

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

ISAIAH 6:1-8

I saw the Lord.

Such a simple statement, yet infinitely profound. What must it have been like to see the Lord, to stand in the presence of One who is so holy that he is surrounded by creatures who dedicate themselves to nothing else but spending eternity declaring his holiness to all who draw near?

For Isaiah, the experience is terrifying. As he gazes on the most high and holy One, he can think of nothing but his own inadequacy, his sin and that of his people. He knows he is not worthy to be there, yet he does not flee from God's presence. Instead, he cries out in anguish, broken for his sin and desperate for the atoning touch of the coal, which brings a painful but necessary purging.

The Lord has a purpose for Isaiah which the prophet could have never imagined. Yes, he has sought the Lord and served him, yet he knows there is nothing he could ever do to be good enough even to speak to God, much less speak for him. Still, when the angel touches the coal to his lips, Isaiah knows that the Holy One is leading him to something more than the life he has always known.

When the Lord asks, "Whom shall I send?" something deep inside Isaiah compels him to cry out, "Here am I. Send me." He does not even know what the mission is, yet he embraces it wholeheartedly because his encounter with God has changed him. A touch from the Holy One has made Isaiah holy, set apart for a special purpose.

Perhaps we have never had a vision of the Lord on his throne, yet each of us as believers can point to times when we have "seen the Lord." The question is, how have those experiences changed us? Far too often we take those encounters for granted. We love the comfort of approaching a familiar God who encourages us to call on him as Father, yet we forget to tremble before the throne of the One who dwells in unapproachable light.

We spend time in his presence, but far too often we come away completely unchanged. We may for a moment resolve to "try harder" not to sin, but we soon settle into a complacency that fools us into believing that our own filth is "not that bad." We may even believe that our good deeds alone earn us the right to stand before God without trembling. Then we wonder why our service is meaningless and our ministry ineffective, why our loving Heavenly Father feels so far away.

Today, once again, God is inviting us to come into his presence. When we catch a glimpse of who He is, we cannot remain the same. May we, like Isaiah, find ourselves broken and begging him to cleanse us with the fire of his Holy Spirit, the only One who can take away our sin and call us to a greater level of service. May his touch make us holy, purified, and set apart for his purpose in a world that desperately needs an encounter with our holy, loving, Heavenly King.