



day three: repentance

Isaiah 6:5

"Woe to me!" I cried.

"I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips..."

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"You are Holy" written & performed by Jason and Stephanie Osario

OPENING

Do you ever feel unworthy? Do you ever feel too dirty for God to look at you? Like you want to hide, cover your face hoping he can't see you?

(Space)

*You are holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
Lord, You are Worthy
You are holy, holy
The whole earth is full of,
Full of Your glory*

*In awe of who you are
Our hearts adore
All creation proclaiming
Holy is the Lord
Through the chaos and the smoke
You are seated on the throne
Unworthy of your presence
You restore and cleanse our soul*

*You are holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
Lord, You are Worthy
You are holy, holy
The whole earth is full of,
Full of Your glory*

As Isaiah has his vision of the throne room of God, he has such a moment. He sees the unveiled glory and majesty of God. He witnesses mysteries too hard to

comprehend and too difficult to retell, and he feels utterly out of place. He feels keenly aware of God's holiness juxtaposed with the sin of his own life. In response to what he sees, he says:

"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 6:5)

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Repentance.

Almost a forbidden word in the secular culture of the 21st century. People hear it and shudder because of the shame it seems to conjure in people's hearts and minds. And yet in the scriptures, repentance is a crucial and regular practice in the life of a disciple of Jesus. Repentance means the changing of one's mind, which in turn leads to a change in behavior. It implies a 180 degree turn away from sin and towards God.

**Holy God, just as you revealed yourself to Isaiah in
your throne room,
So too you reveal yourself to us in Jesus Christ.
You show us your holiness and humility,
Strength and servanthood,
Meekness without weakness,
Love without compromise.
May we, like Isaiah, repent,
Not only in word but in action.
Empower us by your Spirit,**

**To resist temptation like you did in the desert,
And be victorious over sin, like you on the cross.
Thank you.
Amen.**

(Space)

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The reality of this passage is that, when we encounter the Living God, we come face to face with our own sinful nature. We cry out 'mercy', and we repent. What is missing here in this story is an angry judgmental tongue lashing from God. It's not God pointing the finger at Isaiah's sin, it's Isaiah doing so to himself. He knows the brokenness of his inner world. He feels comfortable to be honest face to face with God.

Are you, like Isaiah, able to be honest about your brokenness when you sit with God in prayer?

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Where does that comfortability come from? Trust in the love of God. Isaiah trusts that God loves him despite his imperfection and sin, because Isaiah knows something about God's character. He knows that God is slow to anger and abounding in love. That God's primary char-

acteristic is love. That sort of love does not condone sin but finds us there and saves us from it.

Do you trust that God loves you, irrevocably?

(Space)

**Father,
Help us to trust that you love us,
fully and completely.
Help us to know how much you love us.**

(Space)

Repentance is an appropriate response to becoming aware of one's sin because it's a recognition of the problem and a desire to change it. It is Isaiah's vision of God that drives his understanding that he needs to repent. To come into the light of God is to see oneself clearly; more clearly than ever before. Like someone getting ready for the day, putting on their clothes, brushing their teeth or putting on makeup, while in the dark... When they go outside into the light, they will inevitably see that they look much different in the light than they thought they did in the dark. Coming into the light of God's presence, our lives illuminated in His glory, we will see ourselves for what we are; broken, and messy and yet also deeply loved by Him.

What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you in this moment that you need to change your mind about and turn away from?

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SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 24:4-6

"The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob."

**God may you give us clean hands,
And may you help us to cultivate a pure heart.
May you open our eyes to see your glory,
And may our hearts be purified
in the fire of your presence.
May our minds be filtered of all that is unclean,
Our hands be purged of what does not belong,
And our hearts be reconnected to you,
Most Holy God.
Amen.**

*You are holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
Lord, You are Worthy
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Isaiah sees God, while his lips are unclean. Just as Jesus' disciples saw God in flesh with unclean hearts, minds and hands. They didn't know it right at the start, but they were walking with God. And as they walked with him in discipleship they were changed. And as they were changed their eyes were opened to the reality and glory of God in Christ Jesus.

We all struggle with sin. The great saints of the faith, like the Apostle Paul did as well. He said in Romans 7:15: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." In other words, he understood what it was to be perplexed by your own behavior. Often our deepest desire loses to our strongest desire in a moment of weakness. Our deepest desire is God, but our strongest desire in a moment of temptation might be money, sex, power, or pride. And so we make mistakes. In God's presence we see those mistakes clear as day and are met with the opportunity to change. To repent. To change our minds and behavior to align with God's Word and Way.

King David prays after he is confronted by the prophet Nathan because of his affair with Bathsheba. In Psalm 51:1-12 he says:

**Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.**

**Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.**

**For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.**

**Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;**

so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth,

sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;

you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;

wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

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David is found in the wrong, and prays that prayer of repentance, asking for both mercy and a clean heart. All of the heroes of the faith failed at times. And as the saying goes, it's not about how many times you fall, but that you keep getting back up when you do.

So, if you ever feel unworthy, may you remember that worthiness is not a measure for you but for God. To ask the question of oneself of worthiness is to have missed the point of the gospel. The question is not whether you are worthy, the truth is that He is. Then your life's mission is not to become worthy of God's love or attention. The point is to live connected to His love and live from the knowledge of what God has already done for you.

To repent, when needed, not to become worthy, but because He has chosen you while you were still a sinner. To repent, to repair the tear in your relationship with Him. To repent from love and for love. Because you are loved

and want to reciprocate.

This kind of repentance positions one to respond to God's mercy with gratitude that fosters praise. Thankfulness for what God has done. That He reveals Himself to us, messy as we are and helps us repent. So let us reflect on that loving kindness and then pray.

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*Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise him all creatures here below
Praise him above ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Amen*

