

JANUARY 6th, 2018 “God is Holy. I must be Holy? “Isaiah 6: In the year of King Uzziah’s death, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, the edges of his robe filling the temple. 2 Winged creatures (seraphim) were stationed around him. Each had six wings: with two they veiled (covered) their faces, with two their feet, and with two they flew about. 3 They shouted to each other, saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heavenly forces! All the earth is filled with God’s glory!” 4 The doorframe shook at the sound of their shouting, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 I said, “Mourn for me; I’m ruined! I’m a man with unclean lips, and I live among a people with unclean lips. Yet I’ve seen the king, the Lord of heavenly forces!” 6 Then one of the winged creatures flew to me, holding a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. 7 He touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt has departed, and your sin is removed.” 8 Then I heard the Lord’s voice saying, “Whom should I send, and who will go for us?” I said, “I’m here; send me.” Hebrew 12:12-15 So strengthen your drooping hands and weak knees 13 Make straight paths for your feet so that if any part is lame, it will be healed rather than injured more seriously. 14 Pursue the goal of peace along with everyone—and holiness as well, because no one will see the Lord without it. 15 Make sure that no one misses out on God’s grace. Make sure that no root of bitterness grows up that might cause trouble and pollute many people.

HOLY? What does that mean? Do you know anybody who is holy? Can anybody be holy? If there would be a topic for me to study or I could choose anything I want to know about, I would choose holiness. It just grabs my heart, my full attention, and I am all in with this word. I remember when I was in the seminary. I once heard a professor teaching and explaining about the holiness. I think I had my mouth opened and saliva was dripping down. I started to read more about holiness and I ended up visiting a few of the professors asking for help. How can I understand holiness and be holy?

Last Sunday we talked about receiving God’s love. It is hard to give if you do not have. It is hard and probably no much good, if you try to love when you have not received love. The love we want, all of us, only God can give us. I mean it. It is not just words. I encourage you to spend time with the Lord, with His Word and prayer to receive that love. I pray that the word would bring you not only knowledge but that you would experience a living water and abundance of love that comes from living God. Try it.

Today I chose a few readings. The first is from Isaiah. Here Isaiah sees the Lord. Yes, God is Love, and yes, God is Holy. God is completely separate from sin and morally perfect in all He does. God doesn’t make mistakes. He doesn’t sin and He never falls short. Not only does God not sin Himself, but He is separate from sin itself.

Even the winged creatures, seraphims, they had to cover their faces... These heavenly creatures, they were not able to look at the Lord, because He is so holy. How did the winged creatures worship? What words did they say? "Holy Holy Holy is the Lord". The doorframe shook and the house was filled with the smoke. I do have a shiver just thinking of what kind of experience that would be. The holy God. The power that comes from being the presence of the Lord. Who can live in the presence of the Holy God?

What did Isaiah do? He said, "Woe!"

That is an awesome picture. I like it. I think Isaiah thought, "I am dead." He fell down on his face.

According to the Bible he said: "I am ruined." MSG translates it: "I am as good as dead."

I think we all have sinned and we are all dead. Isaiah said, "My lips are unclean. I live with people who have unclean lips. I found it very interesting that Isaiah first thinks about his unclean lips. Not bad works, things that he has done, but first he confesses the unclean lips. The words that have been said and the words people have said.

Isn't that true about us? Are we not all guilty from what say? We talk about others, judge, hurt, empty talks, dirty, blasphemy, self focus, envy, lie, pride.

Matthew 12: 36 I tell you that people will have to answer on Judgment Day for every useless word they speak. 37. By your words you will be either judged innocent or condemned as guilty." So strong and powerful words for us about our words. What we do?

I believe when Isaiah found himself in the presence of God, he knew his sins very clearly. He thought he would die. God so holy and Isaiah was so sinful. No sin can be in the presence of the Holy One. What happened next? The winged creature brought a burning coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips. Ouch! It hurts. Notice that he did not bring a warm soapy cloth, no baby wet wipe. It is painful. It has to be burnt to be totally taken away. The prophet Isaiah could not do it himself. God comes and cleanses him. Jesus had to die for our sins, so we would be cleansed by his blood. It is a high price and we are all forgiven. Do not sin just because you are forgiven. Jesus did not say, keep on sinning...God says be Holy. What did Jesus say? "Be perfect therefore as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew.

5:48) It can be painful not to sin, not to fall into temptation and to continue with grace, love and patience. God, from His love and mercy, by a burning coal, removes Isaiah's guilt and sin. It is gone. Even the guilt. We do not feel guilty for our past sins. As we are forgiven, our guilt is taken away too. What we do is we answer God's call. God does not want us to stay holy for ourselves. I am pretty sure true holiness appears in the community and in the relationships. God sends Isaiah to spread and be holy to the people and with the people. Our second reading starts with interesting encouragement: "So strengthen your drooping hands and weak knees¹³ Make straight paths for your feet so that if any part is lame, it will be healed rather than injured more seriously. It sounds like it does not matter how weary we are or how tired we are we need to press on. Even if we are injured, the way to be healed is to continue on holiness. Thinking that we will never be holy already sets our mind to not giving all to be the way God intends us to be. We can and we ought to be holy. Wesley taught that genuine faith produces inward and outward holiness. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection": "purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God," Perfect love is the basis of Wesley's perfection doctrine. Filling the gas tank. Can you fill it? top it up? Yes, you can. You can be filled and live in a perfect love and be holy. Pursue Holiness. Seek it. In 1 Peter 1:16 we read: "Be holy." It does not say try to do your best. Be. So could it be that God is just holding a stick with a carrot in the end? (show it) Like for a donkey? So we are to just continue walking toward the holiness but actually never getting there? I totally disagree. No way. If God says to be holy, it is a reachable goal. If he says love your enemies, it is doable, but not without the help of the Holy Spirit, prayer and community. You cannot do it on your own. Do not get me wrong, because it requires your willingness, self control, discipline and love. Holy, of course, does not mean we will not sin any more. But holy does mean we are filled with God's love and we truly love others. Holiness comes from God because He is Holy. So first you have to know God you have to have that relationship with Him. You have make a priority of being with God, to receive His love and to know God and His word. To be holy is to be set apart, not to belong to the world. Be holy is to have a relationship with God so your heart is filled with love and is ready to love others. Without God we will look holy instead of being holy. I had one lady in my church in Lithuania. She is a mighty prayer warrior. She is a beautiful lovely elderly lady. One time we talked about holiness. She said to me that she could be holy but the reason she cannot is...her husband... if she just would not have a husband, she would be holy. So funny. She meant it. It was not a joke. Her husband had addictions and he was truly a troubled man. But being holy? Does that mean we have to get rid of these troubled people who makes us unholy? They are all over and around us. Does that mean we all should become nuns? Monks? Should we just totally close ourselves from all of the world? Maybe not. To be holy is not easy. When you have a relationship with God you start to change. It is radical change. You have to stop tolerating your sins. Stop saying, "My sin is not that bad. There are some other sins that are much worse." We see and judge others for their "big" sins, but we tolerate so well our own. "I am a good person. I do the best I can." If you are believer, if you are born in a Holy Spirit you will be convinced of your sins. The closer you are to God, the more you will see yourself in His light. God does love us the way we are. He makes no mistakes but he also wants us to give the best of our lives for us. He wants us to live a life that is holy. I am good at tolerating my "little" sins. But are there little and big sins? In our second reading we heard: "Pursue the goal of peace along with everyone—and holiness as well, because no one will see the Lord without it" From the letter to the Hebrews we learn that holiness has a lot to do with how we act toward each other. Be at peace with everyone. Woven in there is not only how we act, but what we

think about others in our heart. Peace starts in your heart, in your mind. Guard your hearts and minds. Do not dwell on the thoughts that are not holy. In verse 15 Make sure that no one misses out on God's grace. I can beat up myself and others on trying to be holy. We can not miss God's grace. If the author gives us the warning, there must be a real danger of missing God's grace. We should give grace to ourselves and forgive, we should recognize our weakness and give ourselves time. We must stay with God and in God's word. We are called to be holy. We all can and should be holy. Holy means we are with God in a very close relationship. We know He is Holy. We have received his Love, and we are made to be holy. We continue by not staying in sins. We pursue. We seek holiness. We live at peace with everybody. We guard our minds, thoughts and lips. And we continue is in works of love and holiness.