

Dear Friends,

Isaiah 6: 1-5

Isaiah of Jerusalem is experiencing a vision of God. In this vision, alongside of God there are seraphs. They cry out, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory".

God is holy. God is way beyond anything that we can see or imagine. God is other than this world, other than what we are. We are part of this vast creation of which we understand so little. God is over and above the creation. Heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain God much less we little human beings or the ideas that we have about God. God is the Lord of hosts. The hosts of heaven, the hosts of earth, whatever other hosts there may be. God is God of all of them.

Although God is far above and beyond us, nevertheless God fills the creation. The seraphs say "The whole earth is full of his glory". God is in everything and when we open our eyes, we may see God shining through all things. We are however aware that there is not only glory but also horror that sometimes seems to fill the whole earth. Both sit side by side in the reality in which we live. The seraphs can see that. They can see what is now. They can also see from the perspective of eternity. They see what we cannot yet see. They see what will be when God wipes every tear from your eyes, when death is no more, when mourning and crying and pain are no more, when the first things have passed away and God has made all things new. Seeing what is and what will be leads the seraphs to say "the whole earth is full of his glory".

At the sound of the seraphs, everything shakes, rattles and rolls. The temple is filled with smoke. The smoke protects Isaiah. It prevents him from looking directly at God because that would overwhelm him and send him into a permanent stupor.

He is pretty stupefied as it is. He sums up how he feels in these words, "Woe is me for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts". He feels undone. The word suggests that he feels silenced or struck dumb. It suggests that he is overwhelmed, lost, on the point of destruction. Isaiah is aware of just how small and unclean he is when he is placed alongside God. He is aware that he is not as he could be. He is aware that the world is not as it could be and that he shares responsibility for that. He knows that he is not worthy to be in the presence of God. He has unclean lips therefore he is not worthy to join the seraphs in praising God. He is not worthy to go and be one of God's servants in the world.

Perhaps God will help Isaiah with his feelings of unworthiness. Perhaps, if you ever feel unworthy, God will help you.

God bless you,

Tony