



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

May 26, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

1st Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Trinity

First Lesson/Sermon Text: [Isaiah 6:1-8](#)

Psalms of the Day: Psalm 150

Second Lesson: [Romans 8:12-17](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 3:1-17](#)

A Top-Down Faith Only a Triune God Can Deliver What Only a Triune God Can Offer A HOLY, HOLY, HOLY MESSAGE

1. **God is _____, we are _____**
2. **The _____ Lord gives _____**
3. **Without the _____, we don't _____**
4. **Given the _____, we _____**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Today we begin a new sermon series as we get into the season of Pentecost. The first series talks about **A Top-Down Faith**. We look at these teachings and who God is and how it is unique. The truth is though that the idea of being told what to believe or having someone a little bit higher than you tell you something, is that something we always like, that top-down approach? There is a lot of study and a lot of businesses that are trying to get rid of that. You don't want everyone on top telling everyone on the bottom what to do. You want more of the team approach. Everyone comes together for the ideas. I think there is some truth for some good things for that in life and in business, to get all of the ideas from everyone, but what about in religion? If we don't have a top-down approach, if we don't have God telling us what is true and what is not, what are the alternatives?

Have you ever thought about that; when you have people that come up and say "Well, I don't like Christianity. You get all your teachings from the Bible and from these writers. I like to make God into my god." Have you heard that before? An idea of "My god would do this..." or "My god wouldn't do that..." That's a fine way to think, but how

many “my gods” then are there in the world? If every person is saying “Well, my god wouldn’t do this because this is how I like things,” and that person is saying it, are they ever going to agree? If each person is saying “God should be like this... and God should be like this...” then what you end up having is probably like the Greeks and the Romans where you have all these different gods that appear to be like people and all these different stories about God. People of our time don’t really have the Roman gods and the Greek gods, but I think people like that idea of making God who they want Him to be and dissecting the Bible and the truth by saying “I like this part of God’s Word and not that part of God’s Word.” But in the end, what is that doing? Who is God? If you are saying “My god would do this... I don’t like what that says. I should do it this way and my god would do it this way,” who is God? Then YOU are god. You make yourself god and make yourself above others and really, as much as you might say “You can have your beliefs,” then that person can have your beliefs if you are saying “God should do this,” you are really putting yourself above everyone else.

We might not always, in our own spirit or in our own sinful nature (just like everyone else), like that top-down approach, but how important is it that we do have a God who loves us and shows us who He is.

This is what we have in our text today—a God who loved Isaiah and shows him who He is. If you take a look at the beginning, don’t skip over the first words. It says, ***“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne...”*** Just to put that a little bit into perspective, think of Isaiah and how their king had just died—politics, governments, up in turmoil. Do you ever feel that way? Do you ever feel like the government and the ruling powers are just who knows and you want to throw your hands up and say “Uh”? Here their king has died and God comes to Isaiah and shows him His power and says “You still have a King. You have something greater than this king. You have your loving God.” What does He show him? He shows him this Lord, ***high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above 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. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.***

We have a picture of this holy, amazing God and these incredible angels, not like little cherubs, not like the little angels that look like babies that are helping people fall in love, but amazing angels covering their face and their feet. They, themselves, were covering themselves because they were in front of this Holy God. How great and Holy He was! These angels couldn’t even look upon His glory and they cry out. In Hebrew, the word is kind of neat—the Holy Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, and you could kind of hear the door frames of the temple, the temple is shaking at this.

If you are a fan of cartoons or children's movies, I know this is a very bad example/a simple example, but Kung Fu Panda, what does he do—the "skadoosh!" And "The power goes out!" "Kadosh!" This is so much greater than that! It's shaking the temple.

How does Isaiah react? ***"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."*** What do we see? We see a Holy God. *God is Holy*, and what does Isaiah say? *We are not*. As He looks upon the God, he says "Woe to me! I'm seeing this Holy God. I am a man of unclean lips among a people of unclean lips. It's not just me." He knows the rest of his people all fall short.

We are no different. Maybe we have a different problem because we more often look at the world and we say, "They're the problem" and we don't always look at ourselves. But we so much need to be like Isaiah and say "Woe to me! I am a person of unclean lips, an unclean heart." Jesus says that it's not the things that go into a man's mouth that make him unclean, as the Pharisees were angry at His disciples for not washing correctly, but the things that come out of his heart and his mouth that make him unclean. [\(Matthew 15\)](#) We are no different. We are unclean.

This is the reaction that not just Isaiah has before God but every time an angel of the Lord appears to someone, people are struck with fear. This is not the same fear that our world lives in today of God, of this Holy God, and we are unclean. We are sinful people. Today on Holy Trinity, we are reminded of our Holy God and our place that needs help. We are unclean and we need that top-down Word from God to remind us of the Law—that we fall short. If we make it our ways, when we make ourselves god and make it all about ourselves, we limit our sinfulness. So we need to hear these Words that we, too, are like Isaiah and the people of Israel.

But what happens next is so important. ***Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."*** Can you imagine Isaiah at this time? "Woe to me!" And then this holy angel, who had just been singing the praises and was hiding his face from a Holy God, comes and touches him with a coal and says "You are forgiven." He tells us the Holy Lord gives free forgiveness. Was there anything that Isaiah had done? Does the angel say "Ah, yes, you know, Isaiah, you're a pretty good prophet. You Israelites, you're not so bad"? He didn't say anything about that. He doesn't say anything to Isaiah like, "Oh, you've been pretty faithful." He just comes and by the Word of God, taking a coal from that altar, that is a picture of those sacrifices, where the sacrifice of atonement and all these sacrifices were made, and takes that coal and forgives the sins; not just his guilt, but his sins are atoned for. *The Holy Lord gives free forgiveness.*

The truth is without God showing this, we would never know. *Without the message, we don't know.* That might seem pretty simple but when we talk about that top-down approach, we can have some natural feelings about God and ourselves. God shows Himself a little bit in the world and if we are honest with ourselves, people know their sinfulness, know their own struggles, and so we have this idea of God and who we are, but without God revealing who He is, how Holy He is, but also how loving He is, we couldn't know it. This Gospel message needs to be declared and given to us so that we can know we are loved and forgiven; how deep our sin is but how great God's love is. That Holy Perfect God would forgive you and me! What a message this is!

What do we then hear? This message is so important that the Lord calls to Isaiah. It says, ***Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*** Having seen the Holy God and knowing of his sin but then receiving that Gospel message, what happened? God says "Go!" Isaiah hears the call and goes. So what do we do? *Given the message, we go.* We go, having been forgiven, knowing that doesn't mean we're perfect. That doesn't mean that we're the spiritual elite. We make mistakes. We fall short. Our faith is not perfect. We are not called to go share about how perfect we are. We are called to share a Holy God who gives free forgiveness.

What an amazing thing that we have that Isaiah didn't have. You compare what this vision is and how God and the angel of the Lord appeared to people and their fears and you think about Jesus. As Jesus walked with His disciples and taught, were people frightened and afraid of Him? No, they weren't. Here we have Jesus, true God and true Man, walking among us. Why—to give us that forgiveness. We know of how that forgiveness would come. Isaiah spoke about it and prophesied about it. [Isaiah 52 and 53](#) are amazing pictures of what that Suffering Servant would do, but we have that New Testament, the whole story of Jesus' love for us. And as we go out, I think sometimes we struggle with sharing that message.

I think there are two things to consider. Sometimes it's not all about us just sharing. Sometimes it's about listening and asking questions. Sometimes people have questions or "I need to know how to share the message and what the person is struggling with in the Christian faith or if there is something on their heart and they are struggling to understand God and faith. If I just go and share this or this or this, I don't know what they really need to hear." So sometimes it's just asking people some questions, asking them what they believe and why and who taught them that or why has their faith changed or what struggles do they have in their faith.

We are going to start a Bible study on Sunday mornings in just a few weeks that starts to talk about that—of learning how to love people and listen and then to go out and share that message.

But the other encouragement as we go is to never lose that awe of God. There is a great pastor, Paul David Tripp, who writes a lot of books for pastors and encourages them. He encourages and says as a pastor, if you are reading the Bible and doing your daily devotion and if you ever lose that awe of God, there is a problem. Here, as we see Isaiah and that awe of God, we see His holiness, but it's not just all about His holiness. It's also about His love, His forgiveness, His compassion for you and for me that comes through Jesus and is strengthened by the Holy Spirit, as Jesus spoke about.

So as you grow and as you are in His Word, maybe we sometimes struggle sharing because we sometimes lose our awe of God—His holiness, how awesome He is and how awesome His love is for you and me. How do we grow in that? Be in His Word, be in worship, be in Bible study, look at all the things that even through difficulties, even through hardships, your God still loves you. Your God is your Redeemer, as we just sang about; that a Holy God loves you. So let us not lose our awe of God but be filled with that Gospel message to go out and share this holy, holy, holy message to others. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.