Pastor Dave Doty, Pleasant Grove Community Church

Men in HD Conference---Seminar notes……4/29/17

**“I WONDER why we don’t WONDER about the WONDER of God”**

Isaiah 6:1-7

I have a question before we start:

* How many of you are glad you are a Christian—say AMEN!! How many of you are REALLY EXCITED to be a child of God—say WOOO HOOOO!!!
* **OK……now, the real question: How many of you ACTUALLY see Him as He really is in scripture and are consistently struck with AWE and WONDER?**

Well, I’m not sure enough of us feel like that consistently or live our lives as if we did…….

Today’s Text is Isaiah 6:1-7

I have been thinking about this topic and text for some time now.

I like the TITLE because it is FULL of wonder…

But if you look carefully, **it contains an assumption**, which is this:

* **My observation** is that **we often FAIL to see God as He is** actually described in scripture—Why is this a big deal? Well, THIS **negatively AFFECTS** HOW WE BEHAVE TOWARD HIM!

**AND, if this is true, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!!!**

* I have come to see in my experience that we have a God-sized problem.
* Or better stated, “**WE HAVE A GOD-SIZING PROBLEM**!”

LET ME EXPLAIN…

* You see, we often try to make God in our image—we sometimes want a God according to our desires—Mark Batterson, in his book “ALL IN (p.25),” says “We want God on our terms, but we don’t get God that way. That’s how we get false religion. It’s pick and choose. It’s cut and paste. The end result is a false God we have created in our image.”
* And this is **backwards** IAW Gen 1:26+!....For God made us in **His** image.
* We also sometimes ONLY want the **cotton-candy, love and kisses God**, and for Him to be at **our beck-and-call** for our needs and desires(i.e., the **genie in the lamp**, of sorts, who give us our every whim and wish).
* **We also seem to want a SAFE God**—who is somewhat **predicable and controllable**.
* **We know this is not a biblical view** of God AND WE WOULD NEVER INTELLECTUALLY SAY something like this, BUT we often find our thinking and behaviors **acting as if this were the case**.
* **Self is constantly competing** for the throne of **control** in our lives.
* **This often leads us to see our God as too SMALL!**
* He is not really too small, but we often see him that way and live accordingly!
* Sometimes see him as **just a little bigger than we are**—you hear it said casually of God that He is the “**man upstairs**,” or “**the BIG GUY in the sky**,” “**my buddy from outta town**,” or some such euphemism.
* **This causes some real issues** as we deal with tough circumstances, life issues, and worship, etc. as they relate to God’s involvement and His abilities.
* **There are some understandable reasons for this:**
* **We relate to God according to what we know—through creation.**
* We **cannot fathom something infinite**, so we see God as merely what I call “**ultra or** **super-finite**.”
* **Lastly, and most commonly**, we relate to God via Jesus, the HUMAN, mortal Jesus born in a manger, the mere **historical MAN** of the GOSPELS we know so well. But He is so much more—He is ALMIGHTY GOD!!

When our God is too safe and TOO small, we typically end up having one of two issues:

**PRIDE**: overconfidence, overreliance on self, low view of God (low value/reverence)

**DOUBT**: fear, worry, depression, despondency, anxiety, low view of God (low faith/trust)

And these things PLAGUE OUR SOCIETY—**but SADLY this appears equally in the church!!!**

We sometimes have a **skewed view of Him** as somewhat benign and loving **but not awesome and holy, even terrifying!!!!?????**

**God is not always SAFE and never SMALL**!! Let us NOT FORGET—He is also incredibly powerful, infinite, uncontrollable, unpredictable, dangerous, truly Awe-inspiring, just and righteous, judgmental and wrathful, and uncomfortable in many ways. He does not do things and see things as we do (Is 55:8-9). **His FULL will and purposes are far beyond our comprehension!**

**So What CAN WE DO?? Well. I think Isaiah can HELP US with this…**

**If Isaiah did had our problem**, it was QUICKLY corrected as he came **face-to face with God as He ACTUALLY is** as we see recorded in our text today.

**Let’s take a look** at what he experienced…………

**I.—God Is HOLY and EXALTED (Is 6:1-4)**

**First, some Brief BACKGROUND**:

* Isaiah’s ministry was early in God’s use of the prophets, which began after the split of the united monarchy of Saul/David/Solomon…930AD.
* The kingdom split to North under Jeroboam (10 tribes, Israel, capital Samaria) and South under Solomon’s son, Rehoboam ( 2 tribes, Judah, capital Jerusalem).
* The Northern kingdom—20 corrupt/evil kings would be destroyed by Assyria in 722BC. The Southern kingdom—8 good kings/12 bad kings—would later be taken captive in the exile in 586BC under Babylon.
* Isaiah was a major prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah for over 5 decades starting around 739BC thru 686BC. At the start of his prophetic ministry, King Uzziah, also referred to in 2 Kings as Azariah, had been in power and died in 739BC of leprosy.

**So it is against this backdrop that Isaiah writes in Chapter 6…**

**Is 6:1--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.**

1. Isaiah was supernaturally given **the ability to SEE God in His truest existence**. This was likely similar to how we see the Apostle John in Rev 4:1-11 seeing into the throne room of Heaven, receiving a vision from God regarding the things still yet to come. What an amazing privilege? Can you imagine the sight? What would YOU be feeling?
2. **What does he see?**
	1. God **sitting on His throne**, **lofty and exalted OR high and lifted up**—this elevated state represents the position of the Most High God.
	2. The train of His robe filled the temple. God’s presence and splendor filled the Heavenly temple (i.e., this is not Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem).
	3. In Rev 4:2-3,5 we see a bit more clarity regarding the throne room from John--Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. **Can you imagine? Beautiful and terrifying all at once!!**

**Is 6:2-3--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.**

1. **Seraphim**--these are an order of the angels, **the Heavenly Host**.
2. They have six wings—two covered their faces; two covered their feet; two allowed them to fly. **What does this mean?**
	1. **They covered their faces** as they dared not gaze directly into God’s glory—this is extreme holiness and power—it is dangerous—**See Ex 33:18-20**--Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” **God is so holy, He is dangerous!**
	2. **They covered their feet** to emphasize their lowliness in humility before the powerful throne
	3. **They flew** with the last two in humble service to Him who was exalted!!
3. Pay particular attention to **their attitude in the presence of God**—Humility, reverence, service and sheer awe! Is this how we worship? Is this how we approach life in the church? It should be! I feel a need for improvement—how about you?
4. What were they saying?....And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth (or literally the fullness of the whole earth displays His magnificence) is full of His glory.” They extolled His holiness, as if they could utter nothing else!! His separateness from His fallen creatures is called out----**AMAZING!!! Is this how we see God daily?**

**Is 6:4-- And the foundations (literally the door sockets) of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the house or temple was filling with smoke.**

1. This is **raw and perfect** HOLINESS, POWER and sheer AWESOMENESS!!!!
2. This **shaking and smoke** emphasizes His holiness in reference to His judgment—Rev 15:8 tells us: And the temple (or sanctuary) was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.
3. This is **OMINOUS DISPLAY** can be terrifying or at least captures one’s attention and keeps one fixed and focused!
4. **I don’t see apathy, or arrogance, or indifference** having a chance here!!!!

**How many of you have had an experience where you saw the physical or spiritual POWER of God clearly displayed?**

Let’s be clear that **Our God is not always SAFE and never Small**…He can be dangerous and is always awe-inspiring and POWERFUL!!

**So then, what was Isaiah’s response? How must he have felt in this atmosphere…?**

**II.—Man is UNCLEAN and UNFIT for service before God (Is 6:5)**

What did Isaiah feel?? Verse 5

**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.”**

**THIS GUY IS TERRIFIED!! He is basically saying, “I’m A DEAD MAN!” Get me outta here!!!!!!!!!!! Can you imagine being in the presence of intense purity and power??**

**Almost without exception we see that when men in scripture come before angels, they are instantly terrified in FEAR—and these are merely created beings!**

**BUT…..Isaiah is standing before the ALMIGHTY CREATOR!!!**

**Can you feel the scene?**

He says “**Woe is me**”……..“**Woe**” means:

A passionate cry of grief or despair, crying out after, a lamentation. H188—**'owy**

Then he says “I am ruined”……“**Ruined**” is the idea of the following:

H1820--**dâmâh**, to be dumb or silent; hence, to fail or perish; to destroy:—to cease, be cut down (off), destroy, be brought to silence, be utterly undone.

He knew his condemning condition--**UNCLEAN LIPS**--H2931—tame’-- tä·mā'-- foul in a religious sense:—defiled, infamous, polluted.

**SO, what’s the issue with unclean LIPS?** Our speech reveals the condition of our heart—Matt 12:34—Jesus to the Pharisees, says, “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”

**UH OH!! Does this ring any bells with you? This is sobering, and Isaiah knew it!**

**This was in contrast to his comment**, “I have SEEN the King, the Lord of Hosts.”

Have SEEN--H7200-- ra'ah-- rä·ä'---to see or behold, consider, perceive…

**His brokenness, unholiness, and sin became crystal clear very quickly vs God’s perfect holiness …and he immediately knew he was in deep trouble!**

**Do we see our condition with such stark contrast to God’s holiness? Do we realize this wide gap that exists? If so, how would this change the way we approach God in prayer, worship, and lifestyle?**

**III.—God CLEANSES and makes us ACCEPTABLE (Is 6:6-7)**

**Thankfully, God helps us…..6:6-7:”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.’”**

The coal represents **God’s purifying work**; we also see that **repentance is painful** but critical!! God makes us **relationally pure and right** with Him!

**AMAZING that God chooses to partner with us and makes us fit for service. This is not a statement of Isaiah’s salvation, rather of his commitment and consecration for service!**

The **context** makes this clear: this is the beginning of **Isaiah’s launch** into special service, for in verse 8 we see the familiar statement—Whom shall I send?---SEND ME!

**WOW…I cannot even begin to fathom what this experience must have been like…CAN YOU?**

**CONCLUSION:**

So then in conclusion…with all of this we have considered, I again make the statement:

**“I WONDER why we don’t WONDER about the WONDER of God”**

And I WONDER what our outlook on life and ministry would look like if we had a proper view of God and his holiness and awesome power…..would it be more daring, courageous, dangerous, or involved in prayer? YES indeed we might!!

**Application:..**

The next time (and each time) you come before God in worship, prayer, etc., do these 4 things:

Concluding Points and your last fill-ins……

1. **REMEMBER who God is** as actually seen in scripture.
2. **APPROACH Him humbly as the MAJESTIC, HOLY, EXALTED, and POWERFUL King.**
3. **GRATEFULLY realize He has cleansed you and made you acceptable for partnership with Him in service.**
4. When arrogance and pride, uncertainly, doubt or fear invade your thinking and deplete your faith, **STOP and WONDER and about the WONDER of GOD!!!!! It will rerack your perspective and things will look different!!!**

**Good things to think about!!!!! AMEN?**

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------