

How Great is Our God

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[0 : 00] Is this on? Good morning. Please allow me to do a loose adaptation of Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1 and 2.

Eduardo, a humble servant of God, by the will of God, to the saints in Western Hales, the faithful in Jesus Christ, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I could just, I wish I could just say in words how happy I am to be here, how privileged I feel to be here.

I've been taken care of by Anne and Gerald since last Friday when I got to Scotland for the first time.

And it's really a childhood dream come true because one of my favorite characters in Star Trek has always been Mr. Scott.

[1 : 17] And now I'm in Scotland. And I feel really, really very happy, very blessed to be here. I was asked to speak to you.

And I was thinking, what will I bring to them when I get there?

And, you know, it's such a huge responsibility to speak to a portion of God's people, into a portion of his body.

And what else could I talk about but himself? So, I wish we could think now of him, of his majesty, of his glory, of his love, of his kindness towards each one of them, which is here and scattered all across the world.

But in a very specific way, because this is something that's been over my head and my heart in the last few years. Let's think of him as both majesty and love.

[2 : 38] You know, I wish I knew how many of you remember what you were doing on the 8th of September, 2022.

Myself, I must confess, I don't remember. But many of you remember because this is such an important day for the whole Western world, actually. This is the day where Queen Elizabeth II passed away.

And she was loved by millions. She was mocked by many others. But what no one can deny is the huge influence that she had for decades over the whole known world.

And how many of us really thought of the possibility of Queen Elizabeth's death? Some people might seem eternal to us.

It's such a long-lasting and such a widespread presence that we can't really believe that someday that someone is going to die.

[3 : 57] And when she died, it shook many people's worlds. This kind of day makes us remember and reevaluate lots of things.

Our priorities. We are remembered that we are mortal. We are finite. We are finite. That our validity has a... We have an expiry date.

And we don't know what expiry date this is. We don't know how long we are staying in this world. And how long we have the presence of our dear ones.

How long will we be able to go on working in our jobs. And we remember him. Because he is the owner of our life.

The text I'm bringing you this morning speaks of a similar occasion. Because the people of Judah were about to lose a powerful, famous, loved, successful king, Uzziah.

[5 : 09] Let's open our Bibles. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah. We'll read from verse 1 to verse 8.

Isaiah 6. In this Bible, the title is Isaiah's Commission. But it starts in a very different way.

Not with this commission. But with the glory of God. Thus says the word of the Lord.

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.

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. And they were calling to one another.

[6 : 15] Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and thresholds shook.

And the temple was filled with smoke. Woe to me, I cried. I'm 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. Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live call in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

With it, he touched my mouth and said, See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?

And who will go for us? And I said, Here I am. Send me. Let's pray. King of kings.

[7 : 17] Lord of lords. Our Father. Your word has just been read. And your majesty has just been proclaimed.

Let us have the good sense to tremble inside and fear. Because no one is like you. Only you. Only you have always been.

Only you really are. And only you will ever and forever be in our lives. Make this reality always burn in our hearts.

As it burns right now in mine. Be merciful on us, O Lord. Because you are not worthy. But share with us wisdom from heaven. To feed your people.

And to fill us with your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, what's happening here in this portion?

[8 : 18] What's the context of this text? Isaiah 6. Isaiah 6. Isaiah 6. Could and maybe should actually be Isaiah 1.

Because this is the very beginning of Isaiah's ministry. Before this occasion, Isaiah had not yet been called to serve the Lord.

And his calling happened in such a magnificent and even terrible way. But the first five chapters of Isaiah tell us of the main and most urgent message that God wanted Isaiah to convey to the people.

So, the thing was so urgent. The people were so astray from God. That the very beginning of Isaiah's ministry got postponed to a second moment.

Because the message was too urgent. And actually, the Lord was saying to that people that they were decaying.

[9 : 25] They were down the ladder. Fast. Fast. And their end was to come fast. Let's flip back some pages.

And I really hope you don't mind flipping some pages. Because we are going to walk through some books and chapters of the Bible. To Isaiah 1. And here we can understand why Isaiah said, Woe to me and woe to my people.

Look how far and how sad they were in the eyes of God. Verse 4.

A sinful nation. A people loaded with guilt. A brood of evildoers. Children given to corruption.

They have forsaken the Lord. They have spurned the Holy One of Israel. And turned their backs on Him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion?

[10 : 29] Your whole head is injured. Your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head, there is no soundness. Only wounds and bruises.

An open source. Not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil. But you are not. You are not. You are not. This is an image that for them meant you are patrescent.

You are rotting from inside. What God is saying to them is there is no salvation at all for you.

You are reaching the rock bottom with me. And this is the message that a man who was being cleansed by God was meant to convey to a huge people that considered themselves the very heart and soul of God.

How terrible this would sound. How hated this man was not meant to be by this people because they would get so offended by this message.

[11 : 50] But it happened in a very particular occasion. The year that King Uzziah died. And as we can understand, since Isaiah's ministry started on the very year of King Uzziah, that King Uzziah had not yet died when this happened.

He was about to die. And Isaiah, in this moment, he receives a special vision from God. Who was Uzziah?

Uzziah was the last king to bring peace to Judah and even to the neighbor Israel because he was a prosperous king. He was a wise king. He brought many advances, constructions, military conquests.

Materially speaking, Judah was on the top of the wave. Spiritually, the situation was disastrous. And God was about to execute judgment on that people.

And he announces it to Isaiah. In what way? He's taken in a vision. And he looks and God shows himself in all the majesty and glory that could be shown to a human being.

[13 : 20] Isaiah gets terrified and says, I'm as good as dead right now because I'm unclean and I've seen the cleanest one of all.

I'm unholy and I've seen the holiest one of all. Surrounded by angels, the trail of his robe fulfilled the whole celestial temple.

Even the pillars and the doorposts were wise enough to tremble before God and the people couldn't. And in the middle of this situation, a fiery angel, because seraph comes from a word in Hebrew that means flaming, ardent.

So, that huge, majestic creature grabs a pair of tongs, goes to the altar, catches a live coal, and flies straight into Isaiah's face.

Like he's saying, Hey you, now it's your turn. I don't know about Isaiah, but should I be in his place? There will be no solid Eduardo anymore.

[14 : 38] Only a puddle of fear on the ground. But miracle of miracles, instead of being charred by the coal, he gets purified by it.

His lips are touched. And the very problem that Isaiah mentioned, his unclean lips were purified by the angel.

The angel says to him, Now you are cleansed. Your sins are forgiven. And the thing doesn't stop there, because we are never called by God to be idle, to be sitting on the pews and chairs.

God wanted to send Isaiah on a mission. And only on this moment, after being purified, Isaiah could say, Here I am.

Send me. This was a necessary order for things to happen. And I'd like to split this text in three parts.

[15 : 44] The first four verses, when the majesty of God is revealed to Isaiah. Then, verses 5 to 7, when the transformation takes place in Isaiah's life.

And the last verse, when he rises up and volunteers to do God's bidding. The first part, verses 1 to 4, makes a comparison.

If you pay attention, when we think about Isaiah, and we think about God, there was this calling to attention from God to the people.

Are you about to lose your king? No. I am your king. Because each and every aspect of a king's earthly majesty is substituted in this portion by God's majesty.

Let's see. Verse 1. I saw the Lord. Just in this very word, we can see a lot of things.

[17 : 05] Because there are two words Lord in this portion, if you take notice. In verse 1, the word Lord has the first letter only as a capital letter.

The other ones are small letters. I guess every Bible agrees on that. But in verse 3, the word Lord appears once again.

But all capital letters. That's not for nothing. Because actually, in the original text, these are two different words. The first one is Adonai, which is a title for God, not His name.

The second one is God's very name, the Tetragrammaton, which some translate as Jehovah, which is not a very faithful translation.

A more similar one is Yahweh, but the real pronunciation was lost. That's a story for another occasion.

[18 : 13] But these are two different words. Why? Because the first one is God's supreme and absolute title.

He's the Lord of all. He's the sovereign. Much greater than any earthly king. Much greater than Uzziah. The one the people were relying their confidence and their hopes on at that time.

So, this is the Lord, the real Lord. In verse 3, the word Lord is God's name, which is not attributed to anyone but the Lord.

But there's something interesting here because the only one who deserves the title of sovereign is God. But if you open your Bibles in Psalm 110, Psalm 110, verse 1, we can read as it is.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Can you see there are two different persons here?

[19 : 34] The Lord said to my Lord, the Lord, Yahweh, four capital letters, said to my sovereign, to my Adonai.

So, the word, the title of Adonai, of supreme sovereign, is given to someone else but Yahweh himself. Who is this?

Verse 4, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. His high priest is the Lord who receives the title Adonai.

Jesus is our high priest. So, in this very text, we can see and realize without any shadow of doubt that the title Lord is attributed to both the Father and the Son.

They are at the same level. He is our Lord. Jesus is our Lord. But they are above anything and anyone else.

[20 : 54] His throne right now. A throne is the apex of a king's authority and office. When he is seated on his throne, he is the embodiment of all authority in the reign and the kingdom.

But God's throne is high and sublime and exalted. Much more than Uzziah's throne. I wanted to notice here how the Lord is trying to correct the people's focus.

Don't pay attention on your human king. Pay attention on your divine king because he is the one who lasts forever. He is the one you shall rely on, not a human king.

And a king on earth is surrounded by ministers. They serve him. They do his will. Who are the ones who serve the Lord?

Angels themselves. Perfect beings. But at the same time, so different from the Lord that even they can't look the Lord straight.

[22 : 11] they have to cover their eyes. They have to cover their feet because they are symbols of their createdness. Let's put it this way.

He is the creator. The angels are mere creatures without sin as they are, but they are a product of his hand.

And there's an economic thought here because God does not create anything for any reason. Everything God creates has a specific reason.

God does things in vain. So, six pairs of wings, what a waste. But no, he knows that his ministers wouldn't be able to look him straight.

So, he creates them with six wings so they can fly and cover their eyes and cover their feet. holy, holy, holy.

[23 : 16] This is a wonderful part. And we might read it for the rest of our lives and not realize how important this is because this is not part of our culture. This is Hebrew culture.

In the Bible, until today in Jewish culture, repetition means importance. The more times something is repeated, the more important this thing is.

And in any other part of the Bible, there is no mention of any attribute of God which is repeated three times. God isn't love, love, love.

God isn't justice, justice, justice. But he is holy, holy, holy. holy. This is the most important attribute of God in the whole Bible. So much that it's not repeated only here, but also in Revelation.

Revelation 4 verses 8 to 11. Each of the four living creatures had six wings, I think I've read it somewhere else.

[24 : 36] With eyes all around, even under his wings, day and night, they never stopped saying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever, they laid their crowns before the throne and say, you are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

triple repetition in two places. Any doubts? It's like he's saying, do I have to draw it out for you?

I'm holy. And what is holy after all? Because what does it mean? A Bible dictionary says this, holiness means absolute moral purity and prominence above all creation.

Absolute moral purity. Remember Isaiah 1.4? How bad was the people's situation? And this is one more thing.

[26 : 04] Habakkuk 1.13 says that God is so pure in eyes that cannot behold evil. evil. But here is Isaiah unclean, a sinner, looking God on the eye.

He was about to be fulminated. There's no other end for someone who beholds the Lord of Lords in the face. And here we get to the second part, the transformation.

God not only is the ultimate king, the sovereign of all, but he's also a personal God, a relational God, someone who cares, someone who acts in our favor.

Isaiah, this is the first time ever on the book where a speech by Isaiah is drawn out. God, the first thing the prophet has to say is, I'm dead.

There's no other end for me because I've seen the Lord of Lords. You know, let me think for a minute. I've nothing against dogs or cats.

[27 : 23] It's just a comparison, but I just want you to bear with me right now. Think of a stray dog, which is rescued. and think of an angora cat.

You know? Think of what they are thinking, and that's manifested in their attitudes towards men. The dog thinks, hey, these people rescued me, fed me, cleaned me, took off my problems, played with me.

They do everything I need. I can only get to one conclusion. They're gods. And now the angora cat. Hey, these people feed me, take care of me, buy me things, take me to walks.

They do everything for me. I can only get to one conclusion. I'm a god. I'm a god. god. That's the difference.

The attitude towards them is the same. But which spirit are we imbued with when I see God's care for me?

[28 : 43] am I so special that God has to do something for me? Or is God so special that even not in any necessity to do something for me, even though he does this, he saves me, he touches me, he cleans my lips, he rescues me.

That was Isaiah's position here. he could have thought, hey, I'm looking at the kings. I'm really very special.

I'm the chosen one. Instead, he thought, woe to me, I'm about to be fulminated because I've seen the holy one.

Recognition of our own condition, recognition of our own sin, I guess it's the first sign of the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Because we see how far we are from God, and we fear for ourselves, and we say to ourselves, I'm lost, what can I do?

[29 : 55] There's nothing for me here, but punishment. And now is the time where all God's love, grace, and mercy are shown towards Isaiah.

towards me, towards you, because the angel takes a live call from where? From the altar. What's done upon an altar?

A sacrifice. What sacrifice would be powerful enough to purify a sinful man? A lamb sacrifice?

A bull sacrifice? No. God. The sacrifice of the Son of God. That's the meaning of getting a call from the altar.

The merits of Jesus' death were the only thing that could purify Isaiah's lips. Mercy, grace, and love.

[31 : 00] What is mercy? Mercy is not receiving the punishment that we should receive. Grace.

What's grace? It's receiving something that we wouldn't be worthy receiving. And what's love? It's the source of the other both.

Ephesians chapter 2 verses 4 and 5. These verses bring the three of them together.

And we are shown the relationship between love, grace, and mercy. Can you see that? But because of His great love for us, that's the source of everything, God, which is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions, it is by grace you have been saved.

So, it's not by saying Holy Mary that I'll be saved. It's not by giving alms that I'll be saved. No, it's by grace.

[32 : 21] That's the only reason why Isaiah was purified in that vision because of God's grace, mercy, out of His love. And the third aspect of our God here is God as our general, our commander, the one who sends us on a mission, because that's what was about to happen to Isaiah.

God saved him, showed him all his glory, saved him, and then asked him to go. Whom shall I send?

Who will go for us? And Isaiah says, here I am, send me. I love a certain type of verse that people usually recall only by half.

yes, so many of them. Let's see, 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9, this is wonderful, I love this verse, but I love the whole verse, not the first half of it.

But you are a chosen people, wow, that's wonderful, royal priesthood, okay, amen, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

[34 : 05] So it's not to be seated on Sundays and Wednesdays on the church, no. I was called and saved, so I may declare to a world that is thirsty of God about his glory and mercy and love.

That's what was happening to Isaiah. That's more or less Jesus' method with Bartimaeus, for example, in Jericho.

There was this blind, hopeless man sitting by the way, by the road. this man hears about the promised Messiah that was going through that way, he cries for mercy, he is transformed by Jesus, and he ends up following Jesus on the way, from inertia to movement, from a terrified paralysis like Isaiah's, to a mission of preaching to the people of Judah.

that happens all the times, with everyone here. We need to get terrified by our sin, in order to recognize that only Jesus, through his grace, can save us, can save me.

And after I'm saved, out of gratitude, out of happiness for what happened, and obeying his command, I must go and preach.

[35 : 45] I usually say this, when you're leaving home, and you leave your kids, or your assistant at home, the last words before leaving are always the most important.

Forget everything else, but don't forget this, but do the laundry, or do the dishes, or don't forget mowing the grass, because that's the most important, and the last thing I said before leaving, what's the last thing Jesus said before leaving?

Go and preach, and make disciples. Can you see the similarities? we were transformed, just like Isaiah was.

We saw God's glory, just like Isaiah saw, and we have a mission, just like Isaiah had. We've been recruited, we've been transformed, we've been saved, and now what God asks from us is, do my bidding, spread the word, make disciples, baptize them, teach them, bring them in, because I have the will to gather my people, and I will gather my people, and I want you to help me.

I have two applications to leave with you this morning. the first is completed by the other. First of all, what's my reaction after I see God's work in my life?

[37 : 36] Do I react like a Pharisee because I'm good, I fast twice a week, I give my tithes every Sunday, and I'm not like this one?

Or, do I cry out and say, Lord, thank you for your mercy on me. I wasn't worthy, I'm not worthy.

And even though I'm not worthy, you were merciful, praise be your name. That's the attitude that he wants from us, from you and from me.

I'm not that special for God to act on my life. And that's the beauty of it. I'm not special, and he acted on my life.

But, at the same time, the other application, God has entire hosts of angels, thousands and thousands, Revelation says, perfect beings that fly faster than any jet man can create or produce.

[38 : 58] Should it be up to them, the message of the gospel would be already spread worldwide. They're faster, they're more intelligent, they're more capable than us.

Their voices are perfect, but that was not enough for God. He wanted weak, out of tune, but redeemed people to sing in this choir.

He wanted you and me in his work, spreading his word. Even the angels can't understand this.

The scripture says, 1 Peter 1 something, even the angels want to know more about the work that God does in your life, in my life.

We are so blessed because we shouldn't be there by our own merits.

[40 : 06] God puts value on us. God loves us, and we shouldn't and can't forget it ever on our lives because he makes us special.

We are not special by ourselves, but he makes us special. And may we live and die for his glory because that's all we can do today or ever.

Our lives belong to him. God bless us. Amen. Amen. Thank you.