TITLE: The Holiness of God

TEXT: Isa. 6:1-7; 2nd Sam. 6:1-7; John 3:16-18; John. 1:14

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about the Holiness of God.

**Isai 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.**

**2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.**

**3 And they were calling to one another:**

**"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;**

**the whole earth is full of his glory."**

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

In Old Testament times a king’s garments, especially his robe, testified, it signified his majesty and power.

 The larger and more eloquent his robe, the more

powerful and majestic the king was thought to be.

 At the time when Isaiah is commissioned as prophet he says…

**…. I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.**

What Isaiah is saying is that in this vision he saw the Lord as He really is.. **high and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple.**

Isaiah was able to receive a glimpse of the true power and majesty of the Lord God Almighty. He saw Him as high and exalted and the train of His robe fills the heavenly temple displaying the true majestic character and nature of God.

 And there is even something more significant to Isaiah’s vision here….

**2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.**

**3 And they were calling to one another:**

**"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;**

**the whole earth is full of his glory."**

Even Heavenly beings that were specifically created to serve God must cover themselves in His awesome presence.

 **With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet,**

 And Isaiah testifies that as they did they cried out to one another…**"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty."**

 This is significant…

 In English when we want to emphasize an idea, we italicize, underline, boldface, or add exclamation points.

 But in Hebrew emphasis is made, not through punctuation but through repetition…

 For instance, Jesus would often say, “Verily, verily or truly, truly, I say unto you” to alert His hearers that what He was about to say was extremely important.

 The Apostle Paul used repetition in his writings to emphasize important points that he was trying to make..

 **Phil 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again, Rejoice!**

**Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty!**

 This is the only triple repetition found in scripture and it is used to underscore an attribute of God-- His Holiness.

 Notice it does not say that God is Love, Love, Love or that God is Just, Just, Just or that God is Mercy, Mercy, Mercy, even though God is surely all these things—

 But it says that God is Holy, Holy, Holy!

 The one attribute that God wants to affirm to the world is His holiness…

 The angels were proclaiming to one another..

 God is Holy! Did you hear me? God is Holy!

Do you understand? God is Holy!

 First and foremost God wants to affirm His holiness to you and I..

 What does it mean to be holy?

**06918 qadowsh {kaw-doshe'}**

**1) sacred, holy, Holy One, saint, set apart**

#  It comes from the Hebrew root

**06942 qadash {kaw-dash'}**

**1) to consecrate, to be set apart, be consecrated**

**1a2) to be hallowed**

**1b1) to show oneself sacred or majestic**

**1b2) to be honored, be treated as sacred**

**set apart as sacred to observe as holy, keep sacred.**

As soon as Isaiah had experienced seeing God in His Holiness, notice his response…

Is. 6:5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Isaiah, one of the most righteous men of his day, yet when confronted with the holiness of God was traumatized to the brink of personal desolation…."**Woe to me!" he cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips!**

What caused this kind of reaction on the part of Isaiah from seeing, from coming to a realization of the Holiness of God? What caused Isaiah to cry out, “Woe to me”, I am ruined! I am a man of unclean lips?

 Isaiah had entered into the radiant brilliance of Gods Holiness!

 In the magnificent light of Gods Holiness Isaiah saw, he realized and recognized his sinful state…

 The Holiness of God is so bright, so brilliant, so illuminating that it reveals even our innermost sins and personal shortcomings..

 Even the things that we think we have buried deep within, where no one else can see, come out and are laid bare as we approach the holiness of God.

 John Calvin once said:

“*Men are never truly touched and impressed with a conviction of their own insignificance until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.”*

 That is why repentance is never a pleasant experience.

 When we step into the holiness of God, we realize, we recognize our own depravity and unworthiness apart from Jesus Christ.

 When we contemplate the holiness of our God we must also contemplate our judgment before a holy God and the only reaction to that is the reaction of Isaiah….Woe to me! I am ruined! I am a man, a woman, a child of unclean lips!

 All illusions of our own righteousness disappear when we confront the Divine Holiness of God.

 But notice that God doesn’t leave Isaiah in his ruined, woeful state…

**Isai 6:6 (NIV) Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.**

**7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."**

What a neat picture of what Jesus did for us on the cross!

Note, God doesn’t allow Isaiah to wallow in his guilt-ridden despair, nor does God shrug off Isaiah’s sinful state.

 God, in His mercy and love places a hot coal from the alter on Isaiah’s lips purifying what Isiah was concerned about—being a man of unclean lips.

 For us Today, Jesus is the hot coal from the alter of God that God has provided for us, to redeem and purify us so that we can stand in the presence, stand in the holiness of God without our being utterly consumed by our own sinful state.

 When we accept Christ Jesus as the Lord and savior of our life, when we come to see Him in His Holiness and it causes us to say; “woe is me! I am ruined! I am a man of unclean lips, and it brings us to a place of repenting for our sins and giving Him Lordship of our life, He then becomes the hot coal from the alter of God that redeems us and purifies us so that we may abide in the presence of our God…

 How often do we treat the holiness of God as a common thing, taking it for granted?

Example of Gods holiness and treating it as a common thing…Uzzah

2Sam 6:1 (NIV) David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all.

**2 He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark.**

**3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart**

**4 with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it.**

**5 David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.**

**6 When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled.**

**7 The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.**

This verse always puzzled me… Why did God strike Uzzah dead for just reaching out and trying to steady the Ark when the ox stumbled? It never seemed quite fair to me..

 Two critical mistakes were made..

First, God had ordered that the Ark be transported in a very specific way, by its design, poles were to be inserted through rings at its base to lift and carry the ark. So that the ark would never be touched by human hands!

 Secondly, Uzzah assumed that his (sinful) hands were cleaner then the dirt had the ark fallen off the cart.

 The real question is not why a holy God exercises swift justice but why He tolerates the continuous and willful rebellion of His creatures!

 The answer is God Mercy!

 The Ark represented the dwelling place of God to Israel!

**2 He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark.**

 To reach out and touch the Ark was symbolic of reaching out and touching God Himself!

 Uzzah, like all of us, was a sinner!

 The lesson here is that sin, in any form cannot enter into the presence, especially come into direct contact with a Holy God..

 Gods’ holiness would utterly consume us in our sin….

 That is why God departed from man after man fell to sin in the Garden of Eden.

 Before man sinned Scripture says that God came and walked and talked with man in the garden….

After man fell to sin and became a sinner God had to depart from mankind. Was it because He was that angry with man for his disobedience? NO! It was Because God loved mankind so much. The just penalty for sin is death! God warned man that in the day that you eat of it you will surely die.

 God must judge sin. He has to be because He is a just God.

Justice is just as much an attribute of God as love and compassion and mercy are attributes of God!

 God’s justice demands that man’s sin must be judged! Had man remained in Gods very presence after he had sinned, God would have had to enact His judgment and justice. Man would have been destroyed in his sin!

 But because of God’s love and compassion and mercy He does the only thing that He can do to spare man, He removes His Holy presence from man, for fallen man, sinful man could no longer stand in the presence of a Holy God and survive. So God now would reveal Himself to man from a distance. Speaking out from Heaven, revealing Himself by manifestations such as a burning bush or the angel of the Lord…But no more one on one, face to face encounters with man.

 God removed His Holy presence from man as an act of His Love, Mercy and Grace to spare man.

 Until He could provide a way for man to enter into His presence once again..

 And He did provide the way…

 He provided Jesus!

**John 3:16 (NIV) "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

**18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

 When man sinned, God had a plan already laid out!

 A plan that would once again allow man to enter into His Holy Presence--A plan that would restore fallen mankind to their creator. A plan that would ultimately lead to man’s once again being able to walk and commune with God—To Dwell in His Holy presence…

 The plan was Jesus!

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

 God, the all Holy one, the all holy and majestic God whose robe Isaiah says literally filled His Holy temple testifying of His majestic holiness, leaves the glory and splendor of Heaven, leaves His majestic throne and comes down to meet us where we are at..

 He knows that we cannot approach Him in our sinful state so He humbles Himself to become as one of us.

 Through the incarnation God reduced Himself to mankind. God came down to meet us where we are at. God came to restore us to fellowship with Himself!

John 1:14 (NIV) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

 God is Holy and He is just and His holiness and justice demands that sin, all sin, great and small, be judged. The just judgment for all sin, whether great or small in our sight is death! And not just the physical death of these bodies but eternal death, eternal separation from God.

 That is the justice of God and it is a just judgment for we all have transgressed against a Holy God.

 That is why we should never ask God to give us what we deserve! For even the best among us, the Isaiah’s, the David’s, the Paul’s, the Billy Graham’s, the Mother Theresa’s deserve the full justice and judgment of God!

 Physical and eternal death…being eternally banished from the presence of a Holy God forever!

 If we ask God for anything, let it not be what we deserve, His Justice and judgment, but let it be for what we do not deserve--His Mercy and His Grace.

 Let us come to the place that Isaiah did when confronted with the Holiness of God where we cry out…

"Woe to me!" "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

 Let us come to the place of embracing the cross of Jesus Christ. Of coming to the place where we fall on our face before God, our hearts broken because of our sinful state, to the place of crying out to God as the wretched sinner in Jesus parable…Have mercy on me O Lord, a sinner…

 May we come to that place of seeing sin the same way that God does. As something unholy that destroys and consumes and is indeed worthy of Gods justice and judgment.

 Folks God hates sin but He loves the sinner!

 His love is so great for us that His word assures us that “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us!”

 We didn’t have to try to achieve the impossible and come up to Gods level in order to be forgiven and restored to fellowship with Him but He came down to our level to meet us in our need where we are at!

 But He didn’t come down to leave us in sin, He came down to deliver us, set us free from its bondage…

 Through Christ, as we place ourselves “In Him”, as we give Him Lordship of our life, He sets us free from past sin through forgiveness and He sets us free from future sinning by giving us the ability, through Christ in-dwelling presence within us, to go and sin no more.

 That is how we find total and complete deliverance from the bondage and slavery of sin…

 Accept God’s forgiveness offered to us freely in Christ Jesus and once we have received Christ, make Him the Lord of our life.. Allow Him to live His life through us by yielding our will to His and thus allowing Him to empower us to go and sin no more…

 To, in fact, strive, with all our heart and mind, to become Holy just as He is Holy!

 To be able to once again enter into the very presence of God and enjoy the fullness of relationship that He wants to have with us..

 A relationship that has been destroyed by sin and it’s resulting separation.

 Church, God is Holy and he has called us to become Holy just as He is Holy! To become separate, become sanctified, become as he originally created us to be, become like unto Himself. Be a reflection of His image within our world.

 We can’t do that in and of ourselves, but we can do it through a life of love and relationship with Jesus Christ.

A. W. Tozer said…

 *“God is holy and holiness (is) the moral condition necessary to the health of his universe. ...Whatever is holy is healthy, ...the holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is his utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hated the polio that would take the life of her child.”*

 In conclusion, God is Holy and God hates sin because it degrades and destroys. We have been called as Christians to become as He is and see sin as He sees it….

 To hate sin but to love and have compassion for the one that is under its bondage and control..

 We are to see sin as a parent sees the disease that threatens to destroy the life of their child.

 For it is sin that separates degrades and destroys and keeps us from the fullness of life and relationship with our creator.

 Are you living in the fullness of relationship that God has for you this morning?

 Have you asked Him to come into your heart and be the Lord and savior of your life and restore you to the fullness of relationship with Him?

 Are you daily seeking His Holiness for your life?

 Are you allowing Him to make you Holy just as He is Holy?

 Allowing Him to change you into the new creation that He intends for you to be “In Christ Jesus”?

 To reflect and mirror the image and nature of Jesus to the world around you?

**John 3:16 (NIV) "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

**18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

 To believe in God is to obey Him, To live our lives in disobedience to Him places us among the unbelieving that Scripture says stands condemned already and is just awaiting His Justice and Judgment.

 Where is it that you stand this morning?

 Among the believing through obedience or among the unbelieving through disobedience?

How has the Holiness of God affected your life, how is it affecting your life this morning?