

ESF, Lord's Day service message
5/17/2015

The Vision of the Holy God

Isaiah 6:1-8

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “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.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

In 1963, shocking news was sent out across the world: “The President is dead”. It was unbelievable. John F. Kennedy, a young, vibrant and dynamic leader of both America and the world, was cut down by an assassin's bullet. America was plunged into grief. People flocked into churches in great numbers. Ministers changed their sermon texts and preached messages of healing and hope to Americans.

About 700 B.C., a similar announcement was made, “The king is dead.” King Uzziah, the eleventh King of Judah, had died. Crowned at the age of 16, he had reigned 52 years. Despite his failings, he was a great king for the nation Israel.

The heart of the prophet Isaiah, was broken. Uzziah was not only his king, he was also his friend. In his heartbreak, Isaiah made his way to the Temple to worship and to seek comfort and hope. And God gave him comfort and hope.

In today’s word God, is showing us how we can gain comfort and hope in troubled times.

Turn your eyes upward

King Uzziah had been one of the best kings in the history of Israel. During the king’s reign, the land had enjoyed peace and prosperity. But there had always been hostile enemies around the country. The enemies were constantly seeking opportunities to attack Israel. The death of Uzziah meant the death of the security of the nation. Isaiah had closely worked with the king for the nation. He was saddened and depressed by the king’s death.

But God brought Isaiah comfort and hope. How? By revealing His glorious presence to Isaiah, God did that. Isaiah, in the midst of troublesome time, said, “I saw the Lord!”

His earthly troubles made him turn his eyes upward. When he turned his eyes from earthly troubles to God, he was able to see the majesty, glory, and power of God. Isaiah was able to see God who was still reigning over the entire earth and universe. *I saw the Lord seated on a throne,*

high and exalted, ... Above him were seraphs, And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

When he saw the glory and holiness of the almighty God, the troubles in his life became small. And he felt peace and security.

When God wants to encourage us, He opens our eyes to see His glorious presence. When Moses was living in the desert without any hope for his future, God appeared to him to give him new hope. The first thing God did for Moses was appearing to Moses in a burning bush. The bush was on fire but it was not burning down. The scene was strange and mysterious. It attracted Moses' attention. When Moses approached the burning bush to find out what was going on, God called Moses by his name and spoke to him. Moses encountered God's holy presence. Through His presence, God gave Moses a new hope and purpose (Exodus 3:1-22).

In A.D. 95, Roman emperor Domitian exiled the Apostle John to the island of Patmos. That Island is completely isolated from the mainland. It is rocky and almost treeless. John was very old at that time. In such a situation, John was unable to find any hope for himself and for the churches. Then the Lord opened his eyes and showed him His glorious presence (Rev 1:9-20). With His glorious presence the Lord revived John's hope again.

God still uses the same way to bring hope to us in troubled times. God uses troubled situations to makes us turn our eyes to Him. When we have no place to turn, when we are squeezed by troubles from every side, we come to seek God's supernatural help. In hopeless times, we turn our eyes upward. And the Spirit of God opens our eyes to see God's glorious presence. As soon as we see God's glorious presence, our great troubles become small.

Psalm 123:2 says, *As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy.*

So when you feel hopeless because of great troubles, do what Isaiah did. Turn your eyes upward. Look unto God! See Him on His holy throne. See His majesty, His power, His splendor, His glory, His holiness. In God's glorious presence, your troubles become small like dust and you will see hope again.

Receive God's renewing grace

Isaiah thought that the troubles were coming because the good king had died and the nation was facing crisis. He thought that his troubles at that time were coming from circumstances.

Like Isaiah, we may think that troubles in our lives come from circumstances. We tend to think the cause of the troubles is from the outside: political corruption, crimes, bad economy, betrayal of friends, social injustice, our spouse, our children, etc. So we think that to overcome the troubles in our lives, we have to solve those outside troubles first.

But when God brings solutions to our troubles, He does not solve the outside problems first. Instead, God solves problems within us.

God helped Isaiah to see himself first and to receive God's renewing grace for himself: *"Woe to me!" I cried. "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." Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, ...With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."*

Here, God helped Isaiah to look within himself first. God showed Isaiah how sinful he was. When Isaiah confessed his sins, God gracefully cleansed his sins. God renewed his spirit. Through that, God brought hope to his life.

That was what the Lord did to Peter. When Peter failed in fishing and was deeply discouraged, Jesus came to encourage Peter. Jesus helped him catch lots of fish. But the miracle itself was not the main point. Through that miracle, Jesus opened Peter's eyes to see that he was a sinner: *when Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* From the moment of that confession, Jesus turned his life around to live in God's grace (Luke 5:1-11).

This is how God brings hope into our lives. When we see problems from the outside and try to find solutions from the outside, God gives us spiritual renewal first. When we are discouraged by troublesome situations, God encourages us to change ourselves first.

So when Paul prayed for believers who were living in difficult times in Ephesus, he prayed for the strength of their inner beings: Ephesians. 3:16-17

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

An independent government study was undertaken in the U.S. and found that the success rate of detox centers in getting people off drugs permanently (tested after 7 years) was just 2 - 9%. The more intensive rehabilitation centers were not much better - just 9 - 11%. But this independent government study found that "TEEN CHALLENGE" (an organization that is thoroughly Christian - founded by David Wilkerson in New York - you may remember the story "The Cross and the

Switchblade") had a success rate documented as being 86%. When the government researchers were asked what was the difference, they replied (in their words) that the ONLY thing they could put Teen Challenge's success down to was "THE JESUS FACTOR" (the government's own words!). Teen Challenge is making a difference because this is not a program based upon the wisdom of men, but on the power of God to transform a life. They're not preaching rehabilitation; they're preaching RADICAL REGENERATION. And they're not prescribing substitute drugs; they're prescribing a relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ!

If you want to solve the problems in your life, stop struggling with the problems. Open your heart to God and try to see yourself through God's holy eyes. Seek God's spiritual renewal for yourself. Receive the power of God's Spirit for your inner being. And God will enable you to overcome all your problems through the inner power.

Hear God's calling

When the great king Uzziah died, and troubles were coming from every side, Isaiah thought that there was nothing he could do to bring hope to his country.

At that time, Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord. *Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?*

Why did God speak this word to Isaiah? By this word God was saying Isaiah that there was still something to do. God was saying him that there were still many wonderful opportunities for the future. God was saying him that God wanted to use Isaiah to bring hope to the hopeless world. God was saying him that He had a wonderful plan even in such a hopeless situation. God was saying him that no matter how hopeless the situation was, God still could use believers to bring hope. God was saying him that He needed people who could hear God's calling for

hope.

When Isaiah heard such a calling from God, he responded to God: "*Here am I. Send me!*" His worry was gone. His downcast spirit was lifted. His hopeless feeling was gone. He became enthusiastic to step up for God's calling.

When there is nothing we can do about our troubles, God still has wonderful plans for our lives. God sees not only one place or several places, but every corner of the world. And in God's concern, there are endless opportunities in spite of the many troubles around us.

One day Henry Ford was driving in the Michigan countryside when he came upon a man whose car had broken down. The guy was bent under the hood trying to figure out what was wrong. Mr. Ford stopped and asked if he could take a look. In a few minutes, he had the car running. The grateful owner said, "I'm amazed at your ability; you fixed my car so easily." Ford replied, "I ought to be able to fix it, because I'm the one who designed it."

The same is true with God. He designed us, and He can fix whatever is wrong with us.

God calls every one of us for His worldwide opportunities. He calls you to fulfill His promise of salvation for the whole world. He is calling you for the mission. If you respond by saying "*Here am I, send me*" to the call, God will empower you with His Spirit. He will open the doors to great opportunities for you.