

Creation Series: Sacred Earth: Sacred Work
Week 4: “Sacred Creative Vocation”

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Kemptown Providence U.M. Church
August 12, 2018

This is the fourth week of six in a Creation series titled Sacred Earth: Sacred Work. The Old Testament lesson comes from the book of Isaiah, chapter 6, verses 1 through 12.

Reader: In the year of King Uzziah’s death, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, the edges of his robe filling the temple. Winged creatures were stationed around him. Each had six wings: with two they veiled their faces, with two their feet, and with two they flew about. They shouted to each other, saying:

All: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heavenly forces!

All the earth is filled with God’s glory!”

Reader: The doorframe shook at the sound of their shouting, and the house was filled with smoke. I said, “Mourn for me; I’m ruined! I’m a man with unclean lips, and I live among a people with unclean lips. Yet I’ve seen the king, the Lord of heavenly forces!” Then one of the winged creatures flew to me, holding a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth and said,

All: “See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt has departed, and your sin is removed.”

Reader: Then I heard the Lord's voice saying, "Whom should I send, and who will go for us?" I said,

All: "I'm here; send me!"

This is a Word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

All creation is a word of God.

All: All creation speaks volumes of God.

Uzziah was 16 when he became king of Judah and reigned for 52 years. He was a good king. Scripture states that ". . . as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper" (2 Chron 26:5). He fought against the Philistines and other nations with many a victory, but as any other mortal man, he died.

Judah was in rebellion and unwilling to obey God. The people were calling evil good, and what was good they were calling evil (Isa 5:20). Scripture states that king Uzziah's heart was prideful when he became powerful, and that he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense (2 Chron 26:16). Immediately Uzziah developed leprosy and became a leper and died isolated from everyone. What a tragic ending for such a great king!

The year king Uzziah died, Isaiah the prophet (8th-cent BC) was very discouraged. He felt disillusioned as we all do at times. I can hear him now, "Where are you God?" "Why has this happened to our good king?" So what does a

wise believer do—he goes to the temple and enters the Holy of Holies where the Lord’s earthly throne and Ark of the Covenant (God’s presence) were housed.

Isaiah sees winged creatures all around the Lord God’s throne. Each had six wings: two veiled their faces, two veiled their feet, and two flew all around. They shouted to each other, saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heavenly forces! All the earth is filled with God’s glory!” Then smoke filled the temple and it shook; it was that moment Isaiah discerned his spiritual condition recognizing his inadequacy and unworthiness in the presence of God’s holiness.

Isaiah’s response to being in the presence of God’s holiness is how we’d respond if we saw a vision like that. We’d drop to our knees, head touching the ground, and think we’d be made dust in just a few seconds! Fact is this. The closer we move to the Lord, the more aware we are of our unworthiness. Isaiah may have *thought* he was ruined, but God had another plan. : 0 ☺

When Isaiah perceived his spiritual condition in contrast to God’s holiness the first thing he did was confess his sinfulness. That was right where the Lord God wanted him—on his knees and humble, but God didn’t keep him on his knees. After Isaiah confessed his sin; this is what happened.

One of the winged creatures flew to Isaiah, holding a glowing coal that had been taken from the altar with tongs. The winged creature touched his mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt has departed, and your sin is

removed.” Then the Lord’s voice said, “Whom should I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah said, “I’m here; send me!” This is not your typical call story!

When Isaiah confessed his sin, God cleansed him. He picked himself up rejuvenated and re-energized in his faith. Isaiah reclaimed his calling—right in the midst of his loss and grief about king Uzziah’s death

I’ve often wondered what it takes to prompt us to recognize our human condition. Right in the middle of a life disappointment we can feel it’s quite a hindrance. But perhaps those disappointments become a path that draw us closer in relationship to God. Maybe it’s the sorrows and losses of our lives that become the means by which God shapes our hearts and transforms us.

Isaiah had a rough time when this grief and disillusionment hit him, but he reconnected with God and got back on track to where God wanted him to be, and he started to serve again. My question to you is this. Are you in a low spot in your life, and if so, what can you do about it?

Fact is this. The more intimate time we spend with Jesus we begin to be changed into His likeness. It may not be someone else’s likeness, because we all differ in “likeness”, but God has assigned each one of us to a sacred vocation to serve and to respond to His calling. Sometimes our call comes to us through the invitation of another and sometimes we simply wander into it.

Many people seek the will of God to later find they'd been walking in it all along. Truth is, we're already educated above our level of obedience aren't we? We know intellectually much more than we can perform in our lives. Maybe what we need to do in order to find God's will for our lives is to do what we already know to do, and in doing that, God leads us to where we need to be.

I challenge you again friends with this same need. Take the time to pray daily. Pray more and pray more often. Through prayer, God's creativity blossoms in our thinking and takes hold of us as we're transformed into new ways of becoming the image God has always destined us to become.

Please join with me in prayer. King of heaven and earth, Lord of all creation, as you cleansed Isaiah with a coal of fire to send him into the world to serve, prepare us, so that we might know your call and carry our callings out with enthusiasm and determination. Show the world through us dear Lord that your greatness can't be contained any more than smoke or fire can be caught. In Christ's name who gave His life to cleanse our hearts and minds. Amen.