

Charles St-Onge  
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### **Forgiven Men Preaching Forgiveness to Men**

#### **Isaiah 6:1-13**

Isaiah 6:1-13<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: "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!" <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." <sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." <sup>9</sup> And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." <sup>11</sup> Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, <sup>12</sup> and the Lord removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. <sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

#### THE LORD SENDS FORGIVEN MEN TO REVEAL FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS

### **I. THOSE CALLED TO ANNOUNCE FORGIVENESS MUST FIRST BE FORGIVEN**

#### **A) In the Bible**

What would you do if you saw heaven opened  
and found yourself face to face with the Lord?

What do you think you would see?  
The Philadelphia Cream Cheese angels?  
Sweet little babies with wings and harps?  
An old man with a long white beard?

ILLUS: Fort Wayne Symposia, Pr. Stiegmeyer reminded "When the Lord visits, he's come either to deliver a message, or to kill you - or both."

There are almost no encounters with the Lord or his angels in Scripture  
That don't lead one to fall on one's knees  
And plead for one's life

### Moses and the burning bush:

“Exodus 3:2-3<sup>2</sup> And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” Exodus 3:6<sup>6</sup> And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

### Jonah and the call to preach to Nineveh

Jonah 1:1-3

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

### The Shepherds and the Angels in the Field at Christmas

Luke 2:8-11

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

### Led the writer of Hebrews to reflect:

Hebrews 10:29, 31

How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Why did the encounters create this sort of reaction?

Because an encounter with the living God

Is an encounter with someone HOLY –

WHOLLY OTHER than what we are

### Peter’s Encounter with Jesus Follows the Same Pattern:

Luke 5:

Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking... But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”... And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”

Your guilt is taken away / “Fear not” / “Your sins are forgiven”

Synonyms for the forgiveness that follows repentance

**BEFORE THESE MEN COULD PREACH FORGIVENESS,  
HAD TO KNOW REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS THEMSELVES**

### **B) In Our World**

Which is why the first order of business between us and God  
Is REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS

Before we can be TOOLS of GOD,  
We must admit our inability and unworthiness to serve as tools  
AT ALL

The Church that wants to be used by God  
Must first realize its own uselessness  
Falling face down before the Lord,  
It recognizes the majesty and authority of the God  
To whom the Seraphim sing:

*“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Power and Might  
Heaven and Earth are Full of your Glory”*

**ILLUS: The church that believes it can stand on its own before God will die; for it is striving to live on its own glory. The church that falls on its knees dead before the Lord, will be brought back to life by the one who holds it in the palm of his hands.**

## **II. THEN WE CAN SHARE THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD**

### **A) In the Bible**

At the moment of realizing the holiness of God  
The prophets and apostles became able to see his mercy and forgiveness

#### Isaiah:

In being forgiven, could answer the call to preach forgiveness to a nation gone wrong  
To warn them even knowing the hardness of their hearts  
And their unwillingness to turn back to God

Isaiah knew what the nation of Israel was up against,  
He had seen it face to face,  
Felt the fear and felt the forgiveness  
And he could share that experience with his countrymen

Share with them the promise of a seed from the stump,  
A seed born of Mary who would confront a fisherman named Peter

Jonah:

In being forgiven by God,  
Jonah was able to march through a city like Nineveh  
Not unlike the Philadelphia of today  
And proclaim the need for repentance and forgiveness

In realizing the mercy of God even against a corrupt city like Nineveh,  
Jonah was able to see that God's forgiveness  
Is for even the most corrupt and sinful who desire it

Peter:

How many times did Peter in his ministry  
Look back on this encounter with Jesus  
Where he recognized his sin and was forgiven by his Savior?  
Drew on that encounter in his evangelism and preaching?

Hear echoes of it in Acts 2:

Acts 2:36-39

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

**B) In Our World**

In our everyday dealings with the world  
We would do well to remember Isaiah's encounter with God  
In fact, every worship service we reenact that encounter again

"In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"  
We call from sinful lips the name of the Holy God of Power and Might  
Whoses praises the Serpahim sing in highest heaven

"Woe to us poor sinners! We are ruined. For we are people of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips, and now we are approaching the throne room of God – his altar, his font and his pulpit!"

"But the messenger of God speaks from the altar and says, 'your guilt is forgiven and your sin atoned for.' In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins."

Now, arising from this place we can speak for the forgiveness in Christ Jesus to the world

Regardless of the reception

Regardless of whether the people of Ridley Park's

Keep on hearing, but don't understand;

Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

Regardless of whether the preaching of repentance and forgiveness will

Make the heart of this people dull,

and their ears heavy,

and blind their eyes;

Regardless of whether

This city will lie waste without inhabitant,

Its houses without people,

and its land becomes a desolate waste

We go in the name of the Lord because he has sent us

Like Isaiah

Like Jonah

Like the Shepherds

Like Peter

We go because we have been forgiven

The coals of the Lord have burned the sin from our lips

And now we are free

And now we tell the world what we have seen and heard

The very throne of God here on earth

Forgiving sins

And cleansing us from all unrighteousness.

### **Conclusion**

Think of now better summary than Luther's own hymn

Based on this passage, "Isaiah Mighty Seer"

TLH 249 (singing the Lutheran Service Book version 960)

Amen.