



OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THE GOOD NEWS: IT'S YOUR STORY TO TELL

THE VISION

SEPTEMBER 24-30, 2017

SERMON OUTLINE

The Vision

Acts 10:1–11:18

1. God's Story of Good News Includes the Unacceptable

2. God's Story of Good News Calls the Helpless sinner

1Corinthians 15:3-8

God's Story is now Your Story to Tell

John 1:12; Romans 10:9

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

The Spirit uses visions to spread the Good News.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Have you ever experienced anything so remarkable or unexpected that you had trouble accurately representing your experience to someone else (you couldn't find the words to describe it or your emotions and thoughts)? Describe both that experience and what your struggle to share it was like.

2. Frequently in Scripture God uses visions to reveal more of Himself and His plan to His people. In addition to Peter’s vision in Acts 10, what are some other examples you can think of, and what purpose did they serve?

Leader: We have likely all had a moment when we’ve encountered something so remarkable or unexpected that words fail us. When Isaiah received a vision of the Lord (Isa. 6), that was his experience as well. As we continue in our series, “The Good News: It’s Your Story to Tell,” we turn our focus to the Spirit’s use of visions to spread the good news. Visions are a common way God revealed more of Himself and His plans to people in Scripture (exs: Ezekiel, Daniel, and other Old Testament prophets; Paul in Acts 9; John in Revelation). When God gave Isaiah the vision we will read about today, the goal was to motivate Isaiah to spread God’s message.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 6:1-4.](#)

Leader: The death of King Uzziah marked a significant transition for Judah. Although Uzziah followed God, he foolishly chose not to destroy the high places built to worship other gods. Judah enjoyed economic prosperity during Uzziah’s 52-year reign. Unfortunately, Uzziah’s success led to arrogance and sin against God. As punishment, Uzziah suffered from a terrible skin disease at the end of his life. Uzziah’s death signaled an end to Judah’s stability, and many wondered what the future might bring. The people of Judah were concerned about their future. There is no doubt that Isaiah shared their concern. As Isaiah prayed in the temple, God transported the prophet through a vision into the heavenly realm.

3. When King Uzziah died, the prophet Isaiah received a vision from God. What details did Isaiah’s vision include about God?

4. How do you define “holiness”? Why is God’s holiness significant?

Leader: Hearing played a significant role in Isaiah’s vision, as did seeing. The seraphim (heavenly creatures) called to each other in an unending round of praise to God. Holy, holy, holy expresses God’s complete holiness and otherness. Holiness emphasizes the fact that God is different from any part of His creation. The seraphim were considered holy as well, but only because of their proximity and service to God. As servants in

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God's holy court, they stood ready to go where commanded. Their reverence for God's holiness and majesty led to an eagerness to serve Him. Our holiness consists of being dedicated to God and comes from Christ alone. Isaiah's vision reminded him that despite the uncertainty of the times, God remained holy and sovereign.

5. How do you respond to God's holiness and majesty in daily life? How *should* we respond?

Leader: When we take the time to reflect on God's holiness and majesty, it changes how we understand our relationship with Him and with others, it changes how we think, and it changes how we behave. Understanding God's holiness is humbling, and it should increase our gratitude to Him for His love and grace, as well as our desire to live for Him in all we do.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 6:5-8.](#)

6. What three reasons did Isaiah give for saying "Woe is me, for I am ruined"? In what ways are we like Isaiah in each of these statements?

Leader: Isaiah 6:5 records the emotional and spiritual response of Isaiah to the vision of God's holiness. He acknowledged his own sin and his lostness, the lostness of those around him, and the contrasting holiness of God. Isaiah was convicted of his sinfulness and the wickedness of his fellow citizens in Judah. Isaiah's vision of God's holiness had a profound effect on him. Our understanding of God's holiness should dramatically impact our lives as well. God's holiness is too profound for us to fully comprehend, but when we get just a taste of it, we are humbled by our sin and aware of our dependence on Him. This is what Isaiah experienced when he described himself as "a man of unclean lips" (v. 5). Like Isaiah, we must repent in acknowledgement of our sinfulness.

7. How does reflecting on your sin compared with God's holiness and glory make you feel about yourself? About God? About your relationship with Him?

8. What did God do for Isaiah that made him able to serve? Similarly, how does Christ make us able to serve God? Read 1 Peter 3:18.

Leader: After touching Isaiah's unclean mouth, the seraphim pronounced that his wickedness was removed and his sin was atoned for. Isaiah's unclean lips didn't become clean because of his effort or desire to change, but by God's grace alone. The coal from the altar, the place of sacrifice, was the means God used to purify him. Like

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Isaiah, we too can be made able to serve God by looking to Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins (1 Peter 3:18).

9. Isaiah responded to God's vision and call with the statement, "Here am I, Send me!"? What excuses do we typically make when confronted with the question, "Who will go for us?" How does Isaiah's example speak to those excuses?

Leader: All Christians are called to serve God by spreading the Good News. As we come to a deeper understanding of God's holiness and majesty, we will be eager and willing to serve Him. Our sinfulness and unworthiness do not disqualify us from serving. However, we need Christ's forgiveness to serve Him effectively. Like Isaiah, our response to God should be an unhesitating "Send me." We shouldn't just dream of what we can do for God, we should listen for His call on our lives and be willing to surrender our lives for His service.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

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

10. How is your view of God transformed by reading passages like Isaiah 6? What affect should God's holy and glorious character have on the choices you make this week?

11. How might unrepentant sin keep us from delighting in God's glory and following Him in obedience? What do you need to confess to God and repent of today following Isaiah's example?

12. What are ways we could shift our practices to make spreading the Good News more of an intentional priority in our lives?

PRAYER

Pray that God would reveal His holiness in a powerful way to your group and all of our church. Pray that in response to this vision of God's holiness, we would be humble,

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repentant, and filled with worship. Pray that your group would grow together by encouraging one another to live in awe of the glory and holiness of God and to respond by answering, “Here am I. Send me!”

MEMORIZE

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” –Isaiah 6:8

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

ISAIAH 6:1-8

6:1. The years of Uzziah’s reign were also a time of unfaithfulness by the people of Judah. Empty ritualism and hypocrisy characterized their worship. The death of Uzziah ended a long period of stability and created the potential for a national crisis. God revealed Himself to Isaiah at this critical moment in Judah’s history. Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne. The Bible declares God is Spirit and His essence is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17). Some interpreters believe the prophet saw the preincarnate Christ (a visible manifestation of Christ before He appeared in human flesh in the first century). Others believe Isaiah saw a theophany (symbolic manifestation of God the Father). The high and lofty throne was in the temple. Being on the throne emphasizes the Lord as the true King of Judah and being in the temple emphasizes His holiness. Judah had lost its earthly king, Uzziah, but the true King is always on His throne. The people of Judah had lost sight of God’s holiness, power, and glory.

6:2. Isaiah saw seraphim standing above the Lord. Ancient oriental kings surrounded themselves with a court of servants, and the Lord appeared in a similar way to Isaiah. The word seraphim (“burning ones” in Hebrew) is the plural of “seraph.”

6:3. The seraphim called to one another in a responsive, or antiphonal, chant. The key characteristic of God lauded by these angels was His holiness. Holy is repeated three times for emphasis. Holy is the key adjective in describing the uniqueness of God. Holiness incorporates the sum total of His perfection. Holiness describes the presence of complete perfection and the absence of any imperfection.

6:4. The seraphim’s hymn rocked the foundations of the heavenly temple. The smoke that filled the temple probably came from incense and added the sensory experience of smell to Isaiah’s vision. The smoke shielded Isaiah from gazing on God’s face, thus preserving God’s holiness and mystery.

6:5. Isaiah’s response to these heavenly sights and sounds was an overpowering recognition of sin. Isaiah looked at the Lord and then looked at himself, and his conclusion was I am ruined. Isaiah referred to his unclean lips, representing the sinfulness of his whole being. He identified himself with all the people, stating the universal problem of sin.

6:6. Isaiah expressed despair concerning his conviction of sin and knew there was nothing he

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could do to remove his sin. If the Lord did not provide a remedy, no remedy could be found. In His mercy the Lord sent one of the seraphim who took a glowing coal from the altar and approached Isaiah with it in his hand.

6:7. Isaiah declared himself “a man of unclean lips” (v. 5), and a seraph touched his lips in response to his confession of sin. These terms are clearly symbolic and indicate God alone can forgive our sins. Just as the sinfulness of Isaiah’s lips symbolized all of his sin (v. 5), the touching of his lips symbolized the removal of all his sin. As a result of this act, the prophet’s wickedness was removed, his sin was atoned for. The concept of atonement implies the necessity of payment and a substitute to redeem the sinner.

6:8. After removing the prophet’s sin, the Lord issued a call to service. Salvation must precede service. The Lord sought a volunteer to deliver His message of warning to the people of Judah. The Lord was surrounded by angelic messengers (seraphim), but He desired a human messenger to confront the sinful nation. Isaiah, after he was cleansed from his sin, said send me.