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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
June 15, 2014
Trinity Sunday

Scripture Lessons: 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Matthew 28:18-20
Hymns: 239; 246; 245; 644

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 6:1-7

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.”

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, true God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dear fellow Redeemed.

INTRO: Worshiping the one true God.

As elementary as this may seem to us there is a lot of confusion about worshiping the one true God. Some people want to think that all the gods of this world are simply different representations of the one true God. You know how we use different names for God. We talk about Jehovah, and Lord, and Savior, and Messiah, and Immanuel. Both the Old and New Testaments teach us that we do in fact worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of David and the prophets. From this assertion people in the world conclude that anyone and everyone who makes this claim to worship the God of Abraham does, that they just have a different name for God, a different word that represents God in their culture. And if we accept their claim to be worshiping the true God then we should acknowledge the possibility that others may be doing so also.

In the end society agrees that we should therefore have public prayer, but in a form that would not be offensive to anyone present. That of course does not take into account that the Lord is present, and that whenever prayer is made that excludes His Son, He finds that most offensive.

So it is that mankind, including our society which is characterized as a Christian society, doesn't have a clue about worshiping God, that is the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (**John 17:3**). The natural man doesn't comprehend the nature or the glory of God. That comes to us only by the revelation of God. He presents Himself to us that we might truly know Him, --

THEME: Comprehending the Glory of the One True God.

The revelation of God's glory that is before us in our text was a vision sent to the prophet Isaiah. It was without doubt one of the most powerful experiences in Isaiah's life. In this vision Isaiah saw God and –

I. The Glory of His Power.

It is so important, especially when reading a section of Scripture that is familiar to us, that we don't jump too far ahead in our minds and miss a truth which God would communicate to us. In this revelation recorded for us by inspiration God reveals Himself so that not only Isaiah, but all who read his prophecy might have a better understanding of who God is.

Isaiah 6:1 "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."

Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a throne. Those are the words that we can't just let pass by, or go in one ear and out the other. There is one Lord over all the earth. God almighty who made the heavens and the earth is now and forever the power who controls the universe. Now we should acknowledge this first that as the Almighty He not only created all things, but it is by His power that all things continue to exist, that the world, and the solar system, and the universe continue to operate as they have been ordered by the King!

This the world denies. It is denied by all who buy into the lame theory of evolution as the origin of the universe. It is no more possible for the universe to continue to operate perfectly as it has, all on its own, as it is possible for someone to make a perpetual motion machine. It is by the power of His Word, by His command, that the earth, and the solar system, and the universe all continue, just as it was His power in His Word that called all into being.

All this is the big picture. Let's get down to your life. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne Isaiah saw the majesty of God! Even earthly royalty is addressed as "Your Highness" or "Your Majesty." It is an acknowledgment, one that we Americans are not so ready to acknowledge, that this person is in possession of greater power, honor, and glory than the one being presented before the ruler of that land. We do understand to a point that we should honor the President of the United States, and it doesn't matter if we agree with his politics. So why do we have such difficulty understanding that God is the Divine Potentate?! In earthly terms that would be simply stated that the King gets to

make the rules for the land and all its citizens. We are the people of God. We are His citizens. We honor Him as the King who is high and lifted up, whose glory fills the world. All that means nothing if we don't understand the simple principle that what God says goes, and that means for you and me in our lives. When we think, or talk, or behave otherwise, that is sin. That is rebellion against the Almighty King! Isaiah was clearly taught that this is a big deal when he observed --

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II. The Glory of the LORD's Holiness.

Our text continues with an amazing aspect of this vision as Isaiah saw the angels and their attitude to the LORD. You see, even the angels humbled themselves before the Lord. In humble modesty they covered their faces so as not to presumptuously look upon the majesty of God.

Isaiah 6:2-4 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.

As the angels poured out their praises to the LORD we are reminded that the LORD is the Triune God. Not only is God presented in Scripture only in the plural form of the word “God” whenever it appears in relation to the LORD, but we have many references to God in triplet. It is not merely emphasizing the extent of God's holiness, for holy is holy, and one isn't made holier by repetition. It is an acknowledgment that God the Father is holy. God the Son is holy, and God the Holy Spirit is holy!

We don't know true holiness in all its glory. Even the glory of the holiness of an angel is more than a man can bear. The glory of God's holiness is like a blinding light. God's glory is as a consuming fire.

The impact that this vision made on Isaiah was overwhelming.

Isaiah 6:5 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.”

“Woe is me” – a simple acknowledgement of deep trouble bordering on despair! “Undone” – an expression of total loss. Isaiah had no defense. Isaiah had nothing, no foundation or basis of righteousness by which he might stand before the LORD! Why? Isaiah went no further than the sins of his own lips. He had failed to glorify the LORD in all he had said and done, even though Isaiah is among the mightiest of the prophets of God!

And then there was guilt by association. And yes, there is guilt by association. It is even written into our society’s legal code. Being with a person who commits a crime makes one an accomplice. You can also be counted as “an accomplice before the fact,” not even being present when bad things were going down, but when they were being planned or talked about. You can easily be counted as “an accomplice after the fact” by offering shelter or holding back evidence that might condemn another. **Don’t think for a moment that all the sin of America hasn’t contaminated you!** All too often we simply accept the sins of others. Indeed there is great pressure in our society to do so. God is blasphemed, and we are known to be very calm about it. You wouldn’t be so calm if someone talked about your mother or father so crudely or disparagingly, but God, we hardly raise an eyebrow. We also are “undone” because we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. We are in danger of hellfire!

God would be just and right if that was the point of His revelation. He could have presented Himself to us and the world simply to let us know that He has every right, even a legal obligation to condemn us all for the sin, the many sins, the greatness of our sins. He could have just let it go at that. But the LORD didn’t do that. He revealed Himself to Isaiah and also to us that He might reveal –

III. The Glory of His Grace.

Isaiah 6:6 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.”

The most wondrous and glorious aspect of this revelation of God to Isaiah is found in this last verse of our text. God did NOT reveal Himself to us that He might condemn us and destroy us. He revealed Himself to us that we might know Him as our Savior. **“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”** (John 3:17).

He revealed Himself to us that we might trust in Him and find in Him our deliverance from sin and the death that it brings. He revealed Himself to us that we might observe the glory of His **saving** power!

The symbolism contained in this verse of Isaiah’s vision is powerful. The angel of God came with a coal from off the altar in the temple. The angel touched Isaiah’s lips, and those unclean lips that condemned Isaiah were purified! Isaiah was made clean of sin and transgression, and delivered from death and condemnation. He could now stand boldly before the throne of God, justified and made pure.

The sacrifice that was made for us and our sin, that was presented to God as the atoning sacrifice for our sin was the death of God’s only begotten Son. That message is brought to us in the gospel, and it touches our lips and our hearts, and it purifies us from every sin. And this is what God desires for us and all mankind, that we should be made righteous and holy before Him by the saving grace He has revealed to us in sending His Son into the world.

Today we commune with God. We do this by hearing the Word. God touches our hearts. But today we commune with God also through the Sacrament of the Altar. This isn’t just a vision, or merely a symbol of God’s grace. This is God coming to us in Word and sacrament and taking from the heavenly altar and touching us, our lips, and telling us God’s own truth. A truth made real by the death and resurrection of His Son, **“Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged”** (v.6).

That is the revelation of the One and only true God that comes to you today. He comes to us in the glory of His Majesty, He comes to us on the glory of His Holiness, but most wondrous of all The LORD comes to us in the Glory of His Grace: and our iniquity is take away, and our sin is purged.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the salvation He has revealed in Himself, that we might know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent! (**John 17:3**).

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.