

Trinity Sunday

May 27, 2018

Pastor Hanneman

How would you react if God appeared before us right now? How would you feel if he wanted to speak to you personally? Would you be scared, excited, or at least nervous? Despite what we might think, the Bible shows us how we would react because the reaction has always been the same.

We would all hide in fear and cover ourselves. That is what happened when Adam and Eve was confronted by God after they fell into sin. It was how Moses reacted when he stood before the burning bush. It was how Peter, James, and John, responded on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was what the Shepherds did on that first Christmas Night, and we see it again in our lesson from Isaiah.

Why were these men scared to see God? These men are known for being heroes of faith who knew they didn't need to fear God, right? Well, they didn't know that. They thought instead that they should be afraid, why? They thought they should be afraid because of their sin.

When they saw the glory of God they realized in that instant how far away from "holy" they really were and how they could never achieve such holiness, which is the requirement for going to heaven. Why would God do that? We will see why in today's lesson.

Our God, who wants all people to be saved, has a method in saving us. It is a method filled with much patience and grace and love. He first needs to convict us of our sins. Then he comforts us with forgiveness. That's how he saves but we will see that he isn't finished with us just yet. Finally, he commissions us to go so more can be saved.

Our Triune God does this for us so that we can, like Isaiah, stand before our Triune God with confident joy.

The ministry of Isaiah spanned 45 years, from about 740 to 695 B.C. His service began during the reign of Uzziah and stretched across the reigns of "Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isa 1:1). Our lesson today gives us God's call of Isaiah. At the time that king Uzziah died, the nations of Israel to the north and Judah in the South were prosperous. Their armies were strong, they owned much land, their farming was great, and their national pride was high. However, their spiritual lives were lost. They had turned their backs on God and now life was going to change.

Because Israel and Judah put their trust in the surrounding nations instead of God, the surrounding nations were going to turn on them and break their treaties because they were much stronger. Israel and Judah were no match for these nations, especially since God wasn't going to fight for them. Isaiah was being called to spread this message of destruction to the people of Judah while other prophets preached to Israel.

Who would want that job? Who wants to be the bearer of bad news? How was God going to encourage and inspire this prophet to willingly go to work?

This is what God did: *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!"*

God appeared to Isaiah in all his glory. The sight was spectacular. God sitting on his throne with his angels surrounding him singing his praises constantly. Smoke filled the room and the robe God was wearing did the same. When the angels sang the room began to shake.

Now if God was hoping that Isaiah was going to be ready and willing to go after seeing this he would have been mistaken. Isaiah shook and became afraid. Why? Because he was a sinner standing before a holy God. Isaiah even admitted it by confessing his unworthiness in that he had unclean lips. We are not sure of what sin Isaiah was most troubled by, but we can all agree that the words we speak can cause some of the most damage in this world than many actions we can take.

Isaiah knew he didn't deserve to stand before God and live. He was convicted of his sins and saw his need for a Savior. But, God didn't let him wallow in his sins very long. Immediately he goes to work. He has one of the angels take a coal from the altar. Why the altar? For the Old Testament believer forgiveness came on the altar of burnt offerings when an innocent sacrifice took the place of the people by being punished for their sins as a burnt offering.

God took from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips, the very part where he felt his sins the most and forgave him. God comforted Isaiah with his forgiveness. Now Isaiah could stand before God. Realizing what God had done, Isaiah was willing to serve. All he needed was to be called and that is what the Lord did. He called Isaiah to do for the people of Israel what he had just done for Isaiah. Convict these people of their sins so they can repent. If they repent, to comfort them with God's forgiveness that will ultimately come through God's servant, Jesus Christ. After they realize that God had saved them, send them to tell others too so more can be saved.

Our God does the same for us. He convicts, comforts, and then commissions. He does this so that not only we remain his but so that the world around us can be saved as well. Unfortunately, we have a sinful nature who wants nothing to do with what God wants and he lets that be known to us by tempting us to reject everything God is doing for us. It is a real struggle for us and too often we reject everything God does for us.

We begin by rejecting his conviction. God tells us that we must be perfect, and any sin is worthy of hell. We too often tell our God that he is wrong especially if what he calls sin, we call fun or a part of our lives. Our God didn't create us to be sinners but to be perfect. We fell into sin and if we think sin is what makes us happy or ok to commit then we are dangerously close of losing our God. He does want you to be happy that is why he tells you what sin is. If you are not happy about what God has to say, then you are listening to your sinful nature, who works for the devil to lead you to hell. He doesn't have your best interest in mind but your death and eternal destruction he wants. Listen to your God and stay away from sin and repent when it captures you.

When we reject his conviction, we will then reject his comfort. If we don't feel that what we are doing is wrong, then we will never want to be forgiven for our sins. But without forgiveness then there is no life, no heaven, and no real peace. If we refuse forgiveness we will not like standing before our God because he will tell us how we are not a part of his family and how we will now live with the prisoners in hell. We can't forget that we will all stand before God one day. Finally, if we have rejected God then we will not ever want to work for him because we are only looking out for ourselves. We must resist the urge to say, "No" to our God's message before it is too late.

Isaiah saw that when he was controlled by his sinful nature he didn't find peace especially when he stood before his holy God. But, when he didn't reject God's Word, God brought him peace. We don't like being told, "No," or what you did was wrong, but when we bow before our Triune God and repent we will find peace.

When Isaiah was convicted he repented of his sins. That didn't feel peaceful but knowing that he needed God to save him gave God the opportunity to bring peace into his life and he didn't wait. He comforted him. Your God knows your sins. He knows the sins that trouble you the most. He also has taken away your sins just like Isaiah. That is where we find peace, in God's gracious forgiveness. Notice God caused our forgiveness and not us. He is the one who leads us to confess and repent and he is the one who forgives. God tells Isaiah that his sins are literally "covered." That means he doesn't look those sins ever. They are "out of sight" and "out of mind." Knowing that our sins will not be held against us brings us peace because now we know we can stand before God.

What is left to do knowing that we are saved and going to heaven? We must tell others so that we are not the only ones in heaven. Often, we think we can't tell others because we are not a trained pastor. That is not true. You have been made ready to save the world because you know what is most important. You know that you are saved by your God and that he is with you always. Go and tell others about their triune God. Share his message and the Holy Spirit will do the convicting, comforting, and commissioning of others.

Isaiah couldn't wait to spread the word because it was too good. He was willing to convict the people of Judah because he knew what was going to come next in God's gracious comfort. Go with the joy of knowing that you too will stand before God and when that day comes it will be filled with joy and excitement because your God will look you in the eye and say, "Welcome home." Who do you also want to be with you in your future home? Go and tell them about their savior and your God will do the rest so all God's people will be able to stand before our Triune God. Amen.