



Holiness (part 2)

1 Peter 1:16 (Isaiah 6)

1. The Demonstration of God's Holiness (verses 1-2).
2. The Declaration of God's Holiness (verses 3-4).
3. The Devastation of God's Holiness (verse 5).
4. The Deliverance from God's Holiness (verses 6-7).

One of my favorite non-Biblical quotes from all time comes from A. W. Tozer. He writes, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, 'What comes into your mind when you think about God?' we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man." [\[1\]](#) In other words, Tozer claims that if we would be able to penetrate into your skull and delve into the recesses of your mind and decipher the neurological impulses of your brain and come to see exactly how it is that you perceive God to be, then, we would surely be able to predict with accuracy the sort of spiritual future that lays before you.

It goes like this. If your view God is that of the *deists*, who believe that God created the world and set it into motion, but is inactive in our lives today, then you will have very little interest in God as well. He has played *laissez-faire* with the world. You will play *laissez-fair* with God. If your view of God is that of a *grandfather*, who is all about love, ready and willing to accept you regardless of the way that you act, then you will have very little incentive to walk in His ways. He doesn't really care about the ways you act, and so, neither will you. If your view of God is that of a *reigning tyrant*, who is ready to punish any evil that you do, then you will live your lives in total fear upon the earth, dreading the judgment that is coming upon you. As He will judge your every motive and action, so also will you be judgmental toward others. But, if your view of God is that of *the Bible*, who is holy and pure, but has provided a way of forgiveness through Christ, then you will have a desire to live an obedient life, knowing of God's love for you in Christ. Your desire will be to please Him with all of your being.

The principle is this: You will be like your God. This is the principle of our text this morning: 1 Peter 1:16. To catch the context, I want to provide the surrounding verses for you.

1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit,] fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all [your] behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Contained in these words are a call to holiness. Verse 14 contains the negative command: "Do not be conformed to the former lusts." Verse 15 contains the positive command: "Be holy yourselves in all your behavior." Verse 16 contains the reason: "for I am holy." Last week, we looked at verses 14 and 15. This week, our focus is upon verse 16, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." We are to be holy, because God is holy. In other words, we are called to be like our God. He is holy. Therefore, we are to be holy.

Peter here quotes the Old Testament. In fact, three times in the Old Testament are these exact words given. All three of them occur in Leviticus (Lev 11:45; 19:2; 20:7). In every instance, the context is exactly identical to that here in 1 Peter. You are not to be like those around you, who live in their sin. Rather, you are to be different. "You are to be a holy people, set apart for Me. You are to be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy!"

Now, this morning, we could easily zoom past this verse and head on to verse 17, but I really feel the need for us to linger here for another week. Perhaps it has to do with my own walk with the Lord. See, I grew up in a church that entertained what you might call, "a low view of God." There was very little true Biblical understanding of who God was. There was very little emphasis placed upon the holiness of God. And then, the Lord, in His grace, led me to a place that had what you might call, "a high view of God." The holiness of God was front and center. For the first time in my life, I had been confronted with the awesome character of God. The implications upon my life were incredible.

It was no accident that such was the case. Shortly after I began attending this church, they built a building. At the dedication of this building, the elders of this church wrote a letter "to the future members of this church." They placed it in the cornerstone of the church, to be opened and read someday in the future. I obtained a copy of this letter when it was read to the congregation some 15 years later. Here is what the letter said, ...

To the Future Members of Grace Church of DuPage,

This letter is being written in concert with the dedication of this auditorium. We are using this Dedication Service as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment as a congregation to the purpose for which the Lord raised up this church.

The purpose of Grace Church, ... "is to reveal the holy character and caring heart of God to a perishing world; and in obedience, to be led by the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ."

It is our most earnest desire and prayer that the future generations of Grace Church will seek to maintain this purpose and thereby honor the Lord and His Word. Therefore, whenever or for whatever reason this cornerstone is opened, may the reading of this letter cause the church to pause and ask yourself this question, "Are we fulfilling the purpose for which God raised up this church?"

If indeed you as a congregation have strayed from the very purpose for which God has established Grace Church, then may you respond as Ezra did in Ezra 9:10, "And now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Thy commands. And may you take heed to the words of our Lord, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first..." Revelation 2:5.

As you seek in your generation to reveal the holy character and caring heart of God to a perishing world, may God continue His rich blessing upon this church.

The Elders of Grace Church
November 5, 1989.

In my church upbringing, I knew much about attempting to reveal the "caring heart of God to a perishing world." But, I knew very little of what it meant to "reveal the holy character ... of God." When I came to Grace Church of DuPage for the first time was shown "the holy character ... of God," it totally changed the way that I viewed God. It changed the way that I viewed worship. It changed the way that I viewed church. It changed the way that I viewed my life. It changed the way that I should show the "caring heart of God to a perishing world." For the first time in my life, I had seen the supremacy of God, and so longed to live for His glory. A few years later, I read a book by R. C. Sproul entitled, "The Holiness of God," which helped to further solidify these things in my mind. I would highly recommend that you read this book

I will take this opportunity this morning to remind you of God's holiness. There are many today who don't understand the holiness of God. Again, I want to quote A. W. Tozer. He said, ...

Christians today appear to know Christ only after the flesh. They try to achieve communion with Him by divesting Him of His burning holiness and unapproachable majesty, the very attributes He veiled while on earth but assumed in fullness of glory upon His ascension to the Father's right hand. The Christ of popular Christianity has a weak smile and a halo. He has become Someone-up-There who likes people, at least some people, and these are grateful but not too impressed. If they need Him, He also needs them. [\[2\]](#)

I believe that Tozer is correct. Such a belief is common in the church today. In my message this morning, I want to do what I can to do rid your mind of a wrong view of God, that has a devastating effect upon the way that you live. And so, we will linger here in verse 16 and consider the holiness of God. My message this morning has the opportunity of transforming your view of God. I know that a Biblical view of God changed me. It can change you as well.

To see His holiness, I want for us to spend the rest of our morning in Isaiah, chapter 6. Perhaps this is a familiar passage of Scripture to you. If it is, praise God, because it surely has helped you in your walk with God. If this isn't familiar to you, may the Lord use it in your life to see God for who He is. I have chosen these verses, because they give us a good picture of the holiness of God as is given anywhere in Scripture. They describe the throne of God. Consider them carefully.

Isaiah 6:1-7

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

Here in Isaiah, chapter 6, we have the commissioning of Isaiah. According to the very first verse in Isaiah, we see that Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. When you do a bit of calculation, you can quickly figure out that these kingdoms spanned a period of about 100 years. Obviously, Isaiah didn't prophesy for a hundred years. In fact, his ministry began at the end of Uzziah's reign. According to verse 1, Isaiah's ministry began the year that king Uzziah died. From historical records, you can date his death to 739 B. C.

In 2 Chronicles 26 tells of his story. When he met with a measure of success and the kingdom of Judah was strong, Uzziah's "heart was so proud that he acted corruptly" (2 Chron. 26:16). He was a king, but he entered into the temple of the LORD where only priests were to enter and offered up incense on the altar of incense (2 Chron. 26:16). Right then and there, the LORD struck him with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:20). To his dying day, "King Uzziah was a leper" (2 Chron. 26:21). He lived in a separate house, being cut off from the temple, because he was a leper (2 Chron. 26:21). His son, Jotham took over the duties of the king during the last 11 years of his life.

Isaiah probably never knew anything other than the sickly, old Uzziah, who lived off by himself in the leper colony. Oh, but certainly, Isaiah had heard the stories of how "God prospered him" (2 Chron. 26:5). It's like we might tell our children of the successes of the Reagan years. "Son, during the days of Ronald Reagan, our country enjoyed good times. He was the leader that our nation needed. During his presidency, the economy boomed. We amassed more military power than we had ever had before. He brought about the beginning of lasting peace in our lives."

I can imagine Isaiah's father placing little Isaiah upon his lap and telling him of how in the days of Uzziah, there was none to compare with him. He defeated the Philistines (2 Chron. 26:6-7). He subdued the Ammonites (2 Chron. 26:8). His fame extended to the border of Egypt (2 Chron. 26:8). He fortified Jerusalem by building several towers near the gates of the city (2 Chron. 26:9). He dug many cisterns to accommodate his many livestock (2 Chron. 26:10). In his day, there was no lack of food, as the fields flourished (2 Chron. 26:10). His army was large and strong, over 300,000 fighting men (2 Chron. 26:13). Each of these men were fully armed with shields and spears and helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones (2 Chron. 26:14). Under his reign, new weapons were invented, which caused his fame to extend far beyond."

But, the Uzziah of Isaiah's day had wasted away, much like the life of Ronald Reagan, who spent the last decade of his life secluded from the populace as he suffered from Alzheimer's disease. And in the year that this old king had died, Isaiah, the young man, received a revelation from God. His revelation not only was from God, but it was of God. This is a revelation of God in heaven. Here's my first point, ...

1. The Demonstration of God's Holiness (verses 1-2).

Isaiah describes his vision in the second half of verse 1, "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple."

What a contrast this is between the earthly king and the heavenly king! The earthly king has just died of leprosy, his body wasting away. Whereas once he was strong. He died in weak obscurity. But, God was still on the throne, "lofty and exalted," strong and mighty as ever!

Should you trace this throne room scene throughout all of Scripture, you will find that God is still on His throne, "lofty and exalted." You can read the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation and see the exact same scene. When John saw his revelation, He saw ...

One sitting on the throne. ... Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and peals of thunder. ... Four living creatures, each of them having six wings, are fully of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." Twenty-four elders will fall before this throne and worship Him who lives forever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev. 4:2, 5, 8, 10-11).

This is talking about the future. Just as God was reigning in the days of Isaiah, so is God still on His throne today, and God will forever be on the throne. God buries every king! Uzziah reigned for 52 years in Judah, but his reign wasn't as long as God's reign. The Psalmist declares, "Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting" (Ps. 93:2). God's reign is throughout eternity, and no king will ever be as great as our God. That's why He is called, "The King of kings and the Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).

God is reigning upon His throne. Psalm 92 begins, "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved." In Isaiah's vision, he is amazed at the majestic clothing of the Lord. We read (near the end of verse 1), "the train of His robe filling the temple."

In our day and age, we don't have robes with long trains for our leaders to wear. But, we do have trains in our wedding dresses. I'm sure that many of you women wore a long dress on your wedding day. Your dress was a long dress. Typically, a wedding dress might have a train that's several feet long, which drags behind the bride. I'm sure that many of you had a drain following behind your dress. It is customary for the maid of honor to make sure that the train of the dress is cared for. Often, after the bride and groom ascend the steps of the platform, the maid of honor hands her flower bouquet to one to the attendants and arranges the train of the dress by spreading it across the floor behind the bride.

In my research this week, I discovered that Princess Diana's dress had a train that was 25 feet long. It's amazing if you look at pictures of her dress. The train followed long behind her. Her long train was a statement about her worth. She was marrying prince Charles, heir to the throne of England. She was lined up to be queen of England!

Now, the length of the train upon God's robe here in Isaiah's vision is difficult to measure. But, I guarantee you that it is longer than 25 feet! It filled the entire temple. The fabric of his robe flowed off the throne and buckled and rolled and was pleated back and forth. The sheer volume of this robe was sufficient for Isaiah to say that it "filled the temple." My guess is that this robe covered the entire floor of the temple, perhaps sliding up the walls and piling up in places, perhaps several feet high.

The sheer prominence of God's robe speaks of His majesty. The fact that his robe filled the temple meant that there was no room for any to come into his presence. Just as you don't stand on the train of a bride's wedding dress, so also you don't stand on the robe of the king who sits on the throne. If anyone was to approach God, it can only be from a distance, unless, of course, you were able to fly above the floor, which some in the temple were able to do. Look at verse 2, "Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew." These are like heavenly humming birds.

When the Lord formed the creatures of this world, He created us exactly as we needed to be created. God created our eyes so that we could see. With two eyes we are able to see depth. God created our ears so that we could hear. With two ears, we are able to hear directionally.

God created our noses so that we could smell. God created our mouths so that we could eat. God created our legs so that we could walk. Were we to have only one leg, we would have to hop around. But, two legs allows us to walk. God created our hands so that we could feel and grab and move things. God gave us opposable thumbs so that we can grab.

Everything has its proper function. The one exception that has baffled scientists for years in our appendix. It appears to be a useless part of our body. Scientists have sought to figure out why it is there. They know that everything in our body is for a purpose and that nothing is superfluous. So, they have sought to understand the purpose of the appendix. [\[3\]](#)

With these Seraphim, it is no different. God created these beings with six wings. Each of these wings had a purpose. Two of these wings were functional. Four of these wings were instructional. Two of these wings were used to fly, so that they could be in God's presence, off the floor. Four of these wings were used to teach us about what it means to be in God's presence.

I believe that the two wings that are used to cover their eyes speaks about the *glory* of God's appearance. He is so glorious that we ought to shield our eyes from Him. God dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16). I believe that the two wings that are used to cover their feet speak about the *purity* of God's presence. When Moses was in Midian and the Lord appeared to Him in a burning bush. He told Moses, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). In a similar way, I believe that these creatures covered their feet as an acknowledgement of the purity of God's presence.

Of all the creatures that God chose to be around His throne, He chose these sinless beings who would fly around with face and feet covered. He chose them, because they would teach all who enter into His presence about what it means to be in the presence of God. God's glory is great. God's purity is great. If sinless angelic beings had to cover their face and cover their feet to be in the presence of God, how much more is it true of us! God is high and exalted and the actions of those who come into His presence demonstrate this.

But, not only do these Seraphim demonstrate the holiness of God with their wings of how pure and majestic God is, shielding their faces and their feet. They also declare it with their voices. This is my second point.

2. The Declaration of God's Holiness (verses 3-4).

Look at verse 3, "And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.'"

When we want to emphasize something in our language we often use the word, "very." He is very tall. She is very talkative. Should we want to emphasize something more, we repeat the word. He is very, very tall. She is very, very talkative. Though the Hebrew and Greek language have a word for "very," (*m'od* and *lian*), I can't recall any instance in which they are used together. When they wanted to draw attention to something in the superlative, they repeated their words.

For instance, when Jesus wanted to call particular attention to some of His teaching, He often said, "Truly, truly I say to you." It was as if Jesus was saying, "What I am about to say is very, very important. So listen up." But, when these Seraphim declare the essence of what God is like, they describe God as "holy, holy, holy." In saying this, these Seraphim are making it clear that God isn't merely "holy." Nor is it that God is "holy, holy." But, it's that God is "holy, holy, holy."

This is the only time that the Bible ever elevates any characteristic of God to the third degree. In 1 John 4:16, we read that "God is love." But, never does the Bible say that God is "love, love, love." In 1 John 1:5, we read that "God is light." But, never does the Bible say that God is "light, light, light." In John 4:24, we read that "God is spirit." But, never does the Bible say that God is "spirit, spirit, spirit." Never does the Bible refer to God as "justice, justice, justice" or "mercy, mercy, mercy" or "faithful, faithful, faithful." But, when God wants to communicate to us of His essential being, these Seraphim say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts."

The big question at this point is, "Why?" Why would God see fit to make sure that the single characteristic of Him that is exalted above all others would be His holiness? In fact, throughout all eternity, these creatures will continue this chant. In Revelation 4, verse 8, we read how these creatures "day and night ... do not cease to say, ... 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty.'"

I believe that God's holiness is so lifted high by these creatures because it is the main thing that strikes you when you are in His presence. When someday you die and arrive at the throne of God, you will be struck most of all by His holiness. You will be awestruck at His distinctness from us. He is the Creator and we are the creature. He is the one who receives the glory and we are the ones giving the glory. You will also be awestruck at His purity. "God is light and in Him, there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5b).

There are certain people who become very memorable for some reason when you meet them. I remember when I was a young child, one of the members of the church we attended was a former Harlem Globetrotter. His name was McKinley "Deacon" Davis, a native of Rockford. I went to school with his son. I remember shaking his hand on several occasions. His hands were enormous! It's not so much that his hands were thick. It's that his fingers were long and slender. When he shook my hand, it was as if his hand went entirely around my hand. In part, this was probably why he was such a good basketball player. Deacon Davis is an example of someone who was very memorable when me

There are many others who are memorable when you meet them. Should you meet an NBA basketball player, you will go away from his presence thinking, "Wow! That guy is tall!" Should you meet an Olympic weightlifter, you will go away from his presence thinking, "Wow! That guy is strong!" Should you meet someone with a patch on his eye, you will go away from his presence thinking, "I wonder what happened to his eye?" Should you meet someone who speaks with an accent, you might ask yourself, "Where is he from?" If you meet someone with a few fingers on his hand, you might easily wonder, "What happened to his fingers? What is a birth defect or an accident." Should you be in the presence of God, the one thing that will attract your attention immediately will be His holiness. He is absolutely pure in every way. He is entirely different than we are.

When you stand before God someday, it won't be a day of fun at the park. It will be a terrifying day! In that day, you will realize His great

authority and power. In verse 4, we read that “the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.” When God speaks, you feel the earth shake. It will be a terrifying experience.

When you stand before God, you will realize His great holiness. In verse 5, we read of how Isaiah responded. “Then I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’” Regarding my outline, I’m calling this ...

3. The Devastation of God's Holiness (verse 5).

I love this first phrase, “Woe is me, for I am ruined!” Various translations have translated this phrase differently. The ESV says, “Woe is me, for I am lost!” Eugene Peterson paraphrased this, “It’s Doomsday! I’m as good as dead!” The King James translation (which is my favorite rendering of these words), says, “Woe is me, for I am undone!”

All of these translations give a good understanding of what Isaiah was dealing with at this moment. When standing before God, Isaiah was a broken man, with no chance of surviving in God’s presence because of his sin. He mentions his sin in the next few phrases. “I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.”

Now, you need to realize who exactly it was who was saying this. This was a candidate for the ministry. This was a righteous man. His mouth wasn’t filled with profanity. When Isaiah spoke, he spoke for God! But, when Isaiah encountered the holiness of God, He saw how wretched he was in comparison to Him. After all, that’s the reason he gave in the last half of verse 5, “For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Compared with God, Isaiah was ruined and undone.

The best comparison that I can give you is the picture of an operating room. My father is a retired surgeon, so I know a bit about operating rooms. In fact, on several occasions, I was able to scrub for surgery and assist him in surgery. It’s not a simple task. First of all, we would enter the doctor’s locker room and change from our ordinary clothes into scrubs. Then, I remember standing over the sink and washing and scrubbing my hands for more than five minutes. Afterwards, we stood around with hands in the air, to allow our hands to dry. We didn’t let our hands down, lest some unclean water drip onto our hands, making them dirty again.

When it came time for surgery, we placed surgical masks upon our face. Then, we were given a sterile gown, which a nurse would open from a sterile package and help to put on us. The nurse would hold the gown up and we would place our hands through the arms and would spin around so that our gowns may be tied off in back. We then were given sterile gloves. Actually, they were opened for us and we placed our hands through them. Once our gowns and gloves were on we stood still with our hands folded in front of us to keep us away from any pollutants. Throughout the surgery, we were very careful not to touch anything that wasn’t sterile. Such is the care that we took to be sterile for the surgery.

You simply cannot come in off the street and walk into a surgery room. You need to prepare by changing your clothes and purifying yourself. So it is when coming into God’s presence. You can’t merely walk off the street and into His presence. Even if you just took a shower and put on clean clothes, you still can’t enter a surgery room. You need to be sterile. So it is with God. You need to be sterile. Isaiah may have been a clean man, but he wasn’t sterile! Compared with God, Isaiah was ruined and undone.

Should this passage end here, we would be left to despair. But, we aren’t left here. The story continues on. And I love what happens next. It’s spelled out there in verses 6 and 7, which begins my fourth point.

4. The Deliverance from God's Holiness (verses 6-7).

Verses 6 and 7 read, “Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”

Isaiah experienced the forgiveness of sins. This is the wonderful thing about God. Though He understands how nobody can stand in His presence because of their sin, He also provides the way of forgiveness. In this instance, one of the seraphim had taken some tongs and fished out a burning coal from the altar. He took that coal and touched it to the lips of Isaiah, pronouncing Isaiah’s dirty mouth to be clean. The hot coal seemingly burned off Isaiah’s sin. He was forgiven and wiped clean. He could go from that place with a clean conscience, not because he has lived righteously, but because God had forgiven his sin.

When you are in the presence of God, your greatest need is to be delivered from God. I have been very careful with the wording of this point. “The deliverance from God’s holiness.” It is God’s holiness from which we need to be delivered. R. C. Sproul wrote a book entitled, “Saved From What?” The main premise of his book is that fundamentally, we are “saved from God.” R. C. Sproul writes, ...

What every human being needs to be saved from is God. The last thing in the world the impenitent sinner ever wants to meet on the other side of the grave is God. But, the glory of the gospel is that the One from whom we need to be saved is the very One who saves us. God in saving us saves us from Himself! [\[4\]](#)

God knows full well our predicament in sin. He knows that we need a Savior to cleanse us. He’s provided a Savior for us in Jesus Christ, who hung on a cross just outside the walls of Jerusalem, some 2,000 years ago. Although He was sinless, He died as a criminal. This is because His death was as a substitute. It was His death for all who would believe in Him. He took our sin, that we might receive His righteousness. As A. W. Tozer said, “We must take refuge from God in God.” [\[5\]](#)

But, the only way to actually realize and experience this forgiveness is if you come to a point where you are like Isaiah: broken, ruined, and

undone. So, my question to you this morning is this: Have you come to a place in your life where you have become “undone” and “ruined”? That’s the first step in experiencing new life. Have you come to the place in your life where you are “undone”?

I had an opportunity yesterday to ask this very question to a guy who I had just met. Through a series of circumstances, I had an opportunity to spend some time with a this man. We were working on a project together for our children, and spent a few hours together. In the course of our conversation, I had the opportunity to turn the conversation toward things of the Lord. With Isaiah 6 on my mind, I told this man about Isaiah’s encounter with God. I told him of how majestic and high and lifted up God is I told him of how utterly holy and pure God is. I told him of how Isaiah had come to the end of himself. I told this man of the importance of coming to such a place yourself, where you feel like your life is utterly hopeless, unless God acts on your behalf. For, it’s only then, that you will see your sin and see that you need a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And so, I asked this man, “Have you come to a place in your life where you are undone? Have you come to realize that you have no hope apart from a cleaning touch of the Almighty God?” Do you know what he told me? He said, “No.”

After a few moments of silence, he then replied, “I’ve always tried my best to live the best life that I could.” He then went on to give me some examples of how he has tried to do this. He even explained to me how he was certainly better than many people who attend church on Sunday but go out and are dishonest at work. To this, I went back to Isaiah and told him how God’s economy doesn’t work that way. Isaiah, the most righteous man in the land, was “undone” in God’s presence. Sadly, he wasn’t moved to repentance by what I said. I can only pray that this man sees his sin and his need for a Savior.

And so, I turn back to you. Have you come to a place in your life where you have become “undone” and “ruined”? When we see the holiness of God, that ought to be our only response -- of ruin. But, in our ruin, we find that God has everything that we need to rebuild. As God cleanses us from our sin, it is then that we are free to follow after Him in holy conduct.

Isaiah’s zeal to follow the Lord was apparent in verse 8 when he “heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’” Isaiah responded willingly, “Here am I. Send me!” This is the response of all who are saved. We, who have been cleansed and purified through the blood of Christ, ought to be willing to go anywhere and do anything that the Lord calls us to do. God called Isiaah to a fruitless ministry. Consider the following verses, ...

Isaiah 6:9-10

Go, and tell this people: "Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand." Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.

God told Isaiah to go out and tell them of God’s holiness and saving ways, even though they will never believe. God told him to preach and he would win nobody. Isaiah knew how God had commissioned him to a fruitless ministry, which is why he replied, “Lord, how long?” (verse 11). The Lord answered Isaiah, ...

Isaiah 6:11-13

Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate, The LORD has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, and it will again be subject to burning, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump.

God encouraged Isaiah that there would be a remnant that would remain. Though the axe is at the tree and will cut the tree down. Yet, there will still be a stump! In all of this, Isaiah was still willing. The book of Isaiah stands as a testimony of his willingness to follow the Lord. God has called us to live a holy life. Are you willing?

At this point, I come back full-circle to 1 Peter 1:16, “It is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” The holiness of God is the key to living holy lives ourselves. As best as I know how, I have presented you with a clear understanding of the holiness of God. Perhaps this morning, you have seen Him in the splendor of His majesty. Perhaps this morning, you have once again been broken of your sin. Perhaps this morning, you have been confronted by the sins of your mouth, like Isaiah had been. We don’t have any burning coals here to touch your lips and purify them. But, we do have something better. We have the blood of Christ. You simply need to look to Jesus and your sin can be wiped away like Isaiah’s.

Trust Him to make you holy. Plead with Him to help you live a holy life.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 14, 2007 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] A. W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p. 1.

[2] A. W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p. 36.

[3] Recently, some scientists have claimed to have found a function for the appendix. You can read about it in this article:

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/10/05/appendix.purpose.ap/>.

[4] R. C. Sproul, *Saved from What?*, p. 25.

[5] A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 107.