

Isaiah is called by the Lord

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- [0 : 00] In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne, and the train of his robe filled the temple.
- Above him were seraphim, 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, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory.
- At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and the thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. 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 mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.
- Then one of the seraphims flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.
- [1 : 23] With it he touched my mouth and said, See, this has touched your lips, your guilt is taken away, and your sin 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 am I, send me. Amen. May God add his blessing to the reading of his word. Unforgettable days.
- Have you ever had one? Maybe ones that you expected are ones you didn't expect.
- I'm sure we've all had moments and days when things have been unforgettable for the right or the wrong reason.
- [2 : 33] Like the family who were having guests for dinner. The Christian family. And as they gather around the table, the father asks his son to give thanks.
- And there was a pregnant pause. His mother leaned over to the son and said, Just say what daddy said this morning.
- So the little boy said, Dear Lord, we've got those awful people coming for dinner tonight. Unforgettable moment.
- One day, I was going on a journey with Andrew and my son. He was only about four or five at that time. We were travelling through to Coat Bridge.
- And as we got to the motorway, he suddenly said to me, Dad, let's pray. But don't close your eyes.
- [3 : 47] Well, there's some times in life I've learned not to close my eyes when I'm praying. Because it's brought me into great trouble. Like when I was sharing in a funeral service in Coat Bridge.
- and I closed my eyes. I was doing the prayer. And I almost knocked the coffin over. Unforgettable days.
- Days when incidents remain in your memory. The birth of a child. Your first day at school. People. Possibly winning an award.

Going to university. Becoming a Christian. Being baptised. The death of someone special. All bringing their own particular memories to your mind.

And in ministry, one gets to share some of these experiences. Which can be exciting, thrilling, or harrowing.

[5 : 02] On one occasion, I went to visit someone from my congregation who was in the hospital. As I walked into his room, I could see fear in his eyes.

He looked at me and he said, Alan, I feel so unclean. I've got AIDS.

And I had shared with him and his family some good times in his life. And now I was faced with his fear and his anguish.

Moments in a lives. which are unforgettable. One day, a woman was giving evidence in court and the whole matter of date and time were brought into question.

The counsel for the defence tried his best to shake her. and he asked questions like, have you ever made a mistake?

[6 : 19] How can you possibly be sure that was the day in question? Oh, sir, she said, that was the day my baby died.

some things are indelibly linked in our minds.

And this morning we read, or read for us, a man who recalled a day in his life when it was completely changed.

Isaiah. And we have three things about Isaiah. We have his feelings, we have his deliverance, and we have his response to that deliverance.

You see, the one to whom he had looked up to with much respect had died. Isaiah, perhaps the greatest king after David, was no longer there.

[7 : 34] A man who had been mightily used by God had allowed himself to become disobedient and unfaithful to the Lord because of his arrogance and pride.

And through that found himself in a situation that resulted in his death. And as was to be expected, Isaiah was full of questions, doubts, and discouragements, even misunderstandings.

His hopes and dreams had disappeared, had been shattered before his very eyes in the death of Uzziah.

In fact, he had felt let down by someone special, by this special friend. And I'm sure we can all have days like that.

As you survey your lives, you can remember, I'm sure, days when you were let down, when you felt disappointed, when your misunderstandings about people who said they would trust you or promise you something and then it simply withers before your eyes.

[9 : 06] Maybe you can equate that to politicians when they come visiting you and give you a leaflet and say, this is my manifesto, manifesto and you believe them and they don't fulfill their promises.

But as Isaiah contemplates his friendship with Uzziah and becomes increasingly aware of the empty throne and the failure of power, his eyes were lifted up and he saw the Lord.

You see, the throne of the earthly king was empty, but that of the king of kings remained occupied. for there sat the God of power who ruled and who continues to reign.

He brought his feelings into the presence of God and he left them there. And as he left them, God spoke into his heart.

And we've come this morning with different feelings and different emotions, different thoughts, thoughts from this past week. Maybe we have to leave them before God and ask him to deal with them, to address them, to unravel them, and to enable us to move forward in a positive way that God will bless.

[11 : 02] God's love. And as he brought his feelings before God, so God delivered him.

And God want to deliver you and deliver me this morning from any misconception, any feelings which are wrong, any feelings that are not of him, and our self, in order that we can move forward positively with his leadership and guidance.

we can imagine and possibly identify with Isaiah's feelings of emptiness and loneliness.

But as he looked beyond his needs, his problems, the situation he found himself in at that particular moment in time, he saw the Lord high and lifted up, he saw a great and wise and powerful and awesome God, majestic God.

He saw God who was holy. And it was that vision which captured his mind and his eyes that day.

[12 : 29] His vision of God coupled with God's holiness that humbled Isaiah, making him conscious of his own need for deliverance and help.

And sometimes God has got to break us before he can build us up again and use us. have we come to that point in our lives when we've said to God, I surrender all.

And sometimes that's difficult because there are times we want to hold on to those little things which we think help us, but which God knows doesn't help us.

Before he'd been concentrating on other people's faults. And you see that time and time again in the first five chapters of Isaiah.

Yet don't we all fall into that trap of doing the same thing? someone once said this poster, and on it it was written with these words, thou shalt not judge because you have messed up before.

[14 : 20] And sometimes we tend to fall on that aspect, judging others. I read once a lovely story, Jean Reeves was an author, and she tells of a story about a visit to Scotland where someone on this train said to her, look at all those girls putting makeup on their face.

Is it right for the woman to put on their faces that which nature never intended to be there?

like that mother who said, go and see what Johnny's doing and stop him because she thought he was doing something wrong.

Always thinking of other people's faults and not able to see our own. Remember Jesus on one occasion said, why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

Remember studying that once at college and we had a student, Ian Smith was his name, a great artist and during the break he drew a drawing on the black board of this man with a plank coming out of his eye.

[16 : 25] It was a brilliant drawing but it brought home the message that Jesus was saying on that day. So Isaiah had to be brought to a position of acknowledging his own faults and his own needs and then confessing them before God.

If my people, you see behind every promise in scripture, there's a condition that has to be fulfilled.

if my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way, then I will hear, forgive their sin and heal their land.

promise is, this is what I will do says God, but here's a condition attached to it.

Humble, prayerful, turning from their wicked ways. and when that happens, then I will hear because I will know that they mean what they're praying.

[18 : 01] Henry Drummond, a Scottish evangelist, 1851 to 1897 he lived, said this, the sins that the world can see to be sins are not the most important sins.

just because the world can see them, we need to be more concerned about the sins which God can see because God can see deep into our lives, our minds, our thoughts.

We can't. And that is why we need to humbly come before God and confess and seek and then he will hear and heal and bless.

Isaiah's crying as he looked up to see the Lord was, woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips. We sang just a moment or two ago, O Lord, your tenderness melting all, all my bitterness, O Lord, I receive your love, O Lord, your loveliness changing all my ugliness, O Lord, I receive your love.

love. And that was a crux moment. Those words from Isaiah, woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips.

[19 : 53] And that was his response. God spoke to Isaiah fire. And that indeed is a remarkable symbolism.

We think of Moses and the burning bush. God spoke to him. We think of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. When Elijah said, let's test our God.

See whose God answers by fire. Bring four barrels of water. Do it again and again. Give everything you have and God will bless you.

John the Baptist said, I baptize with water, fire. But after me comes one who will baptize with fire.

Disciples in the upper room, after resurrection, we read that the Holy Spirit came on them as tongues of fire.

[21 : 14] And we all need to have a reawakening where we allow God to come upon us in that way. Indeed, the Holy Spirit's work is to make our lives fit and clean, that the love of God may dwell in there.

Had God been speaking to Isaiah previously without response? Someone who'd been caught up in all his woes as we can, sometimes obliterating God's voice?

Sometimes God has to bring us through fire in order that we may listen.

so don't be afraid of it, but listen to God's voice through it.

So the question is put to Isaiah, who will I send? And Isaiah responded positively, here am I, send me.

[22 : 43] And after the vision of God, the cleansing, the filling of God's Spirit, Isaiah was ready to go.

But it took those things to happen in his life, to bring a change about, and to enable him to see God working in him.

And that same God wants us to know his cleansing, his commissioning, his command. But first, like Isaiah, we have to admit our inadequacies, our failures, and then know his power that enables us to do all things, even in the most impossible situations.

But how will we respond? Will we allow the Lord to renew us and touch the areas of our lives which are out of tune with him?

Only when we allow that will our response be as that of Isaiah. Here am I.

[24 : 10] Send me. And we can either go out of this church this morning in our own strength, in our own power, or we can say, Lord, I want you to change me, and I want to go out in your strength, and your power, and your might.

The choice is yours. It's mine. And may we make the right choice this morning for his glory.

Bless you all, because God loves you, he wants to empower you, he wants to use you, and he will not fail you.

Believe that, he will not fail you. Father God, thank you for what we learn about your dealings with people in scripture, and Isaiah, thank you for that man who was willing to be broken, to be brought through the fire, and eventually say, here am I, send me, and we want that same experience this morning, Lord, that you may fill us, and use us, and bless us, and motivate us, that we may see great things happening, not through us, but through you, using us for your glory.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.