

# Sunday Service ~ August 3, 2025

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

**Welcome to Church.** Today we have another chance to come to our great and mighty God and worship the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As we prepare to do so let us turn to Psalm 91 and remind us ourselves why this is such a good thing to do. **Psalm 91.** *“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. <sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ <sup>3</sup> Surely, he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, <sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. <sup>8</sup> You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. <sup>9</sup> If you say, ‘The LORD is my refuge,’ and you make the Most High your dwelling, <sup>10</sup> no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; <sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. <sup>14</sup> ‘Because he loves me,’ says the LORD, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. <sup>15</sup> He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. <sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

**Let us pray.** Father, we thank you for church this morning. Whether we are seated at home or in the building together, we thank you for the salvation we enjoy. Forgive us for the times this week when we have forgotten your goodness and greatness. We are sinful. We are selfish. We deserve to face the storm of your justice and wrath. Lord, we ask for your mercy and grace. We thank you that Christ bore the judgement we deserve, in his body, on the tree, but then three days later, rose from death, victorious, the risen, conquering king. We thank you for our forgiveness. We thank you for our assurance of salvation. We thank you that heaven is our home. Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son? Who else invites me to call Him Father Only a Holy God. Amen

### **Song – Only a Holy God** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxn\\_fu6rdCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxn_fu6rdCU)

Who else commands all the hosts of heaven?

What other glory consumes like fire?

Who else could make every king bow down?

What other power can raise the dead?

Who else can whisper and darkness trembles?

What other name remains undefeated?

Only a Holy God

Only a Holy God

What other beauty demands such praises?

Chorus x2

What other splendour outshines the sun?

Who else could rescue me from my failing?

What other majesty rules with justice?

Who else would offer His only Son?

Only a Holy God

Who else invites me to call Him Father?

Chorus

Only a Holy God

Come and behold Him

Only my Holy God

The One and the Only

Chorus x2

Cry out, sing holy

Forever a Holy God

Come and worship the Holy God

## Bible Reading – Isaiah 6:1-13 (NIV)

*"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 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. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "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." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 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!" 9 He said, "Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' 10 Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." 11 Then I said, "For how long, Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, 12 until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. 13 And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."*

## Announcements

**Focus for Month: Worship.** The middle of winter. It's cold, wet and miserable outside. Why should we come to Church? Why can't we spend the time watching a sermon on YouTube instead? Maybe we need to rethink what worship is? It's more than singing or teaching or even fellowship. It's an encounter with God. Its to encourage each other in the faith. It's to give God the praise he deserves. This month will have 5 Sundays, how many Sundays this month are you going to find yourself in Church? The balls in your court!

**New City Catechism: Question 32.** What do justification and sanctification mean? Justification means our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us.

Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's work in us.

**Bible Passage: 1 Peter 1:1-2.** To those who are elect exiles . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

**Recharge Men's Conference.** We are looking forward to exploring '**The Church**' with our speaker Roger Burgess. This means, reminding ourselves of the community that leads us to "deep gems of joy, peace, and purpose that are unknown in the world." Location: Grace Evangelical Church. 7:30-1pm. Early Bird \$40 (Ends 23/8)

**Sermon Series for Term 3 (AM Services only).** Stephen starts a new sermon series in the morning, entitled, "God is...,"

10.8	God is good	Psalm 145:8-21
17.8	God is love	1 John 4:7-12

**Scots Kirk (Women).** Games and Trivia with Afternoon Tea. 16<sup>th</sup> August 2-pm. RSVP 0421 643 350 (Kathy)

**Annual SRE Fundraiser Concert.** Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August from 2pm at the Willows Uniting Church, Warners Bay. \$20 Donation. Includes a delicious afternoon tea. Featuring performances by Macquarie Life choir, Vocal Company, Maureen O'Brien, Jennie Wilton, Geoffrey Hicks and Hannah gibbons(who was part of our congregation before going over to support Scots Kirk Hamilton). More details Paul 0411 236 047

**The John Drama, Aug 14-16.** An immersive theatre-in-the-round presentation of the Gospel of John, performed by Newcastle Christian Students. Each evening includes the 90-minute drama followed by a light supper. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased from [www.newcastlechristianstudents.org/john-drama/](http://www.newcastlechristianstudents.org/john-drama/).

**Swansea Ladies morning Tea.** Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August at Channel Cafe Swansea. All ladies welcome

## Pastoral Prayer

**Pray for Oman** (Population 4.7 million, Christians 187,000). While most Omanis practise a moderately conservative form of Islam, there is almost **no tolerance** for family members who convert to Christianity due to a strong clan mentality. Please pray for God to protect the church communities. Ask God to give His wisdom and boldness to immigrant believers living out their faith. Pray for believers to shine the light of Christ boldly.

### Pray for Josh Montzka. (Jo Barlow to provide)

**Pray for our youth groups – IMPACT and Junior Youth.** Its difficult running a youth group when there is nowhere to play outdoor games. Junior Youth has struggled with numbers last term and is going to have a break in term 3. IMPACT a meeting at Mayfield which is not as easy to get to for most of our families. Please pray for our leaders as they seek to keep our young people connected with God and with each other. And pray that all would grow in faith, hope and love.

**Pray for those with disabilities.** Gracious Father, we thank You for creating every person in Your image and for the dignity and worth You give to all, including those with disabilities. Strengthen them with the hope of the gospel and the fellowship of Your church, and remind us all that weakness is not a curse but a place where Your power is made perfect. Help us to love, serve, & honour one another as one body in Christ, to the praise of Your glorious grace

## Song – Yet not I but Christ in me

[CityAlight ~ Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

<p>1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer There is no more for heaven now to give He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus For my life is wholly bound to His Oh how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine" Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>	<p>3. No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven The future sure, the price it has been paid For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon And He was raised to overthrow the grave To this I hold, my sin has been defeated Jesus now and ever is my plea Oh the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free" Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>
<p>2. The night is dark but I am not forsaken For by my side, the Saviour He will stay I labour on in weakness and rejoicing For in my need, His power is displayed To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me Through the deepest valley He will lead Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>	<p>4. With every breath I long to follow Jesus For He has said that He will bring me home And day by day I know He will renew me Until I stand with joy before the throne To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus All the glory evermore to Him When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>

## Bible Reading – Revelation 4:1-11 (NIV)

*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*

<sup>2</sup>At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. <sup>3</sup>And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. <sup>4</sup>Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. <sup>5</sup>From the throne

came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.<sup>6</sup> Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the centre, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.<sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.<sup>8</sup> Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”<sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,<sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:<sup>11</sup> “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

## Sermon – God is ... Holy! (Stephen T)

Sermon video link: [https://youtu.be/C0NfTiBa\\_Os](https://youtu.be/C0NfTiBa_Os)

What is your favourite ALDI ad? The surfing Santas? The go big on the little things campaign? The outback Santa? ALDI have for years produced some of the best ads on TV. And of course, their tagline is also memorable. “Good. Different.”

You see ALDI don't want to be tarred with the same brush as the two big supermarkets, Coles and Woolworths, who don't currently have a great reputation. They want to be known as being both good at what they do and especially good for their customers. And they also want to be different, distinct from all the others. And so, to do that, they spend millions of dollars to paint a different picture of them for the people of Australia to see.

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In Isaiah 6 we see God paint a picture for all to see that he is not just Good. Different but Holy. Separate. He appears before the prophet Isaiah in a blaze of glory that threatens to blow him away. But instead, he is cleansed and commissioned to make sure that the whole world can hear about this God. And today, my hope and prayer is that we too will see how great our God really is and be reminded that this is exactly what our world needs. An encounter with the good, different, holy, separate ruler of this world.

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American preacher, John Piper put it this way, “*People are starving for the greatness of God, but most of them would not give this diagnosis of their troubled lives. The majesty of God is an unknown cure. There are far more popular prescriptions on the market, but the benefit of any other remedy is brief & shallow. Preaching that does not have the aroma of God's greatness may endure for a season, but it will not touch the hidden cry of the soul. (Which is) Show me Thy glory!*” Well, let's spend some time looking firstly at the

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### 1. Character (of God) (verses 1-4)

“*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*” The time is 740BC and Uzziah, a good king, has been reigning on the throne for 49 years. It has been a time of stability and prosperity. God has blessed the people of God with safety and security but there are clouds appearing on the horizon. At the end of Uzziah's time on the throne, he got proud and offered incense on the altar, a job that only the priest could do. This failure to understand God's holiness cost him dearly & he contracted leprosy and was removed from the palace for the rest of his life.

At the very same time, the great nation of Assyria was eating up the surrounding nations for breakfast and would soon be at Judah's door. So, with the death of one king and the arrival of another foreign king, there was concern about the future. But Isaiah 6 says don't worry about that, because the **real king**, the **sovereign king** of all the earth is still on the throne. God is still in control. He is reigning even when the situation all around them looks bleak.

God is on the throne. He inhabits a world beyond what we humans can see. His glory fills the whole earth. And his train stretches down from heaven even to the temple & fills that. Wow, I remember seeing Princess Di getting married to Prince Charles and thinking that is the longest train I have ever seen in my life. But the Lord is so mighty and majestic that the train of his garments reaches even from heaven to earth! But he is not just sovereign but holy.

2 *"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. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

Now holiness means that God is both Good and Different. He is good, righteous, there is no darkness or evil at all in him. Everything he does is true and right, just and fair. But he is not just holy, but "holy, holy, holy." In the Hebrew language, repetition is for emphasis. It's like writing these words in bold, in italics and underlined! There's a fullness of perfection in Him that surpasses even the words that unfallen angels can articulate in ordinary language.

But God is not just holy; He is holy, holier than anything or anyone. He is holiest of all. Which also means he is different to everyone and everything else in all of creation. He stands apart from them. Separate from them. There is a difference between God and humans. A difference between God and his creation. They too were once good but sin has tarnished them. Sinfulness has separated the creation from the perfect creator.

Which is why even these angelic beings, who themselves are perfect, can't look directly at God and so have two of their wings hiding their eyes and making sure they don't look upon God's perfect holiness. Which is why even the created order around God rocks and rolls in God's presence. 4 *"At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke."* Just like Mount Sinai physically shook when God came down onto the mountain, so nothing can stand before such an awesome and holy God.

But this holiness isn't just one characteristic of God, it defines all of God's character. He is a holy King, a holy judge, a holy saviour, a holy lover. He is in fact the only **Holy One**. In short, God's holiness means he is not like us in any way, shape or form.

A.W. Tozer once put it this way. He said, *"We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know, infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom but His holiness he cannot even imagine."*

Friends is that the view of God that you have? A God without rivals? A God whose beauty and holiness can never be properly described. A God whose glory fills the whole world, let alone the temple that Isaiah is in? Friends sometimes we fall into the trap of having a God who is too small. Sometimes we make God in our own image, rather than realise we are made in God's image. Sometimes we think of God as just a mate, a friend, a dad. Sometimes we forget how awesome he really is.

But let me push the envelope a bit further. In John 12:38-41, Jesus quotes this passage from Isaiah and then John goes on to say *"Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about Him."* Friends do you get this? That's not just God the Father on the throne there but that's father, son and holy spirit ruling the whole cosmos!

And to confirm that truth, the book of Revelation in chapter 4 repeats this holiness theme. *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come."* And in the very next chapter we read in verse 6 *"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it has been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders."*

Who is sovereign, who is holy? Jesus is. So, does that mean we also need to get an enlarged picture of the father, the son and the holy spirit as well? Do we need to meditate on the greatness of God? Do we need to ponder the holiness of Jesus? Do we need to keep in the forefront of our mind, the holy spirit? I think we do! In the midst of the mess of the world. As Christian values are trashed in Australia, let's not forget who is on the throne. Let's remember that he has the whole wide world in his hands. The character of God and now

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## 2. The Confession of Sin (verse 5)

5 *"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."* Isaiah gets this vision of God and how does he respond? He doesn't whisper, "Cool!" he doesn't shout "O my God" which might be the only time, that these words would ever be appropriate. He doesn't respond by saying "Wow!" Instead, Isaiah falls to floor & says "Woe. Woe is me. I am ruined!" Isaiah sees his God and he knows he will be lucky to stay alive!

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I remember being a kid, no more than 10 or so, when I went up to my local cricket oval & there was Lennie Pascoe, the Australian fast bowler. At that time, I wanted to be a fast bowler and I wanted to one day to play for Australia. I remember I went weak at the knees, I was struggling to say anything & I wasn't even facing him with a cricket ball in his hand. But meeting my childhood hero is nothing, nothing compared to meeting the true & living God.

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For you see when Isaiah sees God, he immediately lets out a confession. Compared to the goodness, the holiness of the Lord, he is a dirty sinner in need of spiritual cleansing. You see it is one thing to compare ourselves with those around us and say "Well when I compare myself with them, I am doing Okay. I don't swear like they do. I don't treat people as badly as they do. I haven't made a muck of my life, like they have."

But if we turn our gaze away from others and onto a holy God, we realise that any comparison we make is going to lead to a criminal conviction. Our best deeds are like filthy rags. I am not just going to make the grade; I am not going to get any marks at all. *"I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips."*

Isaiah realises that he is just like the people around him. The culture around him and the attitudes of the people around him have rubbed off on him. Whenever he points out other people's sins, he has most likely done that sin himself. Not only has he been affected by his own communities' sin but he has infected his community by his own sin.

And the sin he is now most aware of **comes from his lips**. Now don't you find that fascinating? This Isaiah is already a preacher, a prophet, he is gifted in the words that he is speaking. But even where he is strong, he is sinful. Especially where he is strong, he is sinful.

Before he saw God, he didn't really notice how sinful he really was. Now he knows he is in big, big trouble. For the first time this man with poor eyesight, has been handed a pair of heavenly glasses and he has seen what a desperate state he and his family, his community and his nation really is in. And that is why you and I need such a vision of God ourselves.

BB Warfield, once said, “*A Calvinist is the man who has seen God and, who having seen God in all His glory, is filled on the one hand with a sense of his own unworthiness to stand in God’s sight as a creature & much more as a sinner & on the other hand, with adoring wonder that nevertheless, this God, is a God who receives sinners.*” For following the confession comes the

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### 3. Cleansing (verse 6-7)

6 “*Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”*

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Listen to how preacher David Strain puts it. “*Picture it – speeding toward him as he waits for his own destruction, comes one of these “burning ones,” these seraphim, and they’re holding a fiery coal taken from the altar of burnt offering. And he sees this flaming thing speeding toward him as he waits for what he thinks is his end. This is it. This is the moment of his final doom, surely. And the coal is pressed to his lips... Surely the searing agony of it would mean his end. But it’s not a moment of condemnation, is it? Why not? Why doesn’t the burning holiness of God that comes speeding toward him, this fire, destroy him? Why? (Because) This is a moment of extravagant grace, guilt taken away, sin atoned for”*

Notice that God takes the initiative to solve Isaiah’s problem. God graciously steps in when there is nothing that Isaiah could do. Before Isaiah can give his life to the Lord or put his hand up to serve the Lord, or actually do anything for the Lord, God does something for him. He takes away Isaiah’s sin and replaces it with his righteousness. He takes away Isaiah’s guilt and gives him a pardon. He takes away Isaiah’s filthy rags and places on him the gleaming, holy, perfect clothes of heaven.

And notice how he does it, with a coal from the altar. This is not from the fire of God’s judgement but from the fire of God’s purification. But something had to die to cleanse Isaiah’s lips. A sacrifice had to be made to enable God’s grace to come upon his servant. But was it the blood of a lamb or a goat or a bull that brought about this cleansing? No.

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It was the blood of Christ. Who not only sits on the throne but is slayed on the altar. Romans 3:25 says, “*God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.*” And 1 John 2:2 goes on to say, “*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*”

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Jesus, the only man who was completely perfect, offers himself up as a sacrifice for our sins. You see for God to forgive Isaiah’s sin it took more than just a burning coal from any old altar. It took a coal from the altar that held the charred remains of his one and only son. You see forgiveness is a costly business. Cleansing of one’s sins never, ever comes cheaply.

Someone has to pay the huge cost. And that someone is not Isaiah, nor is it you or I either, it is our Lord and Saviour Jesus. Cleansing comes by God’s initiative, through his grace in the sending of his one and only son to die on the cross in our place. Which leads lastly to a

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### 4. Commissioning (verses 8-13)

8 “*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Who will go for us? Another hint that we are talking about a God who is not only sovereign and holy but is trinity. And the reply? “Here am I. Send me!” Isaiah says, “I will go. I’ll put my hand up! Now that I have seen the character of my God and confessed my sin to him. And now that I have been cleansed from this sin, I am ready to go wherever you want me to go and to do whatever you want me to do.*

It's a dangerous thing to say to our God, send me. Twice when I was growing up in the faith, I prayed the prayer, "Lord, use me. I don't know where you want me to go or what you want me to do but I'm available. Send me!" Soon after I was asked to lead a bible study. The next time I prayed that prayer I ended up leading a Christian youth group of around 80 people.

Can I ask, have you ever seriously prayed the prayer, "Lord, send me? Lord, use me? Lord I'm available." We sometimes sing the old hymn "*All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him. In his presence daily live. I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Jesus my blessed saviour, I surrender all.*" I wonder what God would do in our lives if we put up our hand and said to him, send me. Use me. I surrender all to thee!

That's what Isaiah did and he was given a strange and difficult mission. Because he is to become a preacher who will not see people flocking to the Lord but hardening their hearts to God's message of grace and forgiveness. Now Jonah was given the task of going to Nineveh and the whole city turned to the Lord & were saved. Isaiah is given the task of going to God's own people and they will not listen and so judgement is going to fall upon them.

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*9 He said, "Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' 10 Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull & close their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

There is no promise or even potential for success in what God is calling Isaiah to do. People are not going to want to hear your message, Isaiah. You will be tilling the soil and getting it ready for the planting of God's judgement. It will be costly for you. But that's your job, so get to it. The point being God's doesn't just call us to do the easy stuff, the good stuff, the tasks which lead to success. He calls Isaiah to be faithful, no matter what.

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I can imagine a massive lump appearing in Isaiah's throat. That's not what he thought God would get him to do. That's a tough ask. It's more than what he was asking for. So, he replies, "For how long, Lord?" And he answered: "*Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, 12 until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. 13 And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste.*"

Judgement must come first. The people of God will go into exile. Their sinfulness means they can no longer stay in my presence. But right at the end there is a glimmer of hope. "*But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.*" Judgement is not the final word. There will be embedded in that judgement, a new seed, that will sprout. A seed of the woman will win the victory. He will draw to himself, a faithful remnant. Throughout judgment, God will keep hold of his people.

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And that helps us to understand Jesus' ministry better. Because Jesus is not just the king on the throne and the sacrifice on the altar but he is also the preacher of this very message. In fact, Jesus says he tells the people his parables so that they can be "*Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.*" And when Paul preached the message of Jesus at the end of the book of Acts, he quotes Isaiah 6 to remind the Jews that the closing of their eyes to the gospel will lead to the opening of Gentile's ears to the gospel.

The message of Jesus is the sprouting of the gospel that will end up becoming a mustard tree that will bring people of all the nations into its shade. But it's still not popular. It's still a tough ask. But those who

are converted and cleansed. Like you and I, will be commissioned to go and make disciples of all the nations, beginning with your own home, your own street, your own workplace and amongst your own friends and neighbours. But don't expect a pat on the back for your troubles. But go and serve the Lord anyway however he sends you.

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And as he sends us, the letter of 1 Peter tells us, we must go in holiness.<sup>4</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Friends we serve a holy God. We have had before us this morning a vision of holiness. We have been saved by the holy one. That means holiness is not an optional extra, but it flows from our relationship with a holy God. It is kindled by the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of us. And it is fuelled by now having a new identity in Christ, the only holy person.

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Because if today we have been overtaken by this amazing vision of God, if we have become aware of our sin, if we have had a profound experience of the grace of God and if we are now to be sent in the service of God, then holiness will be important to us. Important in the words we say as we point others to a holy God and in the deeds we do as we want others to see how God has changed us and is changing us to become more and more like Jesus.

Slide 25

Friends, one day 2,746 years ago, Isaiah came to the Temple to worship and saw a vision of God's holiness and it completely blew him away and he put his hand up because he was willing to serve this holy God from now. And today we have come to the Church to worship and we have seen a vision of God's holiness as well. So, will we confess our sin? Will we seek cleansing of that sin? And will the Lord commission us to go in Jesus' name and serve him, be used by him, go wherever he sends us, so that his glory might again fill the whole world?

## Song – Christus Victor (Amen) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF5knxzkCVw>

1. O Most High, King of the ages  
Great I AM, God of wonders  
By the blood You have redeemed us  
Led us through mighty waters  
Our strength, our song, our sure salvation

[Chorus]  
Now to the Lamb upon the throne  
Be blessing, honor, glory, power  
For the battle You have won  
Hallelujah! Amen

2. O Most High, dwelling among us  
Son of man sent for sinners  
By Your blood You have redeemed us  
Spotless Lamb, mighty Savior  
Who lived, who died, who rose victorious

Chorus

Bridge

With every tribe and every tongue  
We join the anthem of the angels  
In the triumph of the Son  
Hallelujah! Amen

3. O Most High, King of the nations  
Robed in praise, crowned with splendor  
On that day who will not tremble?  
When You stand Christ the Victor  
Who was, and is, and is forever

Chorus

Bridge

Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen

Chorus

Bridge

**Benediction** 8 “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!” (Isaiah 6:8)