

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

Theme: Seeing Yahweh Sabaoth

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Old Testament Lesson of Isaiah chapter six, verses one through eight.

Boys and Girls, how are you doing this morning? Good! I want you to look around this morning, what do you see? You might see people, the altar and paraments, the cross, there are many things you can see. Can you see God? We cannot see God. Yet, in our text for today, Isaiah sees just that. How does He react? And how does God make it possible for us to see Him today? Ponder these questions as we hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

Seeing God, is this something that we should desire? Isaiah describes seeing God in the temple. His robe filling the temple from top to bottom. The six winged Seraphim crying one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." At their cry, the very foundations of the temple shake. Isaiah's reaction is less than joyful. He falls down in utter terror. In terror over his sins and who God is. "For mine eyes have seen Yahweh Sabaoth." We typically translate this Hebrew words as "the King the Lord of Hosts." Literally it means I am who I am, the Commander of Armies. Isaiah has seen the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in all of his glory. God is trice holy. Holy means that God hates sins and cannot stand sinners. In his holiness and righteousness, He must punish sinners with what they justly deserve.

Isaiah knows well his sins. He lives in the midst of a people of unclean lips. He cannot stand before God at all. Nor, can we. We too live among sinful people. We too misuse our lips for sinful things. We sinners are in the very presence of God Himself, the God who comes down to us today, as we pray Matins, in His holy, inspired, and inerrant Word. This is the same God who comes down to us in Divine Service, being present among us in His Word and Sacraments. God is holy. God is here. We are here. We are not holy. We are people of unclean lips (you and me alike), and we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. The language of the Church (the language spoken, sung, prayed, and heard in the Liturgy of the Church—whether in Divine Service, Matins, or Vespers), is not a language spoken by the unclean lips of the world. You see, the world neither knows nor cares about the language of the Church. The world does not understand, speak, or sing holy words, and neither does the Old Adam that lurks inside each of us. The human tongue is a dangerous, even lethal, weapon, used to cut down our neighbors and to break the Ten Commandments, especially the Second and Eighth Commandments. We break the Eighth when we gossip, slander, and spread rumors. We violate the Second when call upon His Name, not to pray, praise, and give thanks, but in amazement, disgust, and condemnation. As we just confessed a few moments ago, we too are sinners in thought, word, and deed. We have done no good thing, even our best things are as rags. If that is our best, then what is our worst?! We cannot stand before a Holy God and say Hey, Look at me. Look at all of the good things that I did! We cannot, we dare not. Seeing God? We cannot even approach Him. We, like Isaiah, fall at His feet over the weight of our many, great, and grievous, sins.

God in His mercy and grace, acts to save and redeem. He sends one of the Seraphim with a burning coal, taken from the altar, the place of sacrifice. It touches Isaiah's lips and "His sin is taken away and His

guilt atoned for.” Thus forgiven, Isaiah does not even ask for any details in response to the Lord’s call of who to send, merely an emphatic, “Here am I, send me!” We have not been redeemed with burning coals but with something far greater. We dare not approach God to see Him for ourselves. The only “safe” and possible way for us to see and approach God is in His humanity, for His glory comes down to us as we gaze upon Him in Word and Meal; that is as much glory as we are able to bear. God in the flesh, Jesus, sheds His innocent and holy blood upon the cross for us in our place, paid the penalty for every single one of our sins, that we might be redeemed. Because of the death and resurrection of our Lord, we can stand boldly before the throne of grace without fear and trembling over our sins knowing that we have already been forgiven by the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is a forgiveness that we receive every Sunday through the words of me, your pastor. “Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. [LSB, p. 203]” In the blessed Eucharistic Feast, you join with the Angels, archangels, and all the host of Heaven, giving praise to God for coming to you in this meal, giving you, Jesus very body and blood, in, with, and under the bread and the wine. That with your very lips, you taste not the fire of a burning coal, but the very body and blood of your Lord and Savior, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Here, you behold God face to face. Here, He serves you of His grace and mercy found in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection from the dead. He gives you of His Holy Spirit that with Isaiah you can say, “Here am I, send me!” in all of the many and various vocations in life, of husband and wife, child and parent, employer and employee, whatever

it may be. By the grace of the Triune God, we boldly stand, until that day when we too, shall behold Yahweh Sabaoth, face to face.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.