

Encountering God: Experiencing Transformation

Isaiah 6:1-8

Isa 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Isa 6:2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Isa 6:4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 Then said I, 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 mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isa 6:6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

Isa 6:7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Isa 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Soren Kierkegaard tells a parable of a community of ducks waddling off to duck church to hear the duck preacher. The duck preacher spoke eloquently of how God had given the ducks wings with which to fly. With these wings there was nowhere the ducks could not go, there was no God-given task the ducks could not accomplish. With those wings they could soar into the presence of God himself. Shouts of "Amen" were quacked throughout the duck congregation. At the conclusion of the service, the ducks left, commenting on what a wonderful message they had heard -- and waddled back home.

I'm afraid that we are a lot like the duck church. We come to church...we sing the songs.....we hear the message.....but when the service is over.....we leave the same way we came in. We leave unchanged ! We leave unaffected !

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. I believe that every time we come to church.....every time we gather for worship that God has something for us. He has something he wants to do in our lives.....and if we don't get it or experience it, then it's our fault, and not his.

This morning, I pray that we will open up our hearts to God, and allow him to work in our lives. Right now in our hearts let us say.....not my will, but thine be done !

I want us to have an encounter with the living God.....he wants to meet us here.....he wants us to sense his presence, and his power. He doesn't want us to leave here without a divine encounter!

I'm glad I go to a church where I can lift up the name of the Lord right out loud! Amen?

I love singing songs, clapping and shouting in church just as much as the next guy, maybe even more!

But somewhere in your walk with God you have to grow beyond just a singing and a shouting relationship with God.

I'm not saying we have to quit shouting and singing!

I'm saying that we gotta do more than just come to Church on Sunday and to shout and sing ,And go home and do nothing until it's time to go back to Church again!

Cause all the shouting and singing and stomping in the world ain't going to do us any good if we don't learn how to walk and live for God!!

And the only way to walk with God is to actually walk with Him.

The only way to live for God is to live with God in you!

What I'm saying is we have to have an encounter with God.

We have to come into His presence. And not just corporately but personally.

Cause if we don't actually make personal contact with God we're just shouting at the walls.

If God's not present in our lives we're just singing to each other.

Somewhere we have to reach the point that our relationship with God is an intimate one.

A relationship that involves actually talking to God or singing to God on a personal level.

Not just singing about God to everyone else.

I might talk about President Barack Obama. I might even brag on his abilities or accomplishments, but that's as far as my relationship with Barack Obama goes.

I don't really know him. I know of him.

I don't really speak to him. I speak of him.

But Mrs. Michelle Obama knows him on a personal level.

An intimate level where she talks and he listens.

An intimate level where she talks and he listens and he talks and she listens.

This is what I'm preaching about this morning!

Having an encounter with God, that's more than just an emotional encounter.

I'm talking about having a true encounter with our Savior!

II. An Intimate Relationship With God...

An intimate relationship with God.

How many know that we are the Bride of Christ!

And how many knows that He desires to have an intimate relationship with us?

Well I want what Jesus wants!

I want to bring about that intimacy in my walk with Christ.

I want to have an Encounter with Christ that does more than just excite me.

I want to be transformed!!

I want a relationship with the Lord that isn't based on just my "lip service" to him but it's based upon my "heart service" for him.

Now don't get me wrong, we all need to get emotional about serving the Lord because we have to be willing to give God our feelings and emotions but we've got to be what I call spiritually emotional!

See, anyone can get emotional and not be spiritual, but nobody can be spiritual and not emotional!

And when you're emotional in the spiritual sense it brings you to a special place.

And this isn't a shallow place but it's a deep place in God.

Sometimes when you get to that place all you can do is groan and moan in the spirit.

And words can't describe what's happening to you.

But when you stand up, you're different!

You're not the same anymore!!!

The chains of this world have fallen off and the Devil has lost his grip on your life.

You have a new purpose and desire to please the Lord like you've never had before!

That's an intimate encounter with God!

See, Worshipping God isn't just some routine that we go thru.

It's not like playing the right note on an instrument or singing the right tune in a song but its having an actual encounter with the Lord of Lord, and King of Kings!

We sing praise to come into His presence but once He shows up that's when we start to worship.

That's when we surpass all the shouting and singing and just stand amazed.

And it's at that moment as you stand in awe that your life becomes changed forever.

III. Isaiah's Experience...

Let's look at what happened to Isaiah....

In the text we have just read, Isaiah the great prophet was in need of such a divine encounter. King Uzziah who had served as King for 52 years in Judah had died. He was a Godly man.....and one who was loved by the people. The nation had prospered under his leadership. (Commentary about ladder days.) And now after his death, it was a time of uncertainty. It was a down time. Isaiah, and Judah needed something from God. They needed a sign that he was still in control of the situation. I want us to notice Isaiah's divine encounter with God, and how it occurred, and what it achieved !

We can infer that Isaiah looked up to King Uzziah. Perhaps all his answers were found in the King. King Uzziah may have filled in the blanks. You know how we do...we put some much confidence and emphasis in relationships, people, situations, positions, etc. Then those people or circumstances go away or taken from us. I believe that was where Isaiah was.

I. His Look Upward.

Certainly Isaiah felt down.....discouraged perhaps.....and it would have been easy for him to drop his head, and become disillusioned with God in general, but rather than looking down, Isaiah looked upward ! There is a great lesson in all of this for up.....when we are down.....God is up ! Someone has said that "when mankind is at its worst, then God is at his best".

Isaiah discovers what the writer of Psalms 121 had previously discovered....."I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand."

What Isaiah did not know was that the king had to die so that he could see the King...the King of Kings. (Uzziah had been blocking his view of God...people or things, beliefs and attitudes...kings...can block our view of God)

God was there all the time...God is always there...we just can't see him.

a. The Lord Is Pre-eminent

If you see the Lord this morning, if you encounter God, you will see that he surpasses them all. King Uzziah had died, but God was alive. The throne in Judah was vacant, but the throne in heaven was occupied, and God revealed his Sovereignty in the temple !

Arturo Toscanini, the master symphony conductor. He had given a masterful performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The audience was alive that night. When the master laid down his baton the response was spontaneous. They rose to their feet and applauded and applauded. There was an encore and then another. The roses were brought out. The orchestra bowed. Toscanini bowed. Finally, Toscanini hung his tired body over the music stand, rapped his baton and said, "Gentlemen Gentlemen!" The orchestra members leaned forward to listen. Was he angry? They couldn't really tell. In a fiercely enunciated whisper he said, "Gentlemen, I am nothing." They sat there gasping at this genius of musical performance. Then he rapped the baton again and said, "Gentlemen! You are nothing." They had heard that for weeks at rehearsals. They sat there in silence before the great master. Then with a tone of adoration he said, "Ah, but Beethoven, he is everything . . . Everything! Everything!"

Folks.....Jesus is everything ! Everything !!

b. The Lord Is Priestly

Two things in this vision which Isaiah saw reminds us of the priestly work of the Lord. First of all, he was seated.....Jesus got up from his seat.....descended to earth.....took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful man.....he became obedient unto his death on the cross.....after his resurrection, he ascended back to heaven, where he is now seated at the right hand of God making intercessions for us !

The robe or train gives up a glimpse of the Lord as priest as well. His robe was so long, and flowing that it filled the temple !

c. The Lord Is Pure V3

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of glory.

When you have an encounter with God it evokes worship. You can't experience God like Isaiah did and worship him. Even the angels cried holy!

When you are truly in his presence...when you see God the way Isaiah did...you have to worship him...

You are going to clap...raise your hands...kneel ...lay prostrate...sing, shout...dance.. cry,etc.

We WORSHIP IN RESPONSE TO OUR ENCOUNTER WITH GOD! (Think about that.)

Notice what happens when worship breaks out...the door posts were moved...the sound of the angels crying out Holy, Holy, Holy caused an earthquake if you will and smoke filled the room.. the Shekinah glory came down and filled the place.

Notice what happened when Isaiah saw the Lord. This is what will transpire when we encounter God.....we will do as Isaiah did.....

II. His Look Inward.

Know why we don't experience divine encounters in our church, and in our lives.....know why we don't sense the presence of God nor his power the way that he'd like for us to.....it is because we think that everyone needs it but us !

Preacher, that was a great sermon.....you really told them ! Preacher, I sure wish so, and so had been here to hear that message !

When we have a divine encounter with God.....when we look upward and catch a glimpse of his presence, then we will look first inwardly to check our own hearts.....to measure our own standing with God !

The king had to die not only for Isaiah to see God but the king had to die for Isaiah to see himself.

When we really come into His presence we become like Isaiah saying woe is me.

Because In His perfect presence we realize our imperfect state and we ask Him to purge us, and bring about change.

And we put off the old and take on the new. Amen?

We take off our old self- righteousness because we can see that it is only filthy rags and we put on His righteousness.

Too many Christians have an emotional encounter with God and think that there's nothing more.

But there is!

When you have a true encounter with the Lord of Glory Things change!

Notice what happened with Isaiah after seeing the Lord.....

- a. Note The Conviction He Experienced. Woe is me !
- b. Note His Condition Was Exposed.
- c. Note The Confession He Expressed.
- d. Note The Cleansing That was Effectuated.

Aren't you glad that God doesn't just stop at showing you your condition...he doesn't leave us with just a view of ourselves as wretched...dirty...useless, etc.

When we have an encounter with God he allows us to see ourselves as He sees us!

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18

When we have an encounter with God we come to realize that Jesus blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness... and God sees us through the shed blood of his son.

When we get a revelation of what we were but who we are it is life changing!

Having seen his sinfulness, and worthlessness, and having been cleansed.....note the next thing that takes place in Isaiah's encounter with God.

III. He Looked Outward. V8

- a. He Was Attentive.

Up until this point he had seen the Lord high, and lifted up in the temple. He had heard the angels declaring the holiness of God. But he had yet to hear the voice of the Lord. But now that

he hears God speak, he is attentive to what he says. Until we have been brought under conviction, seen our own sinful condition, and been cleansed by his power, we will not be attentive to his voice.

b. He Was Available.

The Lord asks the question.....Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? The Lord is still asking that same question today. Who will go ? Isaiah responded to the voice of God by saying.....Here am I;

c. He Was Agreeable.

Send me !

Note that God had not told Isaiah as of yet where he would be sent.....If you're not willing to go anywhere, then God might not be willing to send you anywhere ! Some folks narrow their vision, their field of ministry.....some churches try to build their church to attract a certain type of people.....

We must be willing to say as Isaiah.....Here am I; send me !

I'll go where you want me to go.....I'll do what you want me to do.....I'll say what you want me to say.....

Illust

A Sunday School teacher, Mr. Kimball, made himself available and in 1858 led a Boston shoe clerk to give his life to Christ. That clerk, Dwight L. Moody, became one of the greatest evangelists of all time. He held England in one hand and America in the other and rocked them toward God. Moody heard a preacher say: "The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him." Mr. Moody said, "By God's grace, I will be that man." It was while Mr. Moody was in England in 1879 that he awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Frederick B. Meyer, a pastor of a small church.

F. B. Meyer was invited to preach at an American college campus. In one of his meetings he brought a student named J. Wilbur Chapman to Christ. Chapman later employed a former baseball player, Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work for the YMCA.

Mr. Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, North Carolina. After the meetings a group of businessmen were so enthusiastic they planned to hold another campaign and invited Mordecai Hamm to come to Charlotte for the crusade.

Hamm came and preached and a teenager named William Franklin Graham heard the Gospel and yielded his life to Jesus Christ. God laid His hand on young Graham and called him to preach the Gospel.

Years later on a cold, rainy night in Ambato, Ecuador, a missionary was showing Billy Graham films in the open air at a potato market. One of those who came forward that night was Raulo Revelo. He committed his life to Jesus Christ. In the months that followed he shared his new found faith with his family and neighbors. He came by to see the missionary one day and said, "Don Wil, I have led forty-seven members of my family to Christ. What do I do with them now?" "Pray the Lord of the harvest will give us more Raulo Revelos."

Illust

Dr. Paul Brand, a well-known doctor & author, was raised in India. His parents were missionaries there. In his book, "In His Image," he writes about his mother. It is one of the most touching stories I've ever read.

He writes that when his mother was 75 years old, she was still walking miles every day, visiting the villages in the southern part of India, teaching the people about Jesus.

One day, at age 75, she was traveling alone & fell & broke her hip. After two days of just lying there in pain, some workers found her & put her on a makeshift cot & loaded her into their jeep & drove 150 miles over deep rutted roads to find a doctor who could set the broken bones. But the very bumpy ride damaged her bones so badly that her hip never completely healed.

He said, "I visited my mother in her mud-covered hut several weeks after all of this happened. I watched as she took two bamboo crutches that she had made herself, & moved from one place to another with her feet just dragging behind because she had lost all feeling in them."

He said, "At age 75, with a broken hip, unable to stand on her own two legs, I thought that I made a pretty intelligent suggestion. I suggested that she retire." He said, "She turned around & looked at me & said, 'What value is that? If we try to preserve this body just a few more years & it is not being used for God, of what value is that?'"

So she kept on working. She kept on riding her donkey to villages until she was 93 years old. At age 93 she couldn't stay on her donkey anymore. She kept falling off. But she didn't stop preaching. Indian men would carry her in hammocks from one village to another. And she continued to tell people about Jesus Christ until she died at age 95.

Paul Brand writes, "My most vivid memory of my mother is of her propped up against a stone wall as people are coming to her from their homes, schools, & places of work. I can still see the wrinkles in her face, & her skin so tanned by the weather & the heat.

"I saw her speaking to those people. I looked at them & saw the sparkle in their eyes, & the smiles on their faces. And I saw them deeply moved by the message of God's love, spoken by this old woman. I knew what they saw was not an old woman who had passed her prime, but a beautiful person bringing tidings of love straight from heaven."

This morning, I encourage you to let your hearts look upward, see the Lord high, and lifted up, hear the angels saying.....Holy, Holy, Holy.....then will you look inward, and make sure of your own spiritual condition.....and then you will look outward, and say.....Hear am I; send me !

Will you answer his call this morning ? Come have an encounter with God, and experience transformation!