundation for the rebuilding of the nation of Japan.

In the decades that followed, Japan became one of the most productive, peaceful, and prosperous nations in the world. It started with an unconditional surrender. That makes a great illustration but if I leave it with that, then I've left you with a distorted picture. I don't want to leave you with the impression that unconditional surrender to God always leads to deliverance or victory. **Sometimes it leads to suffering and death.**

Bill Wallace was a medical missionary who surrendered his life to doing the will of God. He arrived in China during a time of great political unrest. He stayed through multiple crises including the invasion by the Japanese, the years of WWII, and the takeover by the communists.

He was arrested by the Communists on December 19, 1950 and accused of being a spy. In the weeks that followed he was tortured, mistreated, and abused. He died Feb. 10, 1951. He was completely surrendered to the will of God, and it costs him his life.

Surrender to the will of God is not a means to an easy life, a prosperous life, and happy life. It is the pathway to an obedient life, a fulfilled life and a life that will be rewarded for all eternity in Heaven. A surrendered life is a life that is cradled in the hands of a gracious God who will see it through in this life and in the next.

I want to pray like Isaiah.

I want to pray with a have a high view of God.

I want to pray for a humble, repentant spirit.

I want to pray with a surrendered will.