

I.N.I.

Trinity Sunday  
May 22, 2016  
Isaiah 6:1-8

In Christ Jesus, who has commissioned all of us, His brothers and sisters, to proclaim His Word, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

This morning we are celebrating Trinity Sunday. A day the church has chosen to worship the Triune God of our salvation by looking back upon the first half of the church year and seeing all that our God has done for us. And what have we seen?

We have seen a loving Heavenly Father send His Son into this world, by having Him be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He sent Him to be our substitute Savior.

We have seen this God-Man Jesus Christ live a perfect life of obedient love for us as our substitute and then willingly allow Himself to be arrested, tried, wrongly convicted and crucified by ungodly men. But the real meaning of the crucifixion was that Jesus took upon Himself the wrath and condemnation of His Father for our sins. He paid our debt in full and then He rose from the dead assuring us of our resurrection back to life.

And we have seen the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son bring this Gospel message to mankind through the Means of Grace; the Gospel in Word and Sacraments to destroy blind, spiritually dead, unbelieving hearts and create in those hearts a living, active faith in Jesus Christ.

The four prominent celebrations of this past Church Year were:

Christmas—God the Father's gift of His Son to mankind;

Good Friday and Easter—Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection for mankind;

Pentecost—the Holy Spirit's special outpouring upon the disciples and the promise of His working through the word upon all people. We have seen all of these amazing events done for us.

And what an amazing thing Isaiah saw when the LORD called him into his prophetic office. He saw the Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate state, the Son of God in all of His majesty and glory in that vision. He saw angels surrounding the Lord, Seraphim who had six wings. With two of them they flew, with two of them they covered their feet; and with two of them they covered their faces. What an awesome and majestic yet terrifying and frightful sight!

Awesome and majestic because Isaiah was being shown a glimpse of the glory of heaven itself in the presence of the Lord—the beauty, the wonder, the awe. But also terrifying and frightful because of that holiness and righteousness. The angels were crying out to one another: **"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HOSTS; THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY!"**

This great hymn of praise was so powerful that the very foundation of the temple began to shake. The angels covered their faces and their feet as a sign of respect and humility before their Lord and King. Their three-fold cry of **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** proclaimed supreme honor, glory, majesty and holiness to the Triune God. Each person of the Trinity possesses holiness and all of the attributes and characteristics of God in fullness and glory.

What an awe-inspiring moment! But what kind of reaction do we see in Isaiah? Was he ecstatic with joy? Was he pumped with zeal and excitement? No, he was filled with shame and fear! Why? Because of his sins. Isaiah cries out: **WOE IS ME, FOR I AM UNDONE!** Literally undone means—destroyed, put out of existence. Isaiah realized that there is no way that he, a sinful human being, could stand before the Almighty Messiah and live. Having now seen the true holiness of God, Isaiah realizes the utter horror and filth of his sins. He cries out: **I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAN LIPS.** But not only is he contaminated by sin, so also is the entire nation of Israel. He says: **AND I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN LIPS.**

So Isaiah despairs of life thinking this is the end. He now certainly will cease to exist and be destroyed because he is so sinful and he has just seen the King, the Lord of hosts, the Jehovah God in all His holiness.

What an amazing lesson learned for us. We too this morning have approached our God, stood before His altar in His house. This is the place where our God dwells with His Word and Sacraments. Isaiah realized his own utter sinfulness and depravity before God. God's holiness clearly exposed to Isaiah his sin-blackened heart and lips. And that is exactly how we too felt before

our majestic Lord God. That is why we came before our God this morning and confessed our sins with these words: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against You and do not deserve to be called Your child.**

In other words, **WOE IS ME, FOR I AM UNDONE!** I have, we have broken everyone of God's commands in thought, word and deed, not just once or twice, but thousands of times in our lives. How selfish and self-centered our lives have been. How often our behavior and actions were contrary to God's will and instead were acted out according to our will. How lovelessly we treated others. How impatient we have been, how unforgiving. How impure and immoral our thoughts so often are. How so far from God's holiness we are that we can only feel the tremendous weight of our sins and despair **I AM UNDONE! I DESERVE DEATH AND DAMNATION!**

Are we undone like Isaiah? Yes, we are sinners, but now in Christ we have been redeemed, bought back from sin and death and hell by Christ's shed blood. As redeemed sinners we continued our confession this morning with these words: **But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to Your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

And thank God that we heard these words pronounced to us: **God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed your guilt forever. You are His own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to His will.**

So what happened to Isaiah? Was he undone and destroyed? One of the Seraphim flew over and picked up a live fiery coal from off the altar and touched Isaiah's lips and said: **"BEHOLD, THIS HAS TOUCHED YOUR LIPS; YOUR INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY, AND YOUR SIN PURGED."**

What a beautiful symbolic picture of the shed blood of Christ cleansing Isaiah, purifying him like a fiery, hot coal. This coal of purification came from the altar. We are cleansed by the sacrifice of Jesus' shed blood upon the altar of the cross. Jesus has touched us with His sacrificial blood and we are made clean. This same prophet Isaiah wrote in chapter 1:18 **"THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE LIKE SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY ARE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL."**

We are not only a little clean through His shed blood; we are thoroughly cleansed; cleansed from the guilt and the punishment our sins deserved; completely clean and purified even as Christ is pure. We are now able to stand before God in Christ's righteousness. The Apostle John writes: **THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN.**

What a wonder that God the Son would condescend to be damned for us and die for us to wash us sinful people clean. And what a wonder that He would then call us forgiven, redeemed sinners to be the very ones to bear the responsibility and the privilege of proclaiming that same message to others. But who better than those who benefit the most—redeemed sinners like you and me and Isaiah. Who better to proclaim forgiveness of sins to sinners than the sinners who have been forgiven? The Lord asks: **"WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?"**

Isaiah is no longer filled with fear, gloom and trepidation, but now filled with joy, eagerness and zeal he quickly responds: **"HERE AM I! SEND ME."** Filled with God's grace and peace, Isaiah's only desire now is to serve the Lord. What made him so fit and eager and ready to be a messenger of salvation to others? He had received the preaching of the Law and Gospel in a powerful way. Those who think little of their sins will also think little of the Good News of forgiveness through Jesus. But those who have felt the enormity and burden of their sins and have been brought to realize how terrible sin is in God's eyes, they will truly appreciate the amazing wonder of God's mercy and forgiving grace as that burden is lifted and removed through Christ.

King David felt this burden too when he realized the horror of his sins of adultery and murder but then also the relief and the beauty of the Lord's forgiveness and wrote: **DO NOT CAST ME AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE, AND DO NOT TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION, AND UPHOLD ME BY YOUR GENEROUS SPIRIT. THEN I WILL TEACH TRANSGRESSORS YOUR WAYS, AND SINNERS SHALL BE CONVERTED TO YOU. DELIVER ME FROM THE GUILT OF BLOODSHED, O GOD, THE GOD OF MY SALVATION, AND MY TONGUE SHALL**

**SING ALOUD OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. O LORD, OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH YOUR PRAISE.**

Isaiah experienced God's mercy and forgiving love and received the Lord's call to be His prophet. David experienced God's mercy and forgiving love and received the Lord's call both as king and as prophet with his many Psalms. You and I have also experienced our Lord's mercy and forgiving love and have received His call as His children to be His ambassadors, His representatives His messengers to all people. The Triune God this morning asks you and me the very same question He asked Isaiah: **"WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?"**

What is our response? What is your answer? We cannot pretend that we did not hear it, or that the call does not apply to us without great spiritual harm and damage to our souls. If we ignore this call and do not respond at all then there is something seriously wrong with our relationship with our Savior. If we answer **NOT ME, LORD! I'M TOO BUSY! DON'T SEND ME!**---then we need to reevaluate our allegiances, our priorities and see if our hearts are covered over with hypocrisy.

But if the Holy Spirit has taken a hold of our hearts, we will go out into the world as changed persons and we will proclaim to others Christ crucified and risen again. Having been touched with Christ's love and forgiveness—as with a hot, burning coal--we will be on fire for Jesus and be eager to get the message out.

There is now a compelling powerful force living in your heart and mine that makes us fit for this service and eager to do it. It is called the Gospel! We have been cleansed by Christ. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. We have been called by our Triune God and now we are being sent out as His children to serve Him.

God sent His Son into this world to live and to die for us and Jesus readily, willingly said to His Father, **"HERE AM I! SEND ME."** May our Savior's great love for us, compel each of us to say every day of our lives, **"HERE AM I! SEND ME."**

Amen.