

Worship That Transforms (Part 2)
Worship That Consecrates and
Commissions Us for God's Service

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.¹² "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?"¹³ 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.¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.¹⁸ "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.¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;²⁰ 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.² 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.³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.⁵ 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!"⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."⁸ 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."⁹ And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'¹⁰ 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."¹¹ 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,¹² and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.¹³ 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. ² 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. ³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ 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. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ 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. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹ 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!" ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ 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? ² 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.

¹⁸ "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, ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD. ²² "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. ²³ 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.

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.

Last Sunday we looked carefully and prayerfully at the first part of Isaiah 6, which showed us 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”). *In other words, we saw the power of worship to convict and cleanse us from sin and consecrate us to God’s service!*

We were given front row seats as Isaiah the prophet-priest entered the holy sanctuary of Solomon’s temple, most likely to offer incense on the golden altar inside the Holy Place during the time of evening prayers. We saw his deep burden for the uncertainty of the nation, his grief over the loss of his cousin, King Uzziah, and his fearfulness at God’s displeasure with the empty rituals that His people offered Him when they came to worship.

And we witnessed what Isaiah saw and heard when he saw God seated on His throne in heaven!

- God opened Isaiah’s eyes so that he could see beyond the circumstances that were so difficult for him when he came to worship that day. God opened Isaiah’s ears so he could hear the content of heavenly worship as the seraphim sang about the majestic beauty of God’s holiness with such joy that it literally shook the entire temple in which Isaiah stood.**
- And we listened in stunned silence and not a little confusion when we heard them say, “The whole earth is full of His glory!” (6:3).**

- **How is this so? Isaiah had come from being in the midst of a people of sinful lips who were more interested in the establishment of their own kingdom than the establishment of God's righteous kingdom!**
- **But before we judge them too quickly, it might be good for us to think about which kingdom has occupied our thinking, shaped our desires, and received our time, energy, and resources this past week!**
- **Have we been occupied with advancing and building God's kingdom or have we been more concerned about our own? Worship that truly transforms begins with a vision of God that results in the radical transformation of our own vision and mission!**
- **This is exactly what happened to Isaiah when he worshipped that day – he was transformed! And that transformation started with a recognition of his own deep sinfulness that led to a humble confession – “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!” (6:5).**
- **Isaiah's *confession led to his cleansing* – God sent a seraph with a coal from the altar to touch Isaiah's lips and to declare that guilt had been removed and his sin had been atoned! (6:6-7).**
- **God had made an atonement for his sins and a cleansing for his guilt – and now Isaiah was ready and *consecrated for whatever mission and commission* God had in mind!**
- **Which is where we left Isaiah at the end of our time last Sunday – convicted of His utter unworthiness, cleansed of the defilement of his guilt, and forgiven of the immensity of his sin.**
- **Worship has the power to transform us by convicting us of our unworthiness to stand in the presence of a holy God, and it has the power to transform us by pointing us to the provision that glorious God has made to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all our unrighteousness if we are willing to confess them and repent from them (1 John 1:9). And when we left**

Isaiah, he was forgiven, cleansed, and consecrated by God, and now he was ready for whatever came next in God's purposes for him. And that is where we want to rejoin Isaiah and let him tell us that *worship has the transforming power to consecrate and commission people like us in great service to this glorious King whom our eyes have seen (Is. 6:5b).*

· **If you remember, when we looked at the first part of this chapter, we noted that one writer said that this chapter "*tower(s) like a majestic peak over the surrounding terrain and is clearly of central importance for the message of the rest of the book!*" And as we climbed to the top, we observed several things along the way:**

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

A. National Uncertainty

B. Spiritual Formality

C. Personal Difficulty

- **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.**
- **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)

- **Isaiah saw someone sitting on the throne of heaven who is resplendent in glory . . . breathtaking in majesty . . . awesome in holy beauty . . . matchless in might and authority!**
- **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)

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

- When Isaiah heard and saw the glory of this Holy God – it transformed his life. We have an even greater vision. . . we have seen Christ! *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 was the response to what Isaiah heard and saw?

A. Cosmic Response – The Foundations Shook (6:4)

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

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

We left Isaiah humbled by his sinful condition, cleansed by a compassionate God, and consecrated for service – but what would that service look like? And that is what we see next in the narrative – worship has the power to transform us by cleansing us from sin, but it also transforms us by moving our hearts away from our little kingdoms to embrace a great commission to serve the kingdom of this great King!

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 Gracious Invitation (v. 8)

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

- It is important to note that God is not desperately wringing His hands wondering who (if anyone) would be willing to come and serve Him in this mission.

- God is not desperate for servants, nor does He need them!

- In fact, the Scriptures teach an amazing and surprising truth:

1. God is very different from the gods of the nations who constantly had to be served and carried by those who worshipped them – the true God speaking to Isaiah *“made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything!”* (Acts 17:24-26)

2. Unlike all other Gods, this God came down and tabernacled among men not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

3. No one has ever seen or conceived of a god like Isaiah’s God – *“the Holy One of Israel!”* *“From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God beside (like) you, who acts for those who wait for Him.”* (Isaiah 64:4).

- So if God doesn’t need servants, and if He himself serves those who worship Him . . . then what is going on here in this text where God appears to be asking for someone to volunteer to be a servant on a mission?

- God is actually giving Isaiah a wonderful, glorious, gracious invitation to be a part of the most majestic mission ever seen in the universe!

- This mission may start in the streets of Jerusalem, but it will end in a far more glorious place – a new heaven and earth filled with God’s glory!!

Isaiah 66:18-23

“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,¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ *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.* ²¹ *And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.* ²² *“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.”* ²³ *From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.*

- **This is the mission God is bringing about . . . and He is the one who will supply all that is needed for the mission! He will call and consecrate the servants; He will gift them; He will provide the strength they need; and He will do the necessary spiritual work in the hearts of others . . . God will act on behalf of those who wait for Him!**

- **Illustration: World cup championship game. Best player sets up the winning shot and stops the game, comes over to the bench where you have been all season, and asks you if you want to kick the ball in the goal to win the world championship for the team!**

- **This is what God is up to when He invites Isaiah to participate in the mission He is accomplishing for His glory!**

B. A Willing Servant (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?”**
- **And that is what must happen if we are to serve God gladly and joyfully with all of our strength for all of our days!**
- **Something big enough must fill our vision to draw us away from all the little kingdoms that matter so much to us and demand so much from us – and some of those kingdoms may be good in and of themselves.**

- We give ourselves to so many kingdoms that we have little time, energy, or inclination to serve in God's church – the present manifestation of His kingdom.
- We give ourselves to kingdoms that matter and to which we should give time and attention . . . but often those kingdoms take priority over the central and most significant thing in God's plan for us today – His Church (Eph. 3:21).
- Most of us are not giving ourselves to “bad” kingdoms. We are giving our strength to good kingdoms like our marriages, our families, our careers, our education, or our community involvement – but all those kingdoms, as good and as necessary as they are, are lesser kingdoms than the one God is building through His Church.
- While we must not neglect the responsibilities we have in our marriage, our families, and the stewardship of our jobs – we must do all of those in service to God's greater kingdom and for His greater glory! And when our priorities are properly centered on the right kingdom – all the other kingdoms will flourish long term!
- But for this to happen, we must see the King and not just the kingdom over which He rules. And when Isaiah saw the King and understood His mission, when He called, Isaiah answered.

C. A Divine Commission (vv. 9-10)

- God's mission was actually a commission – *“Go and say to this people”*
- 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!
- The fact that we reject the message does not change the gracious nature of the message – it just reveals the hardness of our heart and the stubbornness of our will.
- Year after year this nation heard Isaiah’s message. He warned them of their sin. He rebuked them for their empty worship. He reminded them of their obligations as God’s covenant people. He called them to repent. He put God’s gracious invitation of forgiveness and cleansing (the very cleansing he received) before them . . . but they would not hear.
- And just as God said, their hearts were hardened!
- And that can happen to us as we hear His Word week after week!

D. A Sustaining Promise (v. 13)

- There will be a holy seed!
- Produced and sustained by the “Holy One of Israel!”

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, and 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)***

- **Isaiah spent his entire life on this grand mission – speaking faithfully to God’s people.**
- **And like God said, they did harden their hearts, close their ears, and shut their eyes to his words and God’s gracious invitation.**
- **Eventually the judgment God announced arrived – and Isaiah, speaking prophetically, spoke of the destruction that would happen 100 years after his death, “*Our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary . . . our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire!*” (Isaiah 63:18b; 64:11).**
- **And Isaiah cries out . . . “*O that you would rend the heavens and come down!*” (Isaiah 64:1)**

- **And 800 years later, a man named John is baptizing in the Jordan River when Jesus comes to be baptized. Listen to Mark’s account of what happened that day (Mark 1:9-11):**
In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”
- **John tells us that Jesus was the one Isaiah saw sitting on the throne of Heaven that day when he worshipped in Solomon’s temple (John 12:41)!**
- **God did hear Isaiah’s cry . . . and He did rend the heavens and come down! Jesus stepped off this glorious throne and was born as a man and took upon Himself the role of a servant (Phil 2:5-11) so that He could “act” for those who wait for Him (Isaiah 64:4). And “act” He did! His active obedience fulfilled the demand of the Law so that we could be righteous. His voluntary, substitutionary death satisfied the penalty of the Law so we could live and not die!**
- **And when this God came down and died on the cross, He rent the veil in the temple that stood between us and the throne of God (Mk 15:38-39) and opened the way so that we could enter and approach that throne boldly to receive grace and not judgment (Heb 10:19-25).**

- **And just before He ascended back to Heaven to sit on that throne Isaiah saw, He invited His disciples to do the same mission He invited Isaiah to do so many centuries earlier – to go to the nations with the news of the kingdom of this great King! To evangelize them, initiate them into His Church, and teach them to live as His joy-filled disciples!**

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, ¹⁸ 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!**