

gospelⁱⁿlife

Isaiah 6.1-8
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Prepared by Curtis A. Bronzan
curtis@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x115

I. Connecting With One Another

What do you think of when you hear the word “connecting”?

We “connect” to a computer network, we “connect” with one another over coffee, and, at Good Shepherd, we talk about “connecting” with God. What does the word mean to you?

II. Introduction to this Series and Study

This week we kick off our fall series, “Gospel in Life.” We read a lot about the gospel, we hear a lot about the gospel, we may even talk a lot about the gospel, but what *is* the gospel? And how does the gospel affect our daily lives? It’s one thing to read about, hear about, and talk about the gospel at church, but what about on Monday morning at work? What about Tuesday afternoon when there’s a pop quiz in English class? What about Wednesday over coffee with the Mom’s Group? What about Friday night with friends? Or Saturday at the soccer game? What does the gospel have to do with those things!? I pray we come to believe the gospel, the good news, that grace changes everything!

To begin, we’re taking three weeks to discuss our mission statement, which states: “Good Shepherd exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ who connect with God, grow in faith and serve in love,” which leads right into the following topics of Gospel in Life. The week of Sunday, September 29th, these pastor-authored study guides will transition to a book-led study entitled (you guessed it!), *Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything!* If you’re not involved in a small group, sign-up on the patio Sunday or on our website at gspc.org on Monday.

This week, we’re thinking together about that first third of the disciple-forming enterprise set before us: connecting with God.

III. Study the Text

a. Read Isaiah 6.1-8.

Take a few minutes to imagine the life-changing experience this must have been for the 8th century prophet Isaiah.

Can you think of any songs Isaiah’s vision has inspired? How would a vision like this affect your life? How would it transform your understanding of “connecting with God”?

b. Isaiah 6.1 tells us that Isaiah had this vision the year King Uzziah, who was made king at 16, died. Though he had been successful and faithful to God during the early part of his reign (during the time of the prophet Zechariah), the king became prideful, which, we know well, comes before the fall – and fall he did!

Knowing all that about King Uzziah (who is also known as Azariah), why do you think Isaiah includes that it was the year the king died that he had this vision? Was it just another way of saying, in effect, “It was 742 B.C.”? Or, could Isaiah have had another purpose in mind? If so, what could it be? (If you’re stumped, reread verse 1, paying special attention to the language used)

- c. The seraphim mentioned in verse 2 may be a specific choir of angels or another way of referring to cherubim elsewhere in the Scriptures. Either way, they are part of the heavenly chorus who praise God. Notice that even these celestial beings cover their eyes with two wings, cover their feet with two wings, and fly with the remaining two! It's as if their flying was the last necessity – first, they cover their eyes from God's holiness, second, they cover their feet, which in Near Eastern culture, was as a sign of politeness, if not respect.

If even the angels cover their eyes and feet, how much more would we need to!? That said, why do you think God revealed himself to Isaiah in this way? And how do you "cover your eyes and feet"?

- d. Read verse 3 again.

Notice and discuss that the angels are 1) calling to *one another*, 2) that they are reminding one another that *the whole earth* is full of God's glory, and 3) that *threefold declaration* of God's holiness.

- e. In verse 5, not only does Isaiah think "Whoa!" he thinks "Woe!" He thinks – no, he *knows* – he's in trouble. Why? And why does he confess not only *his* sin, but his *community's* sin?

- f. In verse 6, we read some beautiful, profound, deep theological language. At the moment Isaiah confesses his sin, his "guilt is taken away and [his] sin atoned for" (atone means, literally, "at one" – *at one* with God!). Three questions to think and talk through:

1) Why do you think the seraph waited until *after* he confessed (because if his guilt was taken away that easily, why not just tell him it's no big deal to start with)?

2) Why do you think the seraph flew to him immediately (instead of making him beg for forgiveness)?

3) Why did the seraph need to touch his lips with the coal and say, "See?, this has touched your lips"?

- g. Notice verse 8 again. Right after Isaiah's guilt is taken away and his sin atoned for, the voice of the Lord calls out, and Isaiah answers!

What is the significance of this verse for what we call "worship" or "connecting with God"? In other words, what does our worship have to do with going out into a world of other people?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. What "King Uzziahs" are on the throne today? How could you be reminded that the real throne – the throne of Heaven – is occupied by the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- b. In what ways is connecting with God a communal event? How can we best "call to one another"?
- c. How do you confess your sin? Have you ever confessed the sin of our community? How do you know that "your guilt has been taken away and your sin atoned for"?
- d. How is worship an "evangelistic task" or a "missionary event"? That is, how does it help you respond, "Here I am. Send me!"

V. Spend some time in prayer:

- a. Pray for this weekend's worship gatherings, that they would truly be evangelistic meetings where we would connect with God,
- b. Lift up our college students, that the Triune God would lead and guide them this year,
- c. Pray for our fall series, that through it the Spirit of God would help us to faithfully live out the gospel not only at church, but in our daily lives.