

Nov 15 2020

Isaiah 6:1-8

This morning's reading is very short but it is packed with at least three levels that I can see. You may be able to envision more. This is the call or recommissioning of Isaiah, the call of Judea and Israel and most importantly the call of you and I.

Let's begin in the text with the call of Isaiah. Some scholars have said that it is not a calling but a recommissioning of Isaiah. He was called long before these events happened. Isaiah's understanding of his call takes on a new meaning with the death of King Uzziah. Isaiah's confession and realization of his current circumstances directs his role. In verse 5, Isaiah confesses that he lives among a people of unclean lips. That Judea and its leaders have strayed from their God. Isaiah has watched this happen. This is why he feels so guilty by association. He knows there needs to be a change of heart among the people of Judea. They need to return to their God.

The scene is set when Isaiah is taken into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies in the temple. Verse one tells us that Isaiah says that he saw the Lord. Amongst the Hebrews it is very well understood that to see God is to die. We learn this from Exodus 33:20. Isaiah is struck very hard by his inadequacy and unworthiness while in the presence of God. His ego is shrinking very quickly. He knows that he is in the presence of God because of the praises of the Heavenly Council. The Seraphim are singing, Holy, Holy, Holy as they fly around the Throne of God. To be

Holy means to be set apart from what is sinful and unclean. Where Isaiah is at is not just Holy, but, Holy, Holy, Holy. This all takes place in the temple in the Holy of Holies. God's Throne on earth.

Isaiah is aware that he is standing in the presence of God and God's Heavenly Council. This is the same place where the prophet Micha saw the Lord sitting on His throne. In the midst of his surroundings Isaiah seems to be very calm. He soon learns that God is not out to punish him but rather to forgive him. The Seraphim cleanse him with a fiery coal from the altar and make him pure.

Isaiah's recommissioning does not come as a command from God. God is having a conversation with His Heavenly Council and asks, "Who will we send?" Isaiah, who is not part of this conversation, overhears the question and volunteers himself. He was not asked directly and neither was his response rejected. Isaiah must have been overcome with gratitude at having been cleansed and allowed to be in the presence of God and to live.

Isaiah pleads for the forgiveness of Judea and it is granted. This is an interesting concept of how one person can ask God for forgiveness for a whole nation. God listens to Isaiah's plea. God's forgiveness knows no earthly bounds. It raises the question, do we pray enough for our nation, our leaders and politicians? Isaiah may have gained God's forgiveness for Judea, but that still does not stop the advancing Assyrian army. God may have forgiven Judea for their collective sins, but He is not saving them from the Assyrians. God will be with Judea and journey with them through the sieges and battles. Judea's collective faith is being tested.

For you and I, Isaiah reminds us that we are all called to serve God in various ways. Sometimes our understanding of our call can fluctuate. Do we ever think, how our children are called? Age is not a barrier to God when He calls someone. Paul reminded Timothy of that. Most of the disciples were only young teens themselves. Ask your children if they feel called and how?

Isaiah reminds us that it is God who makes us pure and forgives our sin. It is a grace from God. There is nothing we can do to earn it, but asking for it is the most important step. We do not need to go to the physical temple or church for forgiveness. Unless you feel you need to and it would be nice to see you. Remember that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit. God is in you and His Throne is your heart. It is there that we encounter God when we pray from our hearts and ask forgiveness from our hearts. We need to approach Him from our hearts whenever we talk or deal with Him. God is the one who makes us worthy to carry out the task He has set before us.

Isaiah also reminds us that we are called to various ministries in the Body of Christ. Some are called to be council members, music ministers, Sunday school teachers, parish administrators, treasurers and pastors and those who support them. As Christians we are to encourage and support one another in their calls. There is so much in these eight lines and we have only scratched the surface.

In these times if you are feeling anxious or a little blue, reach out to someone, either by e-mail or phone. Sometimes hearing another human voice and chewing the fat can be healing. God bless, stay strong and healthy, Pastor D