



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: PRAYER REVERENCE (UPWARD) • ISAIAH 6:1-7 •

1/14/2024

MAIN POINT

The holiness of God is a cornerstone of His greatness.

INTRODUCTION

When was a time in your life you felt unworthy or overshadowed in the presence of someone else? Was it an awe-inspiring experience or a discouraging experience? Explain.

What are the benefits of recognizing our unworthiness before God? Specifically, what are the benefits to our relationships, our outreach efforts, as well as our own spiritual growth?

You have likely experienced the sense of feeling unworthy. Perhaps you were in the presence of a famous person (if so, maybe the experience was exciting). Or perhaps

you were in the presence of an authority figure (if so, maybe the experience was intimidating). Whatever the case, the thrill or reverence you experienced can't begin to touch the experience of being gripped by the holiness of God. The holiness of God is de-scribed in the pages of Scripture as an overpowering experience. Great men are brought low to the ground, humbled, and often terrified. However, like James MacDonald explains, the good news is that God chooses to be near and engaged with His people to make them holy like He is holy.

UNDERSTANDING

Have a volunteer read Isaiah 6:1-4.

What does this passage tell us about God's holiness?

What is the significance of the angels repeating "holy" three times?

Why did the angels cover their faces and their feet?

King Uzziah might not be a household name nowadays, but he led the people of Israel for 52 years. His death left the nation in chaos as everyone fretted over who would take his place. Isaiah felt the weight of this chaos in his heart, but then he saw Lord, the ultimate monarch, the sovereign, the ruler of everything, on His throne in all His holiness. James MacDonald also points out that God is noticeably not fretting. Instead, He is sitting! He is not pacing, He is not stressed, and He is not wondering what will come next. He is in control, His plan is marching forward, and He is ruling with His feet kicked up. As we see in these verses, God's holiness is so overwhelming that the angles were using 4 of their 6 wings to cover themselves as a sign of reverence. The repetition of "holy" in this passage gives force and weight to the statement. As James MacDonald says, "God is not holy. God is not holy, holy. God is Holy, holy, holy!"

READ ISAIAH 6:5-7.

What do you suppose Isaiah meant when he said that he was “ruined”?

Based on the verses we’ve read from Isaiah 6, what words would you use to describe God?

What does this passage teach us about the affects of God’s holiness on sinful people?

What does this passage teach us about the affects of God’s grace on sinful people?

Holiness means “separateness, sacredness, set-apartness.” Our God is holy, meaning He is pure, righteous, perfect, and set apart from everything evil and unclean. It is only naturally, then, for man to become gripped by his own sinfulness in the presence of our holy God. However, as James MacDonald says, God doesn’t want us to simply wallow in our own unworthiness in the face of His holiness. He wants us to recognize our desperate need for Him. More than that, He wants to reach out to us in His grace and make us holy as He is holy.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Why is holiness a difficult concept for us to grasp?

How would you explain the holiness of God to someone who doesn't know Him personally?

Holiness is unreachable by our own means. What steps does God take to make holiness a possibility for each of us?

PRAYER

Thank God for His incorruptible holiness, for being completely pure and righteous with-out compromise. Ask Him in His grace to help you avoid the pitfalls of pride and apathy as He makes you holy.

COMMENTARY

ISAIAH 6:1-7

6:1-13 Most prophets record a time when God called them to their ministry. Moses received God's call at the burning bush (Ex 3). Jeremiah heard God tell him that he had been chosen from the womb to deliver a message of judgment and salvation to the nations (Jer 1:4-10). Ezekiel experienced an incredible vision while he was in exile in Babylon (Ezek 1:4-3:27). Isaiah received his commissioning vision in the temple, but in his vision the temple was transformed into the throne room of heaven itself.

6:1 King Uzziah (called "Azariah" in 2Ki 15:3) died about 740 b.c. He had been a relatively good king, and did "what was right in the Lord's sight" (2Ki 15:3), though he did not remove the high places. God also blessed Uzziah's reign with prosperity and military success. His death, coupled with the rise of Assyria, created great

uncertainty in Judah. Note that God is so great that His robe (the Hb suggests just the seam of His robe) filled the temple.

6:2 The seraphim were angelic creatures of great power and importance. Their name means “burning ones,” and the implication of fire evokes thoughts of danger and mystery. Covering their eyes shielded them from the brilliance of the divine glory. Covering their feet (possibly used here as a euphemism) may have been a posture of submission.

6:3 The word holy spoken three times is emphatic or superlative and points to God’s otherness. He is completely separated from anything profane or sinful. His sovereignty is underlined by the fact that His glory filled the whole earth.

6:5 In the presence of such holiness, Isaiah felt the weight of his own sinfulness. He feared for himself because he knew that God did not tolerate uncleanness in His presence.

6:6–7 God prepared Isaiah by cleansing his lips, the instrument by which he would execute his prophetic task. He did this symbolically by having one of His seraphim touch the prophet’s lips with a burning coal. Fire can purify (Num 31:22–23), and this burning coal was taken from the altar where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin (1Ch 6:49).