

Isaiah 6:1-8

June 16, 2019

“Thanks! I Needed That!”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Trinity Sunday

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[**Introduction**] “Thanks! I needed that!”

Meme after meme exclaims ... “Thanks! I needed that!”

Meme after meme... from Roger Rabbit to Charlie Brown hugging Snoopy

From Will Ferrell as Elf to Harrison Ford as he is slapped in the movie Sabrina.

And some of us may still remember that television commercial from the 1970s that featured an unknown John Goodman refreshing his freshly shaved face with Mennen skin bracer.

Slapping the product on his face, he exclaimed... “Thanks! I needed that!”

The commercial’s message

was that everybody needs a good waker-upper!

Everyone needs a good waker-up to be ready for the day.

[**Isaiah**] That is what the Prophet Isaiah needed!

the prophet Isaiah needed his own waker-upper moment.

He needed a waker-upper moment

*IF* he was going to be ready to be God’s prophet to the kingdom of Judah.

It is true. Isaiah had a tough assignment.

To be God’s prophet at the time in Judah – *well!*

Judah was on its way to destruction and captivity

That call – it was a tough assignment.

You see...

Isaiah was to utter the message of God and his will,

applying the Law to their circumstances.

You see...

To the godless, he would proclaim God’s wrath and inevitable destruction.

You can only imagine it was *NOT* a popular message.

But it wasn’t always this way.

During his initial years of service,

Isaiah prophesied to a kingdom that was flourishing (2 Ki 14:21–15:7).

But it was also a kingdom that was disintegrating and decaying underneath.

Judah was turning to gross idolatry and human sacrifices,

and turning away from God’s help.

In reality

Judah seemed to prefer worldly help from the Assyrians and Babylonians (Is 1:4–6).

So God through Isaiah revealed the future.

It was a future of “your country lies desolate,”  
“foreigners devour your land,” and  
after which there would be only “a few survivors” (1:9).

But Isaiah also foretold an even a greater future,  
the survival of a remnant (1:9),  
with many promises of a Messiah (for example, 7:14; 53:1–12)  
and the glories of the messianic period (2:1–5).

**[Isaiah’s Call]** So Isaiah needed a waker-upper moment.

AND To prepare him for this task, Isaiah had his waker-upper moment in a vision.

In his vision, Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up...

He saw the Lord in all his power and glory (vv 1–5).

AND Isaiah was overwhelmed by what he saw

And despaired of his “unclean lips,  
[dwelling] in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” (v 5).

In his vision, Isaiah is most concerned about his unclean lips. AND

In his vision, those lips receive forgiveness via a means of grace (vv 6–7).

The seraph obtained a burning coal from the altar in heaven.

It was just plain wood – plain wood united with divine fire.

As Isaiah’s lips were touched, the seraph explained what this meant:

“Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for” (v 7).

As the coal touched Isaiah’s mouth,

his guilt was taken away and his sin atoned for.

And it delivered even more.

It provided Isaiah with the one attribute  
to best equip him for the task now before him.

What was it?

The experience and relief of the forgiveness of his own sins.

Having had his “Thanks! I needed that!” moment,

Isaiah was ready to be sent as the spokesman of the triune God  
to a fallen people and a fallen world:

“Here I am! Send me, Send me” (v 8).

**[Ten Years Ago]**

Ten years ago, I stood here and said, “Here I am! Send me, Send me!”

I had completed my Vicarage. I had completed my studies.

I had graduated from Concordia Seminary.

I had been sent by Woodlands Lutheran Church.

At a Farewell and Godspeed Service, the members of Woodlands Lutheran Church  
Sent me to be your pastor.

For it was four years earlier that I stood at that altar and they sent me to seminary.  
And it was four years before that I had a waker-upper moment.

Kara and I were taking Grace to kid party and we passed the cemetery.

Along the road we were discussing what I would do

If I didn’t work for Walt Disney World.

We talked about a lot of different career paths,

And then she said, “What about a pastor?”

Before that no one had suggested that I should be a pastor.

But after that it seemed that everyone suggested I should be a pastor.

Even ardent atheists said, “You should be a pastor.”

I know... I worked with them and asked them.

That day I believe that God sent me a waker-upper moment.

And I can say, “Thanks! I needed that!”

And I have said in my biography that chapter would be called:

“From the Cemetery to the Seminary”

Like Isaiah, I had been called. And I said, “Here I am. Send me. Send me.”

**[This Day]** This day – Trinity Sunday

provide us each with the opportunity for our own

“Thanks! I needed that!” moment.

The reality is...

God is still the holy and almighty God,

and we live every moment with “unclean lips”

among people of “unclean lips.”

Contrary to what people may think and say and do in our day

and to whom or what they may look for safety and deliverance,

the same almighty and all-powerful God that Isaiah saw in his vision

remains omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent

and judges by the same Ten Commandments.

And you see... we fare no better.

Isaiah probably lived a pretty good life,  
as we probably believe we do,  
but he and we can only say,  
in the presence of God Almighty  
“Woe is me! For I am lost” (v 5).

The good news for us...

God is still a merciful God, our God not only of power and glory but of grace.  
By grace, God “left us a few survivors” at the demise of Judah (1:9),  
and through the ministry of Isaiah,  
he showered those survivors with a plethora of promises  
of the one who would come out of Judah  
to save those who remained faithful.

By grace, God kept those promises  
and made possible the salvation of all mankind  
by sending his Son to atone for the guilt of their sins.

By grace, God still sends spokesmen to carry his message of Law and Gospel  
to those who worship him as the only true and triune God,  
still providing visible means of grace,  
the bread and wine that touches our lips  
to give assurance of forgiveness (6:6–7).

AND By grace, God sends all of us to “tell the love of Jesus.”  
Here am I send me, send me.

### [*Conclusion*]

Today is Trinity Sunday.

We cannot and do not fully understand the doctrine of the Trinity.  
It is and will always remain a mystery to us on this side of heaven.  
Only when we are in heaven  
will we slap ourselves on both sides of our face  
like the guy in the television commercial  
and say, “Thanks! I needed that!”

But for now, this is still the God of mystery.

And He sends those who have experienced repentance and forgiveness  
to announce his Law and share his Gospel of forgiveness to all mankind.  
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”  
continues to be his call today for pastors, teachers, and everyday witnesses.  
So we say, “Thanks! I needed that!”  
but also to respond, “Here I am! Send me.” Amen.

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REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

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