

Isaiah 6:1-8

Holiness Over Happiness

Summary: God desires to stir up a generation of radical disciple-makers in this wicked and perverse generation. The man and woman that God uses are called out of the allure of this world and are separated for God's purposes for God's plans.

I. Welcome-

Good morning, my name is Matt Mozeleski. I'm Associate Pastor here at Calvary Chapel Fredericksburg. It's a joy to be here this morning. My wife and I once completed a congregation of 8 to 10 people that met in the double tree hotel that was founding of what would be called Calvary Chapel DC Metro. God added to his church, he combined two churches and has continued to multiply. It's the promise of John 15 and we just stand in awe of His goodness.

I want to encourage you to open your bibles to Isaiah chapter 6 this morning. The title of this morning's message is "Holy Over Happy".

- A. Contamination: The early bird doesn't always get the worm. It was the wee early morning hours, only a stone's throw from here, on the Wed before this past Thanksgiving when a few hundred unsuspecting holiday travelers that lesson the hard way. Little did they know that the tanker truck that delivered gas to the Shell station in Ruther's Glenn, accidentally pumped diesel fuel into the 87-octane tank on his first run of the morning. Some made it out of the parking lot, even making it varying distances up & down 95 before their vehicles turned off. Repairs were reported between \$500 and \$1000 for the few hundred confounded commuters. Great day to own a towing business in Ruther's Glenn.
- B. God's Call to Holiness: And there are many in our culture and many in the church that don't realize that they have been contaminating their heart, mind, and souls with the wrong type of fuel. They've been consuming contaminants that they thought would be life giving but instead are they are leaving them stalled out and broken down. We're at a crisis in our nation and I even dare say in the church of this generation. We are fueling ourselves with everything, but what will get us from point A to B and we don't even recognize it.
- C. God desires to stir up a generation of radical disciple makers in this wicked and perverse generation. The man and woman that God uses will be ones

called out of the sway of this world and willing to be separated for God's purposes for God's plans. God is calling all of us to purity, to holiness, to righteousness.

1. After an extensive call to separation and purity, the apostle Paul summarizes the call to separation by saying this in **2 Corinthians 7:1**, **"let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God."**
2. After a description of the second coming of Christ, John the Apostle exhorted God's people saying, **"And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."** **1 John 3:3** Purify as He is pure? Talk about an unrealistic expectation? What is John thinking? Jesus was perfect. John needs a checkup from the neck up if He thinks that I'm capable of that! No, no, he would just a few verses later say, if you say ` you are without sin, you are a liar. But we are a repenting people, a growing people, a people who seek to be pure. We don't get saved and become sinless but as we follow after Jesus, He will cause us to sin less.
3. That's the work of the gospel in our lives, that we would be redeemed and be a witness to the world. Paul said in **Philippians 2:15** **"that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life."**

Transition:

Here in Isaiah 6 we get a behind the scenes look the prophet's heavenly encounter and his subsequent response to seeing the Lord upon his throne. It brings about humility, repentance, conviction and boldness in Isaiah. And it's my hope that this passage would be do us a form of Spiritual fuel as we head into 2023.

II. Read Isaiah 6:1-7

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."

Transition:

There is so much information packed into these four short verses. We don't have time for an entire history lesson, but I think it's important to realize why do we find ourselves here in Isaiah 6. Why is God calling this man to a life of holiness and then launching him to be his mouthpiece to the nation of Judah? What has transpired that requires the message of judgement and hope?

Keep mind these few details:

A. Ground Zero- Background on Isaiah's Ministry

1. **Civil War:** Israel had endured a civil war. Solomon's son Rehoboam caused a sharp divide amongst the nation. Israel maintained the original moniker while the southern kingdom of Judah assumed the name of one of the tribes. The irony is that Israel means governed by God and after the split, the nation was anything but governed by God. The biblical record says of the kings of Israel during that period, "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord." So, here we sit at the outset of 2023 and perhaps feel like we live in a divided nation. Surrounded by political powers and even those in charge locally, regionally, and nationally that we would assess- "and they have done wickedly in the sight of the Lord." God has a message for us here in Isaiah.
2. **Uzziah, A Godly and Well-Loved Leader:** Secondly, Judah's King Uzziah was a good and Godly leader. Not perfect but a great king in most regards. He died of leprosy brought on because in his exuberance he offered sacrifices as though he was a priest of the Lord. He neglected the scriptures and, in his pride, tried doing something good but not as God prescribed. But scripture by in large remembers him as a faithful man. 2 Chronicles 26 tells us, "And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper." He honored his father and his mother; he took the baton of faith and he ran the race that God set before him. Later in that same chapter many paragraphs were written regarding his accomplishments. we are told that he built up and fortified the kingdom. He was a brilliant military leader, that won several meaningful battles, shoring up the nation's viability. He was loved by the people.

3. **Religious but Lukewarm Nation.** Though the nation of Judah had Godly leadership and was religious in its practice, it was far from God. If we think about it in our context- the people were very religious, but their hearts were far from God. Church attendance may have been high. Rites and ceremonies may have been observed but obedience to God in practice... Let's just say, God would use Isaiah to take them behind the woodshed and share of God's judgment, but he also was the prophet of HOPE! And if there is one thing that I hope you take away from this sermon today is that we serve a God of holiness and righteousness, but he is a God who brings us HOPE. Isaiah brought the most clear and direct prophetic words about the coming Messiah of any of the OT writers. We just

Transition:

That's the "why" of this passage. Now we know why God called Isaiah to boldly bring a message of truth, judgement, and of hope. But now we pivot to give consideration to the "what of this passage." What is happening here in our text.

The first and most significant observation of this entire chapter is the holiness of God. And as we consider this amazing scene that Isaiah describes I hope that we will be at least in part be able to understand it even as they may have understood it in that generation:

B. In the Throne Room- The Holiness of God.

1. **Holy- Sovereign and Exalted:** Notice in verse 1 it says: that "king Uzziah died but the Lord is sitting upon a throne." Not a chair, not a stool, a throne. The king of Judah was laid low but the King of the universe was raised high. That's as much the case now, as it as been at any point in human history. Every king will be laid low but God is still lofty and exalted. Whether it's related to your life circumstances at the present moment, whether it's related to the chapter break of the New Year, there is no greater comfort in the world than to know that God is sovereign and He is seated on his throne. Whether it's the common cold or cancer, God is on His throne. He is not slouching nor is he pacing. He is seated in a place of authority internationally, nationally, regionally, and especially personally. Because when you see God as sovereign, when you realize that God is working all things together for the good" (His good). Then we can like Dietrich Bonhoeffer say, "**No evil can befall us; whatever men may do to us, they cannot but serve the God who is secretly revealed as love and rules the world and our lives.**"
2. **Holy- Royal & Magnificent:** Notice that verse 1 also makes mention of the garments of God. Isaiah records, "his train filled the temple." Figure of speech or not, the train of God is being described as exceedingly long.

- a. Trains are a sign of splendor, a symbol of magnificence and grandeur. In some spheres it signifies the level of importance, or in aristocracies it demonstrates the degree of royalty. In a kingdom, the longer the train, the more elevated one's position was as related to the crown.
 - i. We lost the queen of England in 2022. Does anyone remember what happened on July 2nd, 1953? NO?!?! Personally, my dad was still in diapers, so I won't pretend to have watched it on tv? Or did you listen to it on the radio back then? You're not supposed to alienate your audience when you speak.... Back to my point, it was the coronation of Queen Elizabeth the second. Here train went down the halls of West Minster Abby and out the back door. Her train was 20 yards long and required 12 assistants to navigate it through the corridors. Are you kidding me? Who does she think she is- The Queen of... Right!
 - b. Exactly! What does the word of God say about God's splendor. Here in Isaiah's vision, he can't even see the beginning or the end of the thing. It wasn't just doubled up once or twice. It was back and forth back and forth. The whole temple is swallowed up in that symbol of His majesty and magnificence. That's an important visual to comprehend in this passage.
3. **Holy- Perfect & Adored:**
- a. Notice the mention of the Seraphim in verse 2. They have six wings. Two to shield their face, two to fly, and two to cover their feet. Fish were given gills and scales to navigate their environment. Birds were given beaks and feathers to navigate theirs. Likewise, God has created the seraphim with the ability to live and function in their heavenly environment in the presence of God. You may recall that The LORD said to Moses, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). Apparently, the same is true even for angels, so the seraphim cover their faces.
 - b. Notice in verse 3 that the Seraphim were exclaiming loudly HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. Evidently, we will have new, supernaturally capable eardrums because the sound of this singing was the shaking of the door posts in verse 4.
 - i. As in any culture the Jews had their various writing techniques and figures of speech. The way to bring emphasis to a subject was to add a repetitive modifier or adjective. It would have been one thing to say God was HOLY or even HOLY, but it was something altogether different to say, he is HOLY, HOLY, HOLY.

- ii. It's important not to think of God in terms of human relationships. I love my mom but despite popular belief she is not perfect. I love my wife, more wonderful & beautiful every passing day but I've disappointed her. But when we think of God, we can't think about human relationships because they will disappoint. Think AWESOME. Think DIFFERENT. NOT LIKE US.

1. He's not my homeboy, he's not a white-haired old man that winks at us like Santa Claus. He's not the big man upstairs. He an ineffable glory who dwells in unapproachable light. He's an all-consuming fire. No one can see God and live. That's who God is.

- 2. I want to take a moment just to observe that the seraphim proclaimed HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. They didn't exclaim, love, love, love. Joy, joy, joy. Happy, happy, happy. A 2019 survey found that 73% of Americans more than any other culture want their kids to be happy, their work places to be happy, their neighborhoods to be happy rather than wanting them to be HOLY. What we are finding is that people of all ages are less happy, and the opposite is true we are becoming more depressed by nearly every standard. Our happiness is a personal black hole that will never be satisfied until we are anchored in Christ or in his eternal presence.

C. Unraveled- Our Reaction to Holiness (V4-7)

- 1. Perspective & Repentance: Notice the progression of Isaiah's experience. First awestruck by the seraphim now he is unraveled as he encounters the Lord in V5. Again, it reads, "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!"
 - a. It was just a few weeks ago that we had to go before a judge as a Character witness for two individuals and it happened to be on back-to-back days. As we stood before the judge, he asked the individual if they would like to add anything. That individual froze. The judge's eyes bounced to me. I paused to gather my thoughts. My wife interpreted that as me being frozen as well. She summoned up her courage and she was able to get out one maybe two sentences before her voice cracked and the tears started to well up in her eyes. Why that

reaction? Because there was a sense of smallness and powerlessness. Here Isaiah saw the Lord and he is undone.

- b. Verse 7, depending on your version says, "I am undone." Or perhaps if you are reading from the ESV, it says, "I'm lost." The original language seems to indicate that it means "to be brought to silence or to be undone, utterly". His gut reaction is to comprehend his own filthiness, and the filthiness of his own people, those he's religiously and nationally affiliated.
- c. And there's a divine transaction that is being intimated here and it's one of repentance. It's so sweet and it's understated but look at verse 7 where it says, "your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for". This moment is captured so that we would understand this holy moment produces atonement. It's a moment of repentance.
- d. Can we camp here for just a minute? After all this is the crescendo of this passage. Not his call to be a prophet but the call to holiness and repentance. This can be confusing and controversial topic in the church today.
 - i. We are called to be a repenting people. I must repent, you must repent. What does repentance mean? In the New Testament, it's the word *Metanoia*. *Meta* (change) *Noia* (Mind) At first glance it would seem to simply mean to change your thinking. But in New Testament thought the idea could be better described as bringing your thoughts in agreement with God. We are to have agreement with God as it relates to my life.
 1. What does God say about that sin? I'm to agree with what He thinks and have a change of mind.
 2. What does God say about that lie? What does God say about that unkindness? What does God have to say about those impure thoughts? I need to come into agreement with God and change my mind. With that word *metanoia* comes the idea of a 180-degree turn. I was going my way; I need to go God's way.
 3. Acts 26:20 "I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds." The full biblical definition of repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action
 4. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 7:8-9 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. ⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved,

but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

3. After he wrote this follow up letter because he was concerned that he was too hard on them. But he realizes that it was worth it because it led them to repent and follow Jesus.
- c. Matt, I just think you don't know Jesus nor the bible the way I do. My sweet Jesus wouldn't demand change the way you are. Just a reminder that the idea of repentance is the message of the NT. Repentance is the funnel in which God's grace & mercy flow. God wants to reign down grace mercy and forgiveness but what is holding that back is repentance.
 - i. Repent was the first word of John the Baptist's gospel (Matthew 3:1-2). This is before Jesus began His ministry.
 - ii. Repent was the first word of Jesus' gospel (Matthew 4:14 and Mark 1:14-15). When Jesus begins His ministry.
 - iii. Repent was the first word in the preaching ministry of the twelve disciples (Mark 6:12). That's when Jesus sent his disciples out on their own.
 - iv. Repent was the first word in the preaching instructions Jesus gave to His disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24:46-47). This after Jesus was resurrected. It was done during the life of Jesus and now it's being commanded after his death.
 - v. Repent was the first word of exhortation in the first Christian sermon (Acts 2:38). Acts 3:19 its seen again.
 - vi. Repent was the first word in the mouth of the Apostle Paul through his ministry (Acts 26:19-20).
2. Call to Action: The importance of what takes place in this heavenly scene is a Holy Conviction to live for the Lord. Verse 8 is one of the most famous in the Old Testament. "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." A call to be bold to live in God's truth. An awareness of the eternal nature of everything on this earth. God used Isaiah in a specific time and a specific place. As you read verses 9 through 13 he was called to speak to a people who wouldn't listen until the circumstances of ruin drove people away.
 - a. God's people were asleep at the wheel and Isaiah was being called to deliver a message of judgment and hope.
 - b. earlier this week a man was arrested in Germany for falling asleep behind the wheel in his new Tesla. Here's the catch, his car was

involved in a 15-minute police chase while the man slept in the front seat. He had rigged the steering wheel to make the car think his hand was on the steering wheel, then he laid his seat back and took a snooze.

- i. In the days of Isaiah, the children of Israel had been operating on autopilot. Kicked back, asleep at the wheel, satisfied with religious trappings. But Isaiah, with his holy convictions, shook the nation with a holy discontentment.
 - ii. Our country is asleep at the wheel. So many who name the name of Christ are content with religious rites and ceremonies. The citizens are comfortable allowing the government and the culture take th place of God and supreme influence in their lives.
 - iii. I think of former NFL quarterback and ESPN analyst, Dan Orlovsky who spontaneously offered the “prayer heard around the world” this past January as he paused in the middle of an ESPN broadcast to offer a bold prayer to almighty God on behalf of a player who collapsed in the middle of a football match and was listed in critical condition.
- c. And here’s why the subject of repentance can be such a controversial and confusing topic in the church because what happens when someone with pronounced sin comes into our midst. What happens when become aware of someone who is being overtaken by a sin. Perhaps you had perceived that they were walking closely with the Lord but then you notice a sinful pattern and they seem to be completely unaware.
- d. My question is will you simply sit back in judgement or are you willing to come along side? Are you willing to engage, pray, walk through and reason with them. Jesus always exposed the pharisee for their tendency to discard the undesirables in society rather than to reach out to them. Does God lower the standards for them- NO! But how many of you would be sitting here today if you were expected to be perfect?
- i. Life happens, priorities & disciplines shift often times unknowingly in our life. But Satan doesn’t show up dressed up in a cape, with horns and a pitch fork. He shows up with discouragements and distractions that look like everything that we’ve ever hoped or wished for.
 - ii. Being tempted isn’t a sin. It’s a sin when we give into the temptation and act upon it. Discipline is seeing the temptation, agree with God that you need to flee from the temptation and acting accordingly. Repentance is seeing realizing that you

crossed the line, intentionally or unintentionally, agreeing with God that it was wrong and making the corrective moves to restore your relationship with The Lord on a vertical and restoring things here on earth on the horizontal. How often does this need to happen? Continually. Daily. Moment by moment.

Conclusion:

Jesus didn't come to earth because it was full of "good people" that simply needed a life coach. He came because it was and is full of sinners in need of a savior." Greg Laurie said, "he didn't come to make bad people good, he came to make dead people live." May we stay close to God's heart by obeying his word, repenting continually, so that we may be able to discern his perfect will and live boldly for him in these last days!



Discussion and Application Questions

Isaiah 6:1-8 Holiness Over Happiness

Summary: God desires to stir up a generation of radical disciple-makers in this wicked and perverse generation. The man and woman that God uses are called out of the allure of this world and are separated for God's purposes for God's plans.

1. The body has filters to minimize and expel harmful substances from our bodies. We put filters in important machinery to screen out harmful contaminants. What filters has God given us to filter sin and contaminants from our lives and from the church body? List a handful of examples from scripture.
2. What does was the imagery of Isaiah 6:1-8 supposed to produce in the reader? What other verses in scripture produce that same response?
3. Discuss Isaiah's response to this encounter. Describe a recent encounter with the Lord that has produced an immediate sense of direction.
4. Having read the text (Isaiah 6:1-8) and/or listened to the sermon, what point(s) ministered to you the most? Could you explain this text to a seventh grade student?
5. Do you have a loved one that would benefit from a discussion about this passage? Privately consider how to pray for them and if the Lord leads, make that a point of prayer for your small group.