

The Wake-Up Moment

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Pentecost / Forgiveness; Call; Isaiah; Confession; Absolution / Isaiah 6:1–8; Psalm 29; Acts 2:14a; Acts 2:22–36; John 3:1–17

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Maybe you need coffee. Maybe you need a nice warm shower. Maybe you need a good hearty breakfast. I don't know what it is for you that gives you your wake-up moment. Perhaps it's one of those cold, slap-you-in-the-face-mornings in the middle of winter when you step outside. These are all ways that will wake you right up.

Under far greater and much more profound circumstances, the prophet Isaiah at the time of our text needed his own wake-up moment if he was going to be ready for the rest of his life on earth and the ministry before him as God's prophet to the kingdom of Judah and ultimately the fallen world.

As Isaiah found God's forgiveness and strength in His Call, We as Christians Receive these same blessings for our own call and calling.

Isaiah had a tough assignment to be God's prophet, His official spokesman, at the time the nation of Judah was on its way to destruction and captivity. Isaiah was to utter the message of God and His will, applying the Law to their circumstances. To the godless, he would proclaim God's wrath and inevitable destruction, overwhelming in its force—not a popular message.

As you read through Isaiah, that was His calling. To Proclaim God's Law in all of its fury. During his initial years of service, Isaiah did prophesy to a Kingdom that was flourishing. It was flourishing on the inside, but really it was also a kingdom that was disintegrating and decaying, turning to gross idolatry, human sacrifices, and temple desecration, and turn away from God's help. They

preferred going after the world for help. They went to the Assyrians and Babylonians for help, rather than to the Lord God.

This wasn't his only message. He was also sent to unveil the future, which was also not a popular message. It was a future of "your country lies desolate, "foreigners will devour land," and after which there would be only a "few survivors".

That wasn't the end of his message either. He was also to foretell a greater future, the survival of a remnant, with many promises of a Messiah and the glories of the messianic period.

To prepare Isaiah for this task, God gave him a wake-up moment in a vision. In his vision, Isaiah saw the Lord in all of his power and glory. He saw the flowing train of the Lord's robe filling the temple. He saw the seraphim. He saw the foundations shake and heard the voice of God and saw the house fill with smoke. He saw the glory of God!

This vision validated the message from God delivered by Isaiah, such visions and dreaming having been a common and accepted means by which Old Testament prophets received the messages they delivered. Isaiah was overwhelmed by what he saw. Who wouldn't be? Seeing the Lord, seeing the Seraphs. I would be as well. He was also afraid, because he as a sinner saw the glory of the Lord. He despaired at this saying:

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"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

It was a vision of the glory of the Holy One of Israel. Since Isaiah only saw the glory, it spared him from seeing the face of God, which also then spared his life.

In his vision, Isaiah is concerned most of all about his unclean lips. Isaiah knows that he is a sinner. Isaiah knows that his lips have been unclean. What sins he committed with his lips, we don't know...but I am sure he used the Lord's name in vain and also bore false witness against his neighbor. Something greater

happened to him. In the vision, those lips receive forgiveness through a means of grace.

The Seraph obtained a burning coal from the altar of heaven, plain wood united with divine fire. As Isaiah's lips were touched, the seraph explained what this meant:

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“Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

As the coal touched Isaiah's lip and his guilt was taken away and his sin atone for, it delivered even more. It provided Isaiah with the one attribute to best equip him for the task now before him, the experience and relief of the forgiveness of his own sins.

Having had his “Wake-Up Moment” Isaiah was ready to be sent as the spokesman of the Triune God to a people with unclean lips and the fallen world. He answered gladly saying: “Here I am! Send Me!”

This day, this Trinity Sunday and this Old Testament Reading from Isaiah provide us each with the opportunity for our own “wake-up moment”. God is still the holy and almighty God, and we live every moment with “unclean lips” among people of “unclean lips” before the Holy One of Israel.

Contrary to what people may think and say in our day and to whom or what they may look for safety and deliverance, the same almighty and all-powerful God that Isaiah saw in his vision remains omniscient and omnipresent and judges by the same Ten Commandments. And we fare no better. Isaiah probably lived a good life, as we probably believe we do, but he and we can only say:

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Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;

When God judges by Ten Commandments and we look at those and our own life, we see that we are lost. Before God as we see the Ten Commandments and how they balance in our lives...all we can say is: "I am lost, woe is me!"

The same Almighty and All-powerful God that so severely judged Israel and then Judah must also judge our nation and the nations of this world among whom we live. And when He does judge, it isn't and won't be pretty. It is troublesome. It is fearful. It won't be good! A judgeful, wrathful, and vengeful God is not someone to take lightly.

But God is still a merciful God, our God is not only a God of power and glory, but He is also a God of grace.

By grace, God "left us a few survivors" at the demise of Judah, and through the ministry of Isaiah, he showered those survivors with a plethora of promises of the one who would come out of Judah and save those who remained faithful.

By grace, God kept those promises and made possible the salvation of all mankind by sending His Son to atone for the guilt of their sins, as is so clearly announced in today's Gospel in words spoken by that very sin. Words that are so familiar to each of us:

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"For God so loved the world,⁹ that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

By grace, God still sends spokesmen to carry His message of Law and Gospel to those who worship Him as the only true and triune God, still providing visible means of grace, the bread and wine that touches our lips to give us assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

By grace, God sends all to "tell the love of Jesus," as we love to sing in one of our favorite hymns. We will sing it in just a few minutes and we will sing these great words: "If you cannot speak like angels, If you cannot preach like Paul, You can tell the love of Jesus, You can say He died for all. If you cannot rouse the wicked

With the judgments dread alarms, You can lead the little children To the Savior's waiting arms."

Today is Trinity Sunday. it is and will always remain a mystery to us on this side of heaven.

But for now, this is still the God of mystery, who sends those who have experienced repentance and forgiveness to announce his Law and share His Gospel of forgiveness to all mankind.

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"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

Continues to be his Call today for prophets, pastors, teachers, parents, grandparents, and your everyday witnesses...which is all of you. If we have been truly paying attention to this Spirit-laden text and have been reminded again that God is still God, we will also be ready not only to admit, "I needed this Wake-up Moment!" but also to respond, "Here I am! Send Me! Send Me!"

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.