

Why did You Come To Worship Today?
The oral version presented may have had a few added phrases.
Isaiah 6:1-9 & Matthew 28:16-20
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I'm sure most of you have seen the Steve Harvey TV game show "Family Feud" Well here is what he would say, "4 answers on the Board" We asked 100 folks " Why did you come to worship today?" Answers: (1) was tired of staying home (2) I wanted to show off my mask (3) I had nothing else to do (4) I'm lonely. Well, truth be told, I sure that some of you have the same answers.

It has been awhile since we gathered together in this sanctuary. It is great to see you!!!! Of course, we have been the church during these trying times----praying, making deliveries to the needy, building handicap ramps, providing food, providing weekly messages, studying the word, conducting funerals, making prayer blankets, and many more.

But, we have been true to our health advisors and not gathered in-house. Today, I want to shed a little light on why Jesus wants us to gather in his name.

We see how GOD, the Father, gives Isaiah his great Commission. God, the Father prepares Isaiah, just as Jesus, the Son prepares us. You can surely believe that this is the work of the HOLY TRINITY, ---the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is one GOD preparing Isaiah, the disciples and all of us.

Our primary means of getting prepared for this Great Commission is Worship? So, why do we come to worship?

Our Scripture Lesson from Isaiah is a great place to look for answers to these questions. For the past 3 thousand years, worship has found its basis in this chapter. The order of our worship is based in part on this 6th chapter of Isaiah.

First, true worship is not an escape from reality. It is something that happens in the

midst of life. Isaiah begins this passage with an interesting statement. “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord.” (Is. 6:1)

It’s like saying, in the year of the world Pandemic of COVID-19, I worshipped God. In the year the riots happened in all the U.S. major cities, I worshipped God. In the year when NASCAR ran a race with no fans, I worshipped God. In the year that I was married, in the year that my son was born, in the year my friend died, in the middle of life, in the midst of experiences good and bad, I was worshipping the Lord.

Do you get the idea?, worship in the Sanctuary can never be oblivious to what is happening out there.

Why do we worship God? It is not to escape life out there; it is to **deal** with life out there. If you want your worship inside the Sanctuary to be true worship, then you bring in with you all of the baggage of what is happening out in the world.

In the Old Testament Psalms, one writer said (Ps 86:6-7), “Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

It is a natural part of worship to bring with you the concerns of your life. We gather here and we bring in the fears of life, the worries of our family, the concerns of the world, and we lift them up in prayer and We seek God’s comfort and guidance.

Why do we worship God? Because our lives are so full of concerns and issue that we have to have some place to take them.

True worship also focuses on God. This is where many of us make a mistake. We assume that worship focuses on us. I’ve heard many times people talk about how they are struggling in their worship life because they aren’t being fed. Have you

ever heard anyone say that? “I’m not being fed. I’m not getting anything out of worship. I’m not being nurtured by worship. I don’t get a blessing out of worship.”

Well, that is a legitimate statement with some people, but what concerns me is that I never, ever hear people say anything about whether or not God is being blessed in the worship service. I never hear anyone concerned about whether or not GOD is enjoying worship.

Why do we worship? We worship so that WE can get something out of the experience, but we also ought to worship PRIMARILY so that GOD can get something out of it.

And until God gets something out of our worship, we never will. Until God is blessed by our worship, we won’t be blessed.

All too often, we treat worship as something that is supposed to entertain us. But it isn’t. What is most important is that God enjoy the worship experience. We are here to worship HIM. We are here to bless HIM. I was once asked, “If I came to Worship on Sunday morning and no one else showed up, would I still preach the message?” I had to think twice, but my answer was that I would go through the entire service since I came here to worship God.

In Isaiah 6:2, the prophet goes to the Temple, and he says, “I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.” It is the presence of God that fills the worship. True worship always focuses on God.

True worship always begins with an awareness of God’s holiness. We’ve lost something of that in our worship services. There was a time when people were so aware of this aspect of worship that the very churches themselves were being constructed in ways that emphasized the awesomeness of God. When Ruth Anne and I were in Germany a few years back, it was difficult to walk into one of the

cathedrals of Europe built centuries ago without feeling awe and wonder. The quiet, the slight aroma of incense or candles, the artistry of stained glass windows and classical music moves one to acknowledge awe and wonder.

In recent years, theology and worship have emphasized the personal nature of God, the love of God, and joy of God to such a degree that for some reason we've forgotten that our God is also an awesome God. We have almost reformed God into a "little buddy" or someone to pal around with. We have forgotten that God is such an awesome and holy God that to be in His presence is to be filled with wonder.

When Moses was aware of God's presence in the burning bush, Moses was afraid. When Jacob had a dream of a staircase or ladder to heaven, (Genesis 28:12), he woke up and was afraid because he said, "Surely the Lord is present and I didn't know it." (Gen. 28:16) He was filled with awe. Time and again, when people are aware of the presence of God, we are filled with awe and even fear.

When Isaiah recognized his un-holiness, he immediately confessed it saying, "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" (v. 5b) When he encountered the holy he realized and confessed that he was a man of unclean lips. This reference to unclean lips refers to his spoken words and to the attitudes behind those words -- to the heart. Jesus taught us that we speak out of the overflow of the heart. In other words, what is inside of us -- what is inside our hearts -- is what comes out when we speak.

Why do we worship God? Because He is holy, and His holiness demands our attention.

True worship also helps us understand our shortcomings and ourselves and to seek God's forgiveness. In Isaiah, the heavenly beings sing, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (v. 3) And immediately, the prophet cries out, "Woe to me!" (v. 5) And he speaks of his own sinfulness.

You cannot come into the presence of God without becoming aware of God's holiness, and without becoming aware of our own ungodliness.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, said (Rom 3:23), "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." As people who have fallen short of the glory of God, it is impossible to approach his presence without being aware of our own shortcomings and sins.

Our confession always results in God's forgiveness. In Isaiah, the prophet becomes aware of the holiness of God, which moves him to become aware of his own sinfulness and to admit that sin. That confession leads to the free forgiveness of sins. In Isaiah the heavenly being symbolically takes a hot coal and touches the lips of the prophet as a gesture that declares his sins are forgiven.

In one of John's New Testament letters, (I John 1: 8-9), we are told, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our faults, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness."

Why do we worship? One reason is to be able to experience that forgiveness. We need to hear the same message the Prophet Isaiah heard. "Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." (v. 7)

Once Isaiah is cleansed from his sin and made holy, he is in tune with God so that he is able to hear the voice of the Lord in a way that he could not before. Now he is aware of the fact that God is seeking someone to send out into the world on His behalf and Isaiah responds, "Here am I. Send me!" (v. 8) Isaiah realizes that there is a whole nation of people before him who are in desperate need of the same cleansing he has just received and so out of a heart filled with gratitude to God and compassion for the lost, he willingly commits his life to God's service. We are saved

to serve.

Another reason we come to worship is so that our lives will be different. And the difference should be in terms of service. Worship at its best, always motivates the worshipper to roll up the sleeves and to get to work.

“Enter to worship, depart to serve.” That phrase is a common phrase that is frequently found on bulletins. The word for worship and the word for service is the same word. Worship and service go hand in hand. In the Christian life, one cannot have worship without service to follow.

In our Old Testament lesson, the Prophet Isaiah is in the Temple worshipping God. He hears the call to worship, with angels singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” (v.3)

He is moved to confess his sins, which is followed by the assurance of his pardon.

He hears the word of God proclaimed, hearing the voice of God saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" (v. 8)

And what follows then is the service; work, rolling up of sleeves and the reaching out to others. In the Scripture lesson, the Prophet said, "Here am I. Send me!" (v. 8)

True worship will always result in service. We cannot enter the sanctuary to worship, without departing into the world to serve.

So, why are we here? Why did we come to worship today? We came in here, in part, to be challenged to do something out there.

So the question for us today is not why do we worship? Or why do we come to church today when there are other things we could be doing?

The real question is; What will we do when we leave this place of worship. For the prophet Isaiah, he was sent out to speak a message to the people. But what are we sent out to do? He tells us plainly, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19)

How are you going to respond to the Holy Trinity (GOD, the Father, JESUS, the Son and the Gift of the Holy Spirit) call this week?

Who is it in your life that you need to love a little more? Where do you need reconciliation?

Who is it in your community that you need to reach out to a little harder?

We started this morning by asking the question, “Why are we in worship?” One of the main reasons we come to worship is to discover the answer to the question “What do we do after we worship?” What is God calling us to do?

That is a hard question to answer, but it is one that we come in here each week to seek. And it is an answer that changes every week, because the opportunities and the challenges change every single week.

What is God calling you to do this week? Will you worship HIM as the disciples on the mountain near Galilee?

What God calls us to do from one week to the next may change, but may our response always be that of Isaiah’s -- “Here I am Lord, send me.” (v. 8)

Let us pray: