

## What is the Gospel: Reflections on Isaiah 6

### Who is Jesus?

#### I. Introduction

##### a. Intro

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 many of us may have seen headlines that an airplane taking off from LaGuardia airport in NYC made suffered catastrophic engine failure when the plane flew through a flock of geese, and landed in a river. For many of us those headlines may have filled us with a sense of impending dread. Passenger airplane, engine failure, water landing, the next bit of information that many of us probably expected to hear would be bleak, no survivors. But in God's providence, the next information in those online articles or evening news reports said something far different. "All 155 people on board rescued" That news was so good, and so unexpected that the event has since been called the Miracle on the Hudson.

I feel like the last two weeks have been like the headlines of January 15<sup>th</sup>. True news, but with a really bleak outlook. Truth one, God is the Holy and Almighty King of all of Creation, and Truth two, human beings are image bearers of God, but we are also corrupt and rebellious sinners, we have no way to fix ourselves, and we deserve God's just judgement against our sin. True news, bleak news, and if that is where the headline of the gospel or good news ended you may be seriously doubting how the message of the Bible could be good news. Well today we hear the rest of the story, today we click on that headline, and this news is far better than even hearing that 155 lives were spared on the Hudson river.

If you have your Bibles with you please turn to Isaiah chapter 6.

##### b. (re)Introduce the Series

If you are a guest with us today for the first time thank you for joining us! Our normal sermon diet here at FHRBC is to preach through a specific book of the Bible however from time to time we take a few weeks to focus on a specific topic of importance for the church and that is where we find ourselves this morning in the third week of a series entitled "What is the Gospel?" A fresh reminder of ancient truth for our souls.

##### c. Introduce the Sermon

So far we have answered two of the four questions whose answers help us to define the gospel. We asked "Who is God?" and from Isaiah 6 we learned that **God is the Holy Almighty King of All Creation**. Last week we asked **Who is Man, or Who are We?** And from Isaiah 6 and the rest of Scripture we learned that **Man is an Image-bearer of God, yet is corrupted by sin**. And in answering both of these questions we left Isaiah and ourselves in what can only be described as the worst of pickles. Between a rock and a hard place, or quite simply, in really really big trouble. Because we are wretched sinners who have rebelled against the holy and mighty God who will rightly punish us for our

sin. Because God is the God of justice, perfect justice. But God is also something else, God is also merciful, which we defined just a few weeks ago as God's disposition of treating those who are rebels against him better than they deserve.

But if God is both merciful which means he treats rebels better than they deserve, how is it that he is also perfectly righteous in his judgement? Because letting sin and rebellion go unpunished is not righteous judgement, it is negligence. And negligent is not something that can be said of God. Because of that we have to look at Isaiah 6, and from everything we have learned in the first two weeks, we have to wonder, how is it that Isaiah is still breathing at the end of the chapter?

Ultimately the answer is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, hence our question today

d. Main Point – **Who is Jesus? Jesus is God the Son who took on humanity in order to give his sinless life up as a ransom for sinners.**

e. Read the Text

f. Pray

g. Main Point (Again) – **Who is Jesus? Jesus is God the Son who took on humanity in order to give his sinless life up as a ransom for sinners.**

- i. A little different today, I am not going to tell you what the points are until we get to each one... but there are three of them.
- ii. **The Altar**
- iii. **the Fulfillment of the Altar**
- iv. **the King on the Throne**

## II. Exposition

### a. **The Altar**

Let's deal with the elephant in the room. I know some of you have been thinking it. You are looking at the text of Isaiah 6, and you are thinking... "Pastor Will, I don't see the name Jesus, Son of God, Son of Man, Messiah, Christ, or anything like that in these verses" We will get there I promise.

- i. Remember Isaiah's Need – he is undone and expects death and personal destruction for his own sinfulness
  - ii. The Provision for Isaiah
    1. A burning coal from the Altar
  - iii. The Altar
    1. The place where God ordained that sacrifices made by the people were to be consumed by fire
      - a. Sacrifices – possibly first seen after the fall. Adam and Eve were promised death as a consequence for sin, then they were cast out from the garden, and skins were provided to them from the Lord. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Israel.
      - b. The purpose of these sacrifices
- Leviticus 1:3–9**

*If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (ESV)*

The laying on of hands was a plea to God to accept the animal's life in place of the one offering the sacrifice. It was a plea for the guilt of the individual to be placed upon the animal.

The aroma spoken of is not that God took some sort of pleasure in the death offered, but in the same way that a good and satisfying smell can elicit peaceful emotions, the sacrifice was said to be pleasing and pacifying of God's just wrath towards the individual.

The fire of the altar consuming the offering of the sinner was significant in representing the wrath of God towards the sinner being satisfied in wrath against an unblemished substitute

2. The image we have then is of Isaiah's sin being dealt with from a hot burning coal from the altar. Possibly the remains of a spotless sacrifice still visible burning.
  - a. The sacrifices mentioned in the Old Covenant were many, but there were a few things that remained consistent through all,
    - i. They all had to be spotless animals without any defects or blemishes
    - ii. They all had to die
3. Yet the sacrifices prescribed towards Israel were made year after year, again and again. Were these sacrifices really affective at taking away the sins of human beings?
  - a. A better understanding of these sacrifices were that they were like deferments, the book of Hebrews in chapters 9 and 10 says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, but it also later says that the blood of bulls and goats can never take away human sin.
  - b. The burning coal from the altar that took away Isaiah's sin and guilt was not the complete end of Isaiah's sin before the Lord, but it pointed forward to the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate atonement or satisfaction of God's wrath towards sinners, Jesus of Nazareth.

## **b. the Fulfillment of the Altar or the Fulfillment of All the Old Testament Sacrifices**

i. The Spotless Lamb of God

1. Jesus is a man, but not born under the same circumstances as other men. Where all other human beings are born out of a very natural process, Jesus' conception and birth was a supernatural process. He was born of a virgin as Isaiah would prophesy about in the very next chapter and would be fulfilled and recorded as such in the books of Matthew and Luke
2. Jesus therefore does not inherit the sin of Adam he has no sinful nature, he like all of the animal sacrifices that pointed to him had no sinful defect within his soul.
3. But it wasn't enough for Jesus to be born without sin, he also had to maintain that spotlessness throughout his whole life. Which Scripture says that he accomplished. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that Jesus knew no sin, meaning he never sinned, he never knew what it was to commit sin. But Jesus' sinlessness was far greater than even that, because the Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, yet he never gave in to that temptation. You and I have our limits, you and I have been tempted to the point where we have simply succumbed and given in. Yet no matter how much the intensity of temptation arose in Jesus, he never gave in

ii. The Substitutionary Atoning Sacrifice

1. The animals were slaughtered and burned. Death and Wrath. And so that is exactly what the sinless Jesus did.
2. Through the greatest act of injustice ever seen on the face of the earth, the sinless Jesus Christ of Nazareth was falsely accused, subjected to a sham trial, and endured the horrific miscarriage of justice and was sentenced by the Roman Governor, through the political pressure of the Jewish leaders, to brutal execution by crucifixion.
3. Jesus' final hours on earth can be described rather well as physical hell on earth. But far more than that is what we don't see happening, but what we can only hear in Jesus' anguished cries.

**Matthew 27:46**

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

One author describes what Jesus is enduring in this moment by saying,

“God his Father, who is holy and righteous, whose eyes are too pure even to look on evil, looked at his Son, saw the sins of his Son's people resting on his shoulders, turned away in disgust, and poured out his wrath on his own Son.” – Greg Gilbert

4. That means that in that moment on the cross, Jesus, who had never sinned, had all of the sins of his people laid completely on him. And God treated him with all of the wrath and judgement against sin that God's people deserved.
  - a. Though we do not comprehend fully how this happened, somehow Jesus, in that moment endured, as a substitute in our place all the death of all God's people and countless eternities' worth of wrath against sin fell on to him in those hours on the cross.

5. And Jesus' sacrifice, unlike all of the animal sacrifices, was complete and effective. Jesus' last words from the cross were "It is finished" Full atonement was made for the sins of the people of God at the cross.
- a. Brothers and sisters in Christ do you hear that? Do you hear Jesus' words and do you truly understand them? Do you recognize the universe shattering truths within those words?
  - b. Jesus' words on the cross mean that all, all of the sin that we have deep within our natures, and all of the sins that we have committed in our lives, are gone. Wiped out, Jesus' precious blood has atoned for all of it. God in his omniscience, with all of world history from creation to the very end in view with every sin fully laid out before him, with every bit of your life and mine, he punished his Son in our place! Brothers and sisters do you see that? Do you hear that wonderful news? Do you realize that means that your sin, completely and wholly has been paid for, from your first breath to your last, debt is paid. Brothers and sisters do you know that even now, when many of us sin and our own hearts and maybe even demonic whisperings tells us, "Oh that one is new, there is no way you are saved now. That sin has definitely not been paid for, you a wretched, how could God love someone like you." When you hear that voice you cry out to yourself, you scream out Jesus' words with all of your might. IT IS FINISHED! It is done, I know I am a sinner, but Jesus paid for all of my sin, and you get up and find new strength to fight the battle another day, and when you fall down and you discover a new sin or you fail in another way or you fail again in the same way again you cast your mind again to calvary where Jesus bled and died for me and you say Jesus said "IT IS FINISHED!" The life of a believer, a constant struggle of fighting against sin and repenting of it over and over again is a life that must point to these words of Jesus over and over again and find in him and in him alone hope!
6. Brothers sisters and friends that news is great! And ought to even there cause us to rejoice, but it gets even better!

c. **the King on the Throne**

i. The Lamb is the King

1. **Isaiah 53** connection

- a. Isaiah prophesied about the suffering of Jesus as the substitutionary sacrifice for sin in Isaiah 53.

2. Back to **Isaiah 6**

- a. Isaiah saw, "the *Lord* sitting upon a throne," Isaiah said "For my eyes have seen the *LORD*" and Isaiah heard the voice of the *Lord*.

- i. LORD – Yahweh, Lord – Adonai (both referring to the same person)

3. **John 12:37-41**

*Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:*

*“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

*Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,*

*“He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and understand with their heart, and turn,  
and I would heal them.”*

*Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. (ESV)*

- a. That second part should sound awfully familiar to us
- b. John, writing and recording and teaching in his gospel account, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit connects the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, with the King on the throne in Isaiah 6.
- c. John’s claim then is that though there is one God, The Triune God, the person of the Trinity, whom Isaiah is currently standing in the presence of is the same person, with the same glory as the suffering servant in Isaiah 6,
- d. That means that the story of the person of Jesus Christ didn’t begin in a womb in Nazareth 2000ish years ago. In fact John will tell us that the story of Jesus never had a beginning,

### **John 1:1–3**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (ESV)*

4. Jesus is God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity
  - a. Jesus is the King who is the almighty and Holy King of All Creation
    - i. Jesus is God the Son through whom all of Creation was created
    - ii. Jesus is God the Son for whom all of Creation was created
    - iii. Jesus is the very righteous judge whom Isaiah is undone before and to whom Isaiah is accountable, whom Isaiah has offended and rebelled against by his nature and by his deeds
  - b. That means Jesus, God the Son, the Creator of the Whole Universe, stepped off of his throne, and took on human flesh, and came to this earth as the God-Man Christ Jesus.
  - c. That means Jesus humbled himself by becoming a servant, and coming to seek and to save lost sinners.
  - d. That means that the King on the Throne, would become the Lamb on the Altar. That means that in order to secure the removal of the guilt and the atonement for the sin of Isaiah, meant that the King would have to give up his life for that man.

### **Philippians 2:5–8**

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (ESV)*

- e. Kids there was an old VBS song that taught us all these truths a few years ago...  
*You gave up a throne for a manger  
Traded a crown for a cross  
Laid down Your life for a stranger  
And for all who are broken and lost – How Far Love Goes*

### III. Conclusion

#### a. The Risen King

- i. But wait, there's more – and its better than the infomercials
- ii. The end of that hymn from Philippians 2 says this

#### **Philippians 2:9–11**

*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (ESV)*

The last part of that verse can only be true, if there is something else that is true, unlike all of the other sacrifices made throughout Israel's history... this sacrifice didn't stay dead.

Brothers and sisters the tomb is empty. Though Jesus yielded up his spirit from his body on the cross, though he was pierced, though he was buried and sealed in a tomb behind a heavy stone, no grave could contain this sacrifice.

Jesus is alive, we do not rejoice in a dead savior, we rejoice in the living King. And though I know I have ended at least two sermons of mine with this text from Revelation. Fire me if you have to, but I simply cannot help myself

#### **Revelation 5:9–13**

*And they sang a new song, saying,*

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”*

*Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,*

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”*

*And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea,  
and all that is in them, saying,*

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (ESV)*