

THE NAME: ENCOUNTERING THE GLORY OF GOD

Isaiah 6:1-9, Matthew 17:1-8

Read the Scripture passage above and then work through the introduction below to help guide your personal study.

The sermon this weekend is from Isaiah chapter 6. In this chapter we see what happens when a human is confronted with the reality of God's glory. Isaiah recounts his vision of God's lofty throne and flowing robes to try and give us a brief glimpse of his majesty. He then tells us of how the foundations were shaken and the temple filled with smoke as the Lord spoke, so we might begin to understand the magnitude of God's power. Most importantly he tells us of the seraphim crying "Holy, holy, holy," to remind us of how completely "set apart" God is from anything we've ever experienced. Isaiah's immediate declaration of guilt is not a grand gesture or exaggeration, but merely the logical conclusion of a sinful human being when confronted with the reality of a holy God.

Isaiah's encounter is not the only time that humans interacted with divine glory. In Matthew 17, Jesus took a select few of his disciples to the top of a mountain to pray. It is there that the full glory of Jesus becomes apparent to these disciples. Jesus' clothes shine bright white, his face becomes bright like the sun, and he stands talking with men who have been dead for hundreds of years! When the voice of the Father confirms who Jesus is, the disciples react in much the same way Isaiah did. From these two passages, we see what happens when humans are truly confronted with the holy God – the only reasonable reaction is fear and amazement.

The reaction of fear in both stories is completely predictable. But what happens next in both stories is both wonderful and unexpected – the Lord reaches out to sinful humans! When Isaiah confesses his guilt, the angel (seraph) is sent forward to bring him atonement from the Lord. When the disciples fall to the ground in terror after seeing Jesus' glory and hearing the Father's voice, Jesus comes to comfort them saying "Rise, and have no fear." (Matt. 17:7) When God reveals himself, we can clearly see the disparity between his holiness and our sin, which is a terrifying proposition indeed. After we come to this realization, we can only then truly understand the magnitude of the *forgiveness* that we are offered in Christ.

Work through these questions before you come to small group and be ready to interact with the Scriptures and questions below.

Study Questions

1. Pastor J.D. spoke to us about the holiness of God this weekend. In what ways do you understand holiness differently after this sermon?

2. What about God's character stood out most to you from this sermon?

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3. How did Isaiah react when he was in God's presence? Why did he react like this?

4. Read Matthew 17:1-8. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

5. Jesus comforts the disciples telling them to "Rise, and have no fear." (Matt. 17:7) What does this tell us about his purpose in coming to Earth?

6. How does the sacrifice of Jesus affect the way in which we talk with and interact with the holy God?

7. Pastor J.D. talked about Isaiah's realization that even his greatest strengths were shown to be sinful in the presence of God. In what ways do you need to repent of your *strengths*?

8. We often end up comparing ourselves to other people to measure our righteousness. How does your understanding of sin change when considering the holiness of God? How will this study of the holiness of God affect your prayer life?

Prayer Guide

Pray through some of the ideas in the passage we studied:

- Pray that you might understand the depth of your own sin in relation to a holy God. (Isaiah 6:5)
- Ask God to reveal Jesus to you in all of his glory. (Matthew 17:2)
- Ask God to show you the way in which you need to respond to his glory with obedience. (Isaiah 6:8)