

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

At ten years of age I watched a movie on television, King of Kings. It showed the whole life of Jesus. The Jesus that I had read about in Sunday school really did do the things the Bible said he did. My Sunday school teachers were correct. Jesus loved the people, healed the people, did nothing but good and then the people killed him on a cross. They showed the pounding of the nails and the sound it made pierced my heart. I had been taught in Sunday school that Jesus went to the cross because of our sin, because of my sin. It is one thing to read about the cross. It is quite another thing to see Jesus on the cross on television bleeding profusely. Fortunately, we had a person preparing to be a missionary nurse living in our home at the time. I went to bed in tears knowing what my sins cost Jesus. It was that night that Mary led me in the sinner's prayer. "Lord Jesus please forgive for my sins and come into my life." It was that night that I heard the call of God on my life and answered it by receiving His grace that saved my soul for all eternity. There is nothing more important than God's calling on your life. I will say that again. There is nothing more important than God's calling on your life. When we say yes to Jesus, new life enters us. The Holy Spirit moves in and takes up permanent residence.

To this day I show the crucifixion in the confirmation class. No one is confirmed here unless they have honestly prayed the sinner's prayer. I do not want anyone to miss their calling that brings them into relationship with Jesus Christ. My purpose in getting out of bed each day is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, both to Christians and non-believers. **1. Once you are called you want everyone to come to Christ and be saved.** That desire comes with God's call on your life. It is most difficult to remain quiet about the greatest gift ever, being saved by grace through faith, adopted into the family of God. We are sons and daughters of adoption. God's call brings us into God's family, the family of God. When God calls, please don't give him the busy signal, or hang up on God. He wants to get

through to you and send His Spirit to live inside of you. When Luther finally heard the call of the Gospel through the words of Paul, he felt like he had entered Paradise. When I prayed to receive Christ, I did not feel any different at all. No thunder, no lightening, simply an acceptance of God's love and grace. It was quiet and the Holy Spirit moved in permanently. It is all a work of the Spirit.

Friends, I know we are living in troubled times. **2. There is tribulation everywhere.** This is very personal to me. I honestly believe every problem you are facing in your marriage, in your work, in your home, and in your life, will be overcome through knowing God on a deeper level than you do now. All of life's difficulties will not disappear, but the deeper you know God the more life does make sense. **3. The deeper you know God; you will not have all the answers, but you will be intimately acquainted with the one who does have all the answers.** And the deeper you know God; you know that everything that happens to you comes from God for your good and for the greater glory of God. You do not even fear bad news. The deeper you know God; you will find yourself thanking God for every situation for God's Presence is right there supporting you. I honestly do not know how people live without knowing God.

My two lifetime heroes are Billy Graham and Corrie Ten Boom. Billy Graham has spoken to more people than any one in history, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, wanting all to be saved. Corrie Ten Boom suffered immensely for hiding and protecting Jews from being taken into Auschwitz, gassed and burned during World War II. She and her family served Christ faithfully until they breathed their last breaths. Billy Graham wrote this over 40 years ago when speaking about Corrie Ten Boom. "This is one of the most amazing lives of the century! It constantly shows how God's grace and love can sustain us in the worst of times. Corrie Ten Boom and her family stood up for persons in a minority group, the Jews. It cost most of them their lives. **4. The greatest need in the church today (writes Billy Graham) is to realize judgment is coming, troubles are coming, and we must have disciplined, hearty Christian**

lives. This is the example of the experience of Corrie Ten Boom and her family, of Christian lives disciplined by the Word of God and the power of His Spirit giving strength and courage to fight evil and to triumph over it” (Joan Winmill Brown, Corrie, The Lives She Touched. pg. 11).

The only way to be a disciplined hearty Christian and stand tall for Christ in these evil days is to have a growing knowledge of God, to never be satisfied by what you already know about God, and to have an insatiable appetite for God and God’s truth. **5. The days are not going to get any easier so our faith in God must grow stronger.**

There is one chapter in the Old Testament that teaches me more about God than any other chapter in the Old Testament. The Bible tells us much about God but in Isaiah 6, we get to see God.

Isaiah 6:1, “In the year that King Uzziah died...” I believe that Isaiah was deeply saddened at the death of the King. Some of you here are mature enough age wise to remember when FDR died. It seemed like he had been president forever. I will never forget the day JFK died. The entire nation mourned as we saw Jackie Kennedy, John John, and Caroline without their husband, their Daddy, for our President was no more.

Uzziah was one of the better kings who for the most part did “what was right in the sight of God.” God blessed the nation under his rule, but his success went to his head and his pride got the better of him. He thought himself superior, a cut above the rest. The Bible says, “But when he was strong, he grew proud to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord his God to burn incense on the altar of incense” (2 Chronicle 26:16). In the book of Leviticus two sons of Aaron were put to death by God for burning incense wrongfully. When Uzziah sinned against God in the temple 88 priests stood there to correct him. Instead of humbling himself before the priests and God in repentance he became angry and held onto the censers. The Bible says, “leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord.” When you think you are better than those around you, when

you think you have superior knowledge, when you think you are above it all watch out, take heed lest you fall. "Pride cometh before a fall." God sees all things. God knew Uzziah's proud heart and mind and struck him with leprosy. I see God being gracious to Uzziah, striking him with leprosy and not death as he did to the sons of Aaron. Uzziah lived in a separate house until he died and could never again enter the temple. When God humbles those with pride, it marks them, and they are never the same. Watch out.

Uzziah was dead and Isaiah enters the temple possibly to receive consolation in a time of national and personal grief (R C Sproul, The Holiness of God. pg. 32). Little did he know what he was about to see. The earthly king was dead, but the true King was reigning above. "In the year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 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."

The angels, called seraphim, are heavenly creatures. Even though they are sinless they cannot gaze at Jehovah. They have to cover their eyes and even their feet in the Presence of God. When Jesus comes again our positions in heaven will be higher than the angels for then we will see God face to face. The angels are not given that right in the exalted presence of God.

6. Every person who has been born again has a place in his or her own soul that longs to see God. Isaiah is given that privilege and He was never the same. With eyes full of a vision of God, his ears hear what is said in the Throne Room, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (v.3). Friends this one verse tells us more about God than one sermon can ever cover. This one verse answers so many of our questions of who God is. And when you are 96 you will still be learning more of what this verse means in Isaiah's vision of old.

In our English language we have ways of adding emphasis to words. A person can be hungry. Another one can be hungrier. And another can be the hungriest. Each ending adds

significance. In Hebrew poetry in order to give emphasis, God is called the trifold holy. Holy, Holy, Holy. It is the only one of God's attributes that is given this emphasis. We never read that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath. But the one attribute of God that is the most clear to see and utterly describes that vision of God is the trifold holy.

7. There is no one or nothing that compares to God. The angels are finite, but God is infinite. There is not one thing on this earth that even resembles God. When we see Yahweh God for the first time, we will know then that nothing even compares to what we will see. And when we see Him in His holiness, His holiness will wear off on us and we too will be holy.

One scholar writes this of the threefold holy. "It is perfection x perfection x perfection. His holiness is simply his God – ness in all his attributes, works, and ways. God alone is God. He is not like us. God is in a different category all together (Dr Raymond C Ortlund Jr, Isaiah. pg. 77).

Friends, compared to God, we do not know anything, even the person with the most degrees. Friends, compared to God, we are absolutely nothing no matter how high a view we have of ourselves. Doused in God's holiness this week I felt convicted of the times I have questioned God. God's holiness means there is no evil in God. He is utterly pure and always right. God cannot make a mistake nor has he. When we see God all of our questions and unbelief will be gone. And when you first lay eyes on God, you will only be able to do so because God Almighty chose you, selected you, and birthed faith in you by his grace through faith. **8. God is so holy that no one can even come to him unless he or she is personally called and literally brought into His Presence.**

The whole earth is full of his glory. God's glory is God delighting in Himself. God delights in being God and spreading His goodness everywhere. God is here with us and He takes delight in His work in your life. The universe itself speaks of God's glory. God delights in what he made. God's glory is all around us and what most glorifies God is when you enjoy God and take delight in God. The Bible says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your

heart.” In some mysterious way the Throne Room extends to this earth. The Bible says, “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool” (Acts 7:49). God’s reign is everywhere. We have not been given eyes to see as did Isaiah. But one day heaven will take over entirely and our vision of God will be complete.

God’s holiness encompassed Isaiah and Isaiah found himself in the depths of despair. As beautiful as it was to see the holiness of God, it was just as awful to see and feel how utterly sinful and rotten Isaiah realized he truly was. His sin began to kill him in God’s holy Presence. We most often deal with one sin at a time. Isaiah was confronted with all of his sin at once. He was becoming completely undone, dis-integrating. Because of his sin he had no right to lay eyes upon what he saw and he knew it. The first words Isaiah speaks about himself in this book is a word of judgment upon himself. Woe is me! His pride is purged. He is no better than any of his generation. He is being humbled.

One of the seraphim got involved and brought a burning coal and touched the mouth of Isaiah. “The burning coal symbolizes the finished work of Christ on the cross” (ibid pg. 81). “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sins atoned for” (v. 7). When Isaiah gets caught up into eternity there is no such thing as time. The blood that Jesus shed on the cross, the death of Jesus on the cross for sin, Isaiah now receives full pardon. He has been purified and made fully right with God by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

With Isaiah fully forgiven, a work of grace, God speaks words of call to Isaiah and Isaiah is now officially a spokesperson for God. And now you know the call of Isaiah. Amen and Amen.