

**"The Divine Service in the Presence of the LORD"**  
**Isaiah 6:1-8**

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Emmett, Idaho

18 June Anno Domini 2000  
The Feast of the Holy Trinity

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Dear Baptized,

*In the year the King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. 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. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the House was filled with smoke. Then 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." 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. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged." Also I hear the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."*

Thus far the inspired and inerrant Word of the Lord our God.

Once upon a time in a land far away ... in the year King Uzziah died in Judea ... 2,750 years ago in Jerusalem ... 750 years before the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, a man named Isaiah received a revelation from the Lord God Almighty. Behold, Jehovah manifested Himself to the prophet by bringing this sinful man into the heavenly Temple and before the very Throne of the Lord God - the uncreate, the incomprehensible, the eternal - as we have just confessed in the Athanasian Creed. Here, before the Face of the Almighty, in the Presence of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, of things visible and invisible, in the perfect and glorious Heaven of God, Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up.

Thus did Isaiah see Jesus and thus did the mighty seer of old behold the Glory of Jesus (John 12:41). He saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. Here Isaiah is in the Presence of the Lamb Who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), Who died on Calvary's cross atoning for your sins, and not for yours only but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) and Who said, Fear not; I am the First and the Last. I am He Who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore (Rev. 1:17-18).

While the Lord God manifests His glory to Isaiah by bringing the prophet before the Throne of Heaven, the revelation is also veiled for no human being on this earth and in this sinful state is able to bear the unveiled Glory of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Isaiah knew this and declared,

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.

The sinful man who suddenly becomes aware of being in the Presence of God makes a confession of his sinful nature and his sin. It is not a comfortable feeling or sense of existence. The Apostle John wrote of what he experienced when in the Presence of the Incarnate, Ascended, Majestic, Victorious and Reigning Christ: And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead (Rev. 1:17). Even in His state of humiliation, when Jesus veiled His Divinity and revealed it in glimpses, the sinner understood what it meant to be in the Presence of God. Following the miracle of the first catch of fish, Peter fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord (Luke 5:8). The Prophet Isaiah declared, Woe is me, for I am undone!

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. 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. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the House was filled with smoke.

You have come here this day to the House of God ... to this sanctuary which is a place consecrated by and to the Lord. You have come here to be in the very Presence of the Lord God. But you are no less a sinful man than Peter; no less unclean than Isaiah. You dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Do you realize what you have done by appearing here and seeking to be in His Presence? Do you understand what you have said when you added your "amen" to the Invocation? You have presented yourself here invoking His Name ... the Name declared unto you on the gracious day of your Baptism ... in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah was one of God's chosen people when the Lord brought him into the heavenly Temple. Still, following the Lord's calling of this son of Amoz into the Kingdom of God, Isaiah remained a sinner and he knew it. Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips. This Isaiah says as he stands in the Presence of the Lord. You are one of God's chosen people when you crossed the threshold of this House of God today. Still, following the Lord's bringing you into the Kingdom of God by water and the Word, you have remained a sinner and you know it

In the Presence of God and before the Lord's angels who cried out to one another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory, Isaiah made a confession of his sin, 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. Isaiah had nothing to offer God to stay the arm of judgment and wrath ... no good work, no sacrifice, nothing. His continued existence in the very Presence of God was due solely and only to the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Here today, in the Presence of God and before the Lord's angels and archangels, and following the singing of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," you made a confession of your sin: "O Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended Thee and justly deserved Thy temporal and eternal punishment." You have nothing to offer God to stay the hand of condemnation and wrath ... no good work, no sacrifice, nothing. Your continued existence here and now in the very Presence of God is due solely and only to the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus.

We would do well to hearken the ears of our hearts and minds to the Word of God recorded by King Solomon, Guard your steps when you go to the House of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do evil (Ecclesiastes 5:1).

After Isaiah confessed his sin, then one of the Lord's angels ... one of the messengers ... one of the seraphim flew to me (Isaiah), having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my (Isaiah's) mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."

After you confessed your sin, then one of the Lord's messengers ... one of Christ's undershepherds announced to you, "Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Now, with all our sins removed as far as the east is from the west, with all our transgressions forgotten by the God Who knows all things, we are ready to enter into His Presence where we are permitted to sing The Sanctus —

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory;  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is He, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

Then, for those who are prepared, one of the messengers, takes a live coal from the altar ... the very Body and Blood of Christ. He places it in your mouth and says, "Take and eat, this is the Body of Christ given into death for you. Take and drink, this is the Blood of Christ shed for you. Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."

Isaiah confessed, my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Following the reception of the Holy Eucharist, where you have received Christ in the proper altar call of the Church, you sing the words of Simeon who held the Holy Infant in his hands, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word, For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be with the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Isaiah then heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Here is the Call to be the Lord's prophet extended to Isaiah. He whose sin has been purged and whose iniquity has been taken away is now ready to serve where and when and how the Lord wills. God certainly expects His people to in His Word and doing His work. God expects you who, on account of the sin-atoning death of His Son, have been absolved of every sin to be involved in accomplishing His will in your life. These good works are not the basis of your salvation; rather they are a fruit of faith that naturally follows and the Lord most certainly expects to find these good works. Thus Isaiah accepted the Call when he said, "Here am I! Send me."

We are saved by the grace of God through faith in the "One Christ; Who suffered for our salvation;

descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead" (Athanasian Creed).

While we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus, His judgment will be based on the fruits of faith that will be made manifest by Christ "at Whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved" (Athanasian Creed).

Thus Isaiah was returned from the heavenly Temple and sent to the people with whom he was called to proclaim the Word ... a man of unclean lips, and one who dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For those faithful who congregated to hear the Word of the Lord, can there be any doubt that they heard him say, The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace (Numbers 6:24-26). Amen.