

Weekly Lift #33

24th November, 2020.

A little extra bible in your week



In the presence of a Holy God

Have you ever walked into a building that was so awesome and so inspiring, it literally took your breath away for a moment? Have you ever been in a place that was so magnificent that you felt you didn't belong there?

Maybe an old cathedral, or a museum, a legendary place, an ancient place, a high mountain, a deep cave... sometimes we find ourselves in places that transcend words and, for a moment, leave us breathless.

Isaiah the prophet had a vision – and he was transported into the very throne room of God. In the opening verses of Isaiah 6 we hear language that perhaps reminds us of the book of Revelation. Language that tries to convey the deep sense of awe when you stand in the presence of the living God:

1In 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. 2Above 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. 3And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4At 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.”

(Isaiah 6:1-5)

Isaiah finds himself in the holy presence of God Almighty. The room can barely contain Him. Angels surrounded Him, calling out words of praise. Their voices were so loud that the walls shook. Isaiah was overwhelmed. He recognised he stood in the presence of the holiness of God and he sunk into a desperate cry: “I am ruined!” What does he mean by this? The Hebrew word can also be translated as “I am undone”, or “I cease”, “I am cut off”. Isaiah is saying: “I don't belong here. I am nothing here in the presence of God. God's holiness is so great, I am completely humbled before him.” Isaiah recognises his true identity before a holy God.

Isaiah recognises that he is unclean, sinful. And he lives among people who are unclean and sinful. But, on the other hand, his eyes have seen the glory of God! How can this be? How does he possibly deserve to see the holiness of God? How can he, a sinner, be in the very presence of a holy God?

Everyday, because of Jesus, we live in the presence of our holy God. Hebrews reminds us in chapter 10 that “we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19). Confidence to enter the presence of a Holy God and live there. Not only can we walk into the presence of God because of Jesus, but we can live in the presence of God every day.

But our hearts are to remain like Isaiah’s. Deeply humbled. We don’t deserve to be here. Yet we are. And just when Isaiah feels like hiding...

6Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:6-7)

As he feels the weight of his sin, standing before the presence of God, his sin is atoned for. Taken away. And his guilt is gone.

Isaiah had a vision of what God was doing through his plan of salvation. Jesus came to be that hot coal, that atoning sacrifice, that not only took away our sin, but relieved us of our guilt, and enables us to stand in the presence of God.

The most awe filled thing we will ever know is what we have each day when we trust Jesus – being able to stand, as a child of God, in the presence of God, forgiven by God, free from guilt and shame. Undeserving, yet forgiven. Sinners in the presence of a Holy God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, may I never cease to be amazed that I live in your holy presence. May I be humbled each day by this. You have removed my sin and taken away my guilt. You have brought me near, as undeserving as I am. You are Holy, Holy, Holy. And I am your humble servant.

Amen.

God bless.

Bruce

Bruce Stanley

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Helpful links for your daily walk:

1 Thessalonians Bible Studies

The new Bible study guide for the book of 1 Thessalonians can be found here:

<http://stphils.org.au/blog/2020/10/14/staying-faithful-the-book-of-1-thessalonians/>

Missed Church on Sunday? Catch up on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/eastwoodanglican>

Weekly lifts in Chinese now available:

<http://sc.stphils.org.au/weeklyblog> (simplified – Mandarin)

<http://tc.stphils.org.au/weeklylift> (Traditional - Cantonese)