

Disruption:

Challenging the Status Quo

In this sermon series we'll be studying the Prophets of the Old Testament. Each week, we'll focus on a new theme. This week's theme is: **ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD.**

Isaiah 6: Meeting a Holy God

Isaiah 6:1-8

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."⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.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."⁶ 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." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Visualize the scene. What feelings does this vision stir up?

What is God like? How does Isaiah respond? What is Holiness? How do you respond?

What is the connection between the mention of "lips/mouth" and Isaiah's mission? What about you, are your lips (tweets, posts, speech) clean?

Do you bear responsibility for the sins around you? How do you share in the corporate guilt of your culture?

The Three Part Message of the Prophets

- Israel has broken the **covenant** they made with God
- If they don't **repent**, God will send judgement and **exile**
- Even if God sends judgment, there is hope. He will **redeem** them and bring them back into the land

memory/meditation verse

Isaiah 6:3

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Monday

Shaped for Service:

Jeremiah 1:4-10

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. 2 The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3 and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. 4 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." 6 "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

Definitions

- **Covenant:** an agreement or contract that God made with Israel in which God promises to love and provide for Israel and Israel promises to love and obey God
- **Repent:** to stop what you are doing and turn to God
- **Exile:** because Israel did not obey God, He sent them out of their land to live as strangers in the land of their captors
- **Redeem:** to forgive, bring them back into their own land and restore the relationship they had before

Compare with Psalm 139

Describe the challenges our world is facing? Do you feel like you are qualified to address those challenges?

God tells Jeremiah that He knew Jeremiah in the womb and had been preparing him for this ministry? How has God been preparing you for the challenges of our day?

What "excuses" did Jeremiah offer to God? What are the reasons you can't serve God? Are those reasons really valid?

What is the source of our strength and security?

Wednesday

How big is your God?

Ezekiel 1

Read Ezekiel chapter 1. Don't panic, it's strange but we can make sense of it with a little effort (and God's Word is worth a little effort)

- The people are in **exile** in Babylon because they did not obey God. What would you feel if you were far away from home--away from the symbols of God's presence? Would you feel abandoned, helpless, or hopeless?
- Describe the storm and things in it. It's helpful to know that the symbols (the animals and seraphim) are used on thrones (the seat of power). What about the wheels? Draw this throne. (take a picture and tag the church)
- How does the throne move? Who is on the throne? If the throne can move in all directions and move as quick as lightning, is God limited? Can he show up in Babylon as easily as Israel?
- Do you ever feel God is limited? Perhaps in a time of pandemic, political upheaval, or sickness. Ezekiel's vision is a reminder that God is not limited by our hardships or circumstances.
- How big is your God?

How to read "strange" parts of the bible

- Ezekiel is unlike literature that we have today
- Don't read it like a newspaper
- Think "Lord of the Rings" "Blade Runner" or "Harry Potter"
- Imagine the symbols, what emotions do they bring up
- Sometimes historical homework is required
- Above all: Use your imagination

A Great Resource

*The Message of the
Prophets*
by
J. Daniel Hays

Friday

A Transformative Encounter:

Acts 9:1-19

- Saul (eventually he goes by Paul) is on his way to persecute Christians; whom is he actually persecuting? How is Paul's experience different and similar to the prophets?
- Paul's encounter is different because he doesn't "see" anything but only hears. Then the scales fall off, what is the symbolism?
- How does this encounter change Saul. What is his mission? What will mark his mission?

Developing intimacy with God

- Nobody grows in their faith by accident--make a plan and follow through
- Don't be the Lone Ranger. We grow in our faith through community
- Don't be afraid to start small--nothing worthwhile in life is easy
- Take yourself out of the spotlight--Christian maturity is others-centered
- Join God in His mission--you were created to serve God. Find a need and fill it.

Tying it together:

Do these encounters with God change your picture of God? How?

How can our view of God change how we approach the issues of our life (pandemic, racial reconciliation, apathy, spiritual and physical hunger, etc)?

What one thing can you do this week to enlarge your picture of God?