
Sunday 30th May – Trinity Sunday
Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8 & John 3:1-17

Isaiah 6:1-8

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. 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. And they were calling to one another:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

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

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

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!’

John 3:1-17

Jesus teaches Nicodemus

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.’

Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’

‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!’

Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, “You must be born

again.” The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.’

‘How can this be?’ Nicodemus asked.

‘You are Israel’s teacher,’ said Jesus, ‘and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.’

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Reflection

As I prepare this lectionary reflection I am facing a challenging personal crisis. After over 6 years of treatment for Parkinson’s disease, my diagnosis has proved to be incorrect and my medication ineffective. I await further information. I have particular difficulties with balance which makes any form of concentration difficult. As we look at the vision that Isaiah saw it is important that I live in the good of what I am about to say. What I ‘say’ to you, I ‘say’ to myself!

AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

“In the year King Uzziah died...” (v 1).

Uzziah was 16 when he became king of Judah and he reigned for 52 years. At the start of his reign he did what was pleasing in the Lord’s sight.

“The Lord gave him marvellous help and he became very powerful.” (2 Chronicles 26:15).

But, when he became powerful, he also became proud, was infected with leprosy and lost his way. It was time for a fresh vision...

THE VISION

In the same year that Uzziah died, Isaiah had a vision of the Lord. This is what he saw: *“I saw the Lord sitting on a throne – high, exalted – the train of his robes filled the Temple. Angel-seraphs hovered above him, each with six wings. With two wings*

they covered their faces, with two wings their feet, and with two they flew. And they called back and forth one to the other,

'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord. His bright glory fills the whole earth is filled with his glory.'

Their voices shook the Temple foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke." (v 1-4)

Let's consider Isaiah's reaction to this vision.

FACE DOWN (v 5)

Isaiah was overcome by what he saw. He cried out:

"It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King."

Isaiah did what others did in the Bible when they were in the presence of God. They were **face down** on the floor! For example, in Revelation 1:17 the Apostle John says: *"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead."*

HEART CLEANSED (v 6-7)

Isaiah's immediate reaction was an awareness of his sin and guilt. But a seraphim flew with a burning coal and touched Isaiah's lips, declaring him clean. *"Your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."* His **heart was cleansed!**

HAND UP (v 8)

Then God challenges Isaiah with the questions, *"Whom should I send? Who will go for us?"* Isaiah put his **hand up** and responded, *"Here I am. Send me."* His encounter with God resulted in a willingness to serve the Lord in new ways.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

Have you had an encounter with God? Do you want an encounter with God? Are you aware of sin and failure in your life? Do you know that you are forgiven? Is God calling you to serve him? Are you saying, "Yes" or "No"?

When we have an encounter with God, things happen!

Prayer: Lord, meet with us in a new way. Help us turn from our sin and failure and experience your unconditional forgiveness. Help us to hear and obey your call upon our lives. Amen.

~ Peter Sanderson