

# Worship that Transforms

## *The Devastating Beauty of Holiness*

### Worship Matters!

#### Palmetto Baptist Church

#### Summer Series 2023

**Texts: Isaiah 1:11-20; 6:1-13; 40:1-11; 66:1-2, 18-23**

#### ***Isaiah 1:11-20 (Israel's sinful state and worthless worship)***

*"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.<sup>12</sup> "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?<sup>13</sup> Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.<sup>14</sup> Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.<sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,<sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.<sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;<sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

#### ***Isaiah 6:1-13 (Isaiah's First Vision and Commission)***

*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.<sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.<sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"<sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.<sup>5</sup> And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for 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!"<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.<sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."<sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."<sup>9</sup> And he said, "Go, and say to this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."<sup>11</sup> Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste,<sup>12</sup> and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.<sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.*

### *Isaiah 40:1-11 (Isaiah's Second Vision and Commission)*

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." <sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup> Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" <sup>10</sup> Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup> He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*

### *Isaiah 66:1-2, 18-23 (Israel's restoration and global worship – and the earth filled with God's glory like waters covering the sea)*

*Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? <sup>2</sup> All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

<sup>18</sup> "For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. *And they shall come and shall see my glory,* <sup>19</sup> and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. *And they shall declare my glory among the nations.* <sup>20</sup> And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. <sup>21</sup> And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD. <sup>22</sup> "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. <sup>23</sup> From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, *all flesh shall come to worship before me,* declares the LORD.

## **Introduction:**

**For some weeks we have been listening to the Spirit and examining the Word to discover what God has said about the glad worship He desires from His people each week.**

**As I have spent time praying and looking past the surface and peering carefully into some of the key texts where God has said things about worship, I have been impacted by the sheer amount of material God put into His Word about worship! Clearly it is important to Him. And because it is important to Him, it must become important to us!**

**There are two very impactful things that I have seen thus far (I am sure there will be more to come as we move through this series together). One of them is impactful in an expected way; the other is impactful because it is something I did not expect to encounter.**

**First, I have been impacted by the fact that worship is not about the worshiper – it is about God. God is the center of attention and the focus of worship in Scripture. Put plainly, worship is not about the experience of the worshiper. It is not about what the worshipper gets or doesn't get out of corporate worship. It is not about how the worshipper feels about the worship – nor is it primarily about how worship benefits or helps the worshiper. To be sure, our attitude in worship matters (just ask the prophet Malachi). And worship does bring benefit and spiritual health to our lives. BUT those are secondary benefits. Front and center in every worship context described in Scripture is God. All attention is on Him and on His purposes! And frankly, that is not always the case in contemporary worship – and perhaps at times, even our own worship as a church.**

**Second, one of the surprising aspects of worship that has come more sharply into focus for me is the gladness and joyfulness God has designed into worship. Consistently when we are brought into a biblical scene where corporate worship is happening in ways that please God, the worshippers are worshipping joyfully, gladly, and exuberantly (Psalms 95, 96, 100 provide good textual examples).**

**In other words, God designed worship to make us glad and joyful. And this is exactly what we find in the biblical record. Listen to how the Psalmist describes the gladness and joyfulness in our worship that God desires from us when we come and bow down before Him:**

**Psalm 100:1-5. A PSALM FOR GIVING THANKS.**

<sup>1</sup> Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! <sup>2</sup> Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! <sup>3</sup> Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. <sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! <sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**What may not be as evident to us is the astonishing reality that our joy in worship gives God joy!** Our singing about Him and to Him causes His heart to break forth in song over us! Listen to the prophet Zephaniah describe the amazing joy God gets when we joy in Him!

<sup>17</sup> The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.  
*Zephaniah 3:17*

A magnificent thing happens here in this place each week when we come together as His redeemed people and rejoice in Who He is, What He has done, and What He is doing for us! When we exult in God, He exults over us with singing of His own!

And that is why our series on Worship is so important – it has the power to fundamentally reorient the way we think about so much of the way we live before Him.

The transformative power of worship is at the essence of what we are praying for as God uses this series in our personal lives and in our life as a church. To that end, I want to remind us of the five big goals our pastors/elders have for this series and for which we are praying:

- That joyful worship would fuel our glad service to God as a church.
- That thankful worship would be our response to the grand story God tells in the Bible about His glory.
- That our corporate worship would both glorify God and help us intentionally magnify His beauty to the Nations around us.

- That our personal participation in gathered worship would transform us into the likeness of the One we worship each week.
- That we would see worship as so important that each of us would give it our spiritual focus and intentional engagement each week.

**Psalm 95 introduced us to the “Call of Worship” and helped us see the biblical framework God designed for the gathered worship of His people as they come to bow down before Him in joyful, humble, Word-obedient worship!**

**Romans 5:1-2 reminded us of the “Hope of Worship” that fuels our hearts with exuberant, triumphant joy as we celebrate what Jesus has done to regain for us and restore in us the “glory of God” that was lost when Adam sinned.**

**This morning our text from Isaiah 6 is designed to expose us to the “Power of Worship” to transform our lives and bring them into conformity to the likeness of Christ so that we think like He thinks, value what He values, and respond to life and others like He responds (this is what it means to be “Christlike”).**

**And to help us appreciate our own need for this transforming power to be operative in our lives, I want to share a statement made years ago by William Temple (archbishop of Canterbury) about the power of worship to transform our lives.**

*Both for perplexity and for dulled conscience the remedy is the same: sincere and spiritual worship. For worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishing of the mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose – and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.*

*So, if worship rightly done has this kind of transforming power, I must ask myself why it isn't transforming me in this way? Why is my conscience dull? Why is my soul captured by the vain imaginations of this world? Why is my mind weak and malnourished? Why is my heart so cold and loveless toward God and others? Why is my will so weak and powerless to resist the lusts of my flesh? And more importantly - how does worship deliver me from all of these things that reside in me?*

*What is the transformative power in worship and how do I avail myself of that power as I worship this morning?*

The answer to all these desperate desires and to this central question is found in one of the primary passages on worship in the Old Testament - Isaiah 6.

One writer described this chapter as “towering like a majestic peak over the surrounding terrain and is clearly of central importance for the message of the rest of the book!”

So, this morning I want us to climb this peak and find out why it has such an important place in Isaiah’s life and ministry.

### I. The Context for Worship that Transforms (6:1a)

In the year that King Uzziah died

All worship, whether personal or corporate, is offered in the context of the circumstances of our lives. The gathered worship of God’s people rises from and is shaped by the life of the individual and our lives are not lived in temples but in fields, homes, marketplaces, and city squares. It is what happens in those places that provides the context and circumstance from whence we come when we enter to bow down and worship the Lord.

The opening phrase of this chapter reveals the context and the circumstances that were going on in and around Isaiah as he entered the temple in Jerusalem to worship.

*As a prophet*, Isaiah was concerned about the national implications of what was going on around him. *As a priest* he was concerned about the spiritual implications of the external, ritual, lifeless worship that Israel brought to the temple daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. And *as a member of the covenant people of God*, Isaiah was deeply concerned about how the prophetic vision God was showing him would impact his own life and the life of the nation (cf., Isaiah 1:1).

#### ***A. National Uncertainty***

- Both Israel and Judah had enjoyed a lengthy period of peace and prosperity due to two things:
  1. The quietness of the Assyrian Empire (perhaps due to the revival under Jonah; perhaps due to several weak rulers who came after Jonah's time).
  2. Political Stability and Economic Prosperity under two kings who had lengthy successful reigns (Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom; and Azariah or Uzziah in the Southern Kingdom). Uzziah's story is told in 2 Kings 15 and 2 Chron 26.
- Life was good for the people in both kingdoms. Under these two kings, the land that had been lost to Assyria had been regained so that the kingdom was almost as large as it was when Solomon sat on the throne.
- The economy prospered. Rains came; crops grew; life was good in Israel – all of which made the warnings of prophets like Joel, Amos, and Micah seem a bit far-fetched.
- BUT – the times were changing. In the North, the evil king Jeroboam II had recently died and a squabble over his crown ensued. In the South, good King Uzziah, ravaged by leprosy, had also just died and his weak son Jotham reigned briefly only to be replaced by an even weaker and more wicked son, Ahaz (who we meet in Isaiah chapter 7).
- And if political instability were not enough, the giant in the North was stirring – Assyria was once again on the move bringing fear, terror, tribute, and death on her march to regain world domination!

#### ***B. Spiritual Formality***

- In addition to national uncertainty, Isaiah was confronted by the empty, ritualistic, formulaic worship that God's people offered daily, weekly, and yearly at Solomon's temple.
- What mattered to them was form - making sure to do the rituals; offer the sacrifices; do the washings; say the prayers; and offer the praises - in the house of worship. And they were good at this!
- BUT . . . what they were not good at was living according to the covenant of God and by the Wisdom of Torah. While they were concerned to worship correctly at the temple, they were unconcerned about the way their lives violated the moral commands and ethical expectations God had established in the Torah.
- And Isaiah knew how God felt about such worship - in fact he wrote it down and announced it to the worshippers in Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 1:11-20 (Israel's sinful state and worthless worship)**

*"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.<sup>12</sup> "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?<sup>13</sup> Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.<sup>14</sup> Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.<sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,<sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.*

### **C. Personal Difficulty**

- Isaiah's difficulty lay in the fact that he knew something the nation did not know - judgment was on the way!
- Furthermore, as a prophet, he had the difficult job of confronting a nation comfortable in their sins and convinced that all was well - that they needed to repent and respond to God's gracious invitation (1:18-20):

*<sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;<sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

- And so, as this prophet-priest goes into the temple to worship, we see that he comes with a heavy heart, burdened soul, and fearful mind.
- Burdened over what is coming for the nation,
- Grieving the huge loss of his first cousin, the King (Isiah was probably related to Uzziah by family lineage),
- And fearful of what God had called him to do,
- Isaiah stands before the Lord . . . to worship.
- And this is often how we come as well . . . with these same burdens, griefs, and fears . . . we come, and we bow down and as we do, something unexpected and amazing happens . . .

## **II. The Content of Worship that Transforms (6:1-3)**

- As a priest, Isaiah had access to the holy place in the Temple where the altar of incense, 7-branched menorah, and the table of showbread were located – symbolizing important parts of Israel's covenant relationship with God. The light of the menorah represented the wisdom of God in the Torah. The table of showbread represented God's commitment to provide richly for His beloved people as well as fellowship with Him around the table He spread for them. And the altar of incense represented the sweet joy God received from the thankful gratitude of His people offered up in constant intercessory prayer as well as His commitment to hear and answer the petitions they brought before His great throne!
- And so, on the day appointed to him, Isaiah entered the holy place to offer incense on the altar and to worship with Israel assembled before the doors at the time of daily prayer (as in the day of Zechariah the priest in Luke 1-2).
- And just like Zechariah saw something spectacular when Gabriel appeared to announce the birth of John the Baptist; Isaiah had an even more spectacular vision! It appears the curtain separating the holy of holies and the ark therein from where Isaiah stood disappeared – and instead of the ark and the cherubim, Isaiah was confronted with a

glorious sight – a massive throne – high and lifted up – marvelous in design and spectacular in beauty. And as his eyes moved up from the base of the throne, he sees someone so glorious and so majestic that the whole temple is filled with his glory.

- And the person sitting on the throne is God! Isaiah's title for Him in the book is “The Holy One of Israel” and he uses this title 25x in the book (it occurs just six other times in the rest of the OT).

#### *A. The Vision of the Sovereign (6:1)*

- As wonderful and majestic as Uzziah may have been, this King (“*I saw the King*”) was unmatched in His glory and majesty.
- His robes were so splendid and majestic they filled the entire temple – not the little temple Isaiah was in (Solomon’s glorious temple) but the temple that is Heaven (not that is in heaven . . . that is heaven).
- And there is no question about His majesty, might, or authority! Later, He is called the “Lord of Hosts” which speaks to his might and authority over all the armies of heaven ,and His sovereignty over all the kingdoms and armies on earth!
- Judah may have lost King Uzziah; but a much greater king was still on His throne; and, this King was their king!!
- *This is what Isaiah sees . . . but we are also told what he hears!*

#### *B. The Voice of the Seraphs (6:2-3)*

- There are majestic angelic beings that surround the throne of God – beings with the appearance of fire.
- They have six wings – two for covering their face (even perfect beings can’t gaze into perfect, majestic holiness), two for covering their feet (a sign of deep humility, respect, and submission), and two for flight (in obedience to the commands given by the One on the Throne).
- And they are singing back and forth to each other (that is the implication of the idea of calling to one another). And the content of

what they sing to each other continually is the awesome, matchless, stunningly beautiful holiness of God!

- Holiness is more than just moral and ethical rectitude – so much more. It speaks to the totality of the perfections and the uniqueness of God in every category that exists. God is in a class by Himself – there is no one like Him!
- And the beauty of this majestic perfection is something at which the entire universe marvels and praises!
- And the Seraphim make an astonishing pronouncement – “*The whole earth is full of His glory!*” (6:3)
- How is this possible? Isaiah has just come from a political, spiritual, and personal context where no one was thinking about the glory of God . . . so how can these Seraphim say that His glory fills the earth?
- They stand on a much higher plane and can see what we can’t, and what they see is a new heaven and a new earth so filled with God’s glory that the nations will all come to see, experience, and celebrate the glory of God (Isaiah 66:18-23)!
- *When Isaiah heard and saw the glory of this Holy God – it transformed his life. When God is on the throne; we are not!*
- And we have an even greater vision that what he saw that day . . . we have seen Christ! The One who came from Heaven to reveal the Father. He was full of grace and truth and we beheld His glory – a glory like that of the Father! *So how is it we miss Him?*
- Perhaps we are so preoccupied with life, we content ourselves with lesser glories of worship – what we get out of it; how we feel; what we like or don’t like; what we learned or didn’t learn; etc.
- And because we settle for lesser glories, we miss the greater glory
- Isaiah points us to and consequently, we leave unchanged.
- But this was not the case with Isaiah! Note his response:

### III. The Response to Worship that Transforms (6:4-7)

What happens when we truly see God as He is as we worship?

#### A. *Cosmic Response – the foundations shook (6:4)*

- So powerful was the song of the Seraphim and so joyous its acclamation the entire temple shook with their joyful singing!
- So pleasing was this to the Lord that His glory filled the temple!
- What would happen if we sang this way to one another in worship and shook this building with our praise to the One on the throne?

### ***B. Personal Response – Humble Confession (6:5)***

- Listen to Isaiah's response to all this: "*Woe is me! I am undone!*"
- Six times in the previous chapter, Isaiah pronounced woe on others for their sins and wickedness (5:8,11,18,20,21,22).
- But when he saw this vision of God on His throne, he stopped pronouncing woe on those around him and said, "*Woe is me!*"
- He recognized his own deep sinfulness and realized that he was devastated and undone before the Holy God of Israel in whose presence he had entered to worship.
- Do you see your own sinfulness when you come to worship? Or do the sins of others so fill your eyes that you can't see your own?
- Are you so exercised with the sins of our political leaders that that you can't see your own devastation before God? Are you so angry at the sins others have committed against you or are committing around you, that you excuse your own sinfulness?
- *The truth is that when you come to worship with a heart of moral indignation, self-righteous infuriation, or even self-justified anger – you won't see God!* And that is why you come week after week and leave as you came – unchanged.
- Isaiah saw God (*for I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts*) – and then he saw himself. And when he saw himself, he humbled himself and confessed his own desperate condition!
- And when Isaiah spoke in humble confession out of spiritual brokenness and devastation – God intervened!

### ***C. Divine Response – Compassionate Cleansing (6:6-7)***

- God Himself made a provision that atoned for Isaiah's sin and removed His guilt.
- The provision was on the altar (probably the great altar) – something had been sacrificed as a whole burnt offering for sin.

- God commanded one of the Seraph's to take a coal from that altar and touch Isaiah's lips – and when the coal touched his lips it did not bring pain but cleansing! And the proof of his cleansing was the message God authorized the Seraph to deliver – *"Your sin has been atoned and your guilt removed!"*
- And this is precisely what needed to happen to the nation itself! Isaiah announced that he was a man of unclean lips dwelling among a people of unclean lips! The same atonement and cleansing he experienced here is what the nation desperately needed to experience. *AND Isaiah had the cure.*
- But to experience the cleansing three essential things needed to happen: 1) they needed to see a vision of God; 2.) they needed to humble themselves and confess; and 3.) they needed to hear (and receive) the word of the King!
- And so do we! We must ask God to help us see Him, respond in humble confession, and hear His word each week!

#### **IV. The Impact of Worship that Transforms (6:8-10)**

**What happens when we encounter the cleansing, consecrating power of a vision of God in worship? This kind of worship has powerful impact that shapes our lives and redirects our purpose.**

##### **A. A willing messenger (v. 8)**

- As soon as Isaiah heard God speak, he immediately and eagerly volunteered! It is as though Isaiah presented himself and beseeched God to let him be the one to go!
- His purposes, goals, plans, and agendas vanished in the sound of God's voice – *"Whom shall we send and who will go for us?"*

##### **B. A divine message (vv. 9-10)**

- Isaiah went on to spend the rest of his life declaring this message and writing it down in the book that bears his name!
- What was the message? It was a gracious invitation from the Lord he was authorized to deliver – *"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of*

*the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword (of Assyria); for the mouth of the Lord has spoken!" (Isaiah 1:18-20)*

- And God is very honest with his eager prophet – “*When you go and announce this gracious message to this nation – they will harden their hearts and refuse to hear!*”
- In other words, instead of convincing the people to repent, Isaiah’s gracious message would harden them!
- And before we judge Israel for the hardness of their heart, we must look hard at our own response week after week to the gracious, kind word from God inviting us to repent!

## V. The Consequence of Worship that Transforms (6:11-13)

But what will sustain a man like Isaiah on a mission like this where for the next 60 years he would preach to people he loved and his preaching would actually harden their hearts and bring judgment?

### A. Deep compassion (6:11)

- “*How long . . . O Lord?*” – he was moved by deep compassion for the people to whom he was being sent.

### B. Unshakable commitment (6:11-13)

- “*Isaiah, you are to stick to this until the judgment you dread has come upon this nation – until the cities are wasted and ruined, the houses are empty, the land is desolate, and my people have been carried away into captivity!*

### C. Unbroken confidence (6:13c)

- “*Isaiah, when I have destroyed my people and cut down David's house, I will leave a stump! And from that stump will grow a seed . . . a holy seed!*”
- So, what is this stump and who is this holy seed?
- And the answer is the glorious, unexpected thing Isaiah saw that day in the temple when He saw God on His throne!
- There is a glorious holy seed out of which will come someone called the Root of Jesse (Is. 11:10) who will fix everything (Is. 11)!
- *And this “Root of Jesse” is the one sitting on the throne!*
- John tells us who Isaiah saw – he was looking at Jesus!! (Jn 12:41).

## VI. The Means by which Worship Transforms (6:13c)

### A. *The Holy One of Israel will do something*

- He will make an atonement that will take away their guilt and cleanse them from their sins!
- *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed! (Isaiah 53:4-5)*

### B. *For the Holy Seed of Israel*

- *Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior! (Isaiah 43:1-3)*

### C. *Through the Root of Jesse*

- *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, an a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord! (Isaiah 11:1-3)*
- And this “Root of Jesse will establish a gardenlike kingdom for His people marked by righteousness and flavored with shalom and global worship of Yahweh! (Isaiah 11:4-9)

### D. *That will draw the nations*

- *In that day the Root of Jesse , who shall stand as a signal for the peoples – of Him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious! (Isaiah 11:10)*

### E. *And fill the earth with His glory*

- *For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea! (Isaiah 11:9)*

## Conclusion:

- But in the meantime, in the middle of what was and what is to come, God's glory has filled a people – the Church.
- We have seen Jesus – who came to reveal the Father's glory – the glory that Isaiah saw in the temple that day.
- We have seen His glory through Jesus and what is more, we have been given a share in that glory.
- Like Isaiah, we have been commissioned to speak for Him.
- But like Isaiah, perhaps we have been so busy pronouncing woes on those around us that we have forgotten what happens when we stand in the presence of a Holy God and listen to the joyful worship that constantly surrounds His throne!
- *So what must happen for worship to transform us as it did Isaiah?*
- First we must be devastated and humbled by a vision of God as we come to worship so that part of our worship is our humble confession of what our vision of God has helped us to see about ourselves.
- Only then are we in a position for God to cleanse, consecrate, and commission us to speak the message God has for the nations (a message of gospel grace that will harden many but reach some).
- And when we are made conscious of our own sinfulness and reminded of the immense mercy we ourselves have received, we become genuinely compassionate for those to whom we are sent!
- And we are comforted by the broad scope of God's stunning plan and sovereign providence (He will provide the Servant Who will make an atonement for our sins and for the sins of the world!).
- BUT . . . for any of this to happen for us, something must first happen in us. *And what must happen in us can only happen when God grants us a vision of His holiness that devastates our pride, removes our self-righteousness, and destroys all of our petty plans and purposes.*
- And then that same Holy God will Himself atone for our sins, remove our guilt, and repurpose our life for His own great end – so that we will have a part in how He intends to fill the earth with His glory!!
- *But what about now . . . when life is hard, dark, and bleak around us? The prophet Habakkuk had an answer: Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on*

*the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,<sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

- This is the true power of worship – worship that transforms!