

Where Does Passion Come From?

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of great thoughts about God and the source of passion, which comes from dwelling on God's character and revelation in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:13:16

Scripture: Exodus 20:4-5, Psalm 139:14, Isaiah 6:1-4, Matthew 6:33, Mark 11:15-17, John 15:4-5, Hebrews 1:3

Topics: "Passion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the problem of taking our victories over problems and putting them aside, thinking we no longer need God. He emphasizes the constant need for God's presence and guidance in our lives, comparing it to branches that remain connected to the vine. The preacher also highlights the danger of trading our relationship with Christ for worldly entertainment and recreation. He then delves into the passage from Isaiah 6, where Isaiah sees the Lord sitting on a throne and experiences the awe-inspiring presence of God. The preacher concludes by addressing the question of where his passion comes from and acknowledging that age does not diminish his passion for God.

Transcript

Again, a great privilege to be here. In Peru, we have a saying, el cerebro solamente puede comprender lo que el trasero puede soportar, which basically means the mind can only comprehend what the seat can bear. So, I'm going to try to be brief, although it's probably not going to happen.

One of the things that has become so dear to me over the years is men of olden days in the Christian ministry seem to have been allowed to have greater privilege of study. Their life was not as hectic as ours. And they also, I think, simply obeyed the Lord more than we do.

They thought great thoughts about God. And over the years, one of the greatest movers in my life has, of course, been Scripture, but the great thoughts about God. And as I was listening to the sermon, something came up.

Our brother's sermon. It was something that I shared earlier with some brothers. And it just reminded me so much of the same thing.

And I'd just like to read it to you. I call it the Father's Bargain. And it comes from John Flavel.

It's just very special to me. Flavel says, Here you may suppose the Father to say when driving His bargain with Christ for you. Talking about the decrees of God before the foundation of the world.

First, the Father speaks. My son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to My justice. Justice demands satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them.

What shall be done for these souls? And thus Christ returns. Now Christ speaks. My Father, such is My love to and pity for them that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their guarantee.

Bring in all Thy bills that I may see what they owe Thee. Lord, bring them all in that there may be no after reckonings with them. At My hand shalt Thou require it.

I will rather choose to suffer their wrath than they should suffer it. Upon Me, My Father, upon Me be all their debt. And then the Father responds.

But My Son, if Thou undertake for them, Thou must reckon to pay the last mite. Expect no abatements. If I spare them, I will not spare Thee.

The Son. Content, Father. Let it be so.

Charge it all upon Me. I am able to discharge it. And though it prove a kind of undoing to Me, though it impoverish all My riches, empty all My treasures, yet I am content to undertake it.

With that, Jonathan Edwards says, he that is Christ, delighted in the prospect of eternal salvation of souls more than countervailing the dread which he had of his extreme sufferings. Many waters could not quench his love. Neither could floods drown it.

For his love was stronger than death, yea, than the mighty pains and torments of such a death. And I find it quite remarkable. I want to bring in one more passage before the sermon of something that Spurgeon said that has always been very dear to me.

He said we never sent to Him. He sent to us. Suppose that after we had all sinned, we had fallen on our knees and cried, O Father, forgive us.

Suppose that day after day, we had been with many pious tears and cries, supplicating and entreating forgiveness of God. It would be great love then that He should devise a way of pardoning us. But no, it was the very reverse.

God sent an ambassador of peace to us. We sent none to Him. Man turned his back on God and went farther and farther from Him and never thought of turning his face toward his best friend.

It is not man that turns beggar to God for salvation. It is, if I may dare to say it, as though the eternal God Himself did beg of His creatures to be saved. Jesus Christ has not come into the world to be sought for, but to seek that which is lost.

It all begins with Him. Now He describes, unsought, undidden by the object of His compassion, Jesus came into the world. Remarkable.

Remarkable thoughts of God. And I would encourage you to think. To think.

I would encourage you to read. I would encourage you to read good books. Dwell upon great truths.

You are called to be a noble people. You are called to be a high thinking people. And what is a higher or nobler thought than to dwell upon the character of God and the revelation of the character of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ? We feed oftentimes on such low things.

It doesn't become us as children of God. Now, actually the office there at HeartCry, they told me, they said, Brother Paul, don't sweat this very much. You're only preaching once in English and once in Spanish and then you're coming home.

And I heard just only several minutes ago, you're preaching. You're on next. Well, the problem is not having something to say.

The problem is knowing what to say. I would like to just take this time to read to you some notes and to talk about the notes that I've written. Things about God.

I want us to go for a moment to Isaiah 6. I am not known as a great theologian, nor do I, I guess, whatever, bear the title maybe even a theologian. I am sometimes very, very passionate and not careful enough about the things I say. But there's one thing that over and over people have asked of me, so I must think that maybe there's some truth to it.

They say, from where does the passion come? I say, after all, Brother Paul, you're not young. That's what a guy told me a while ago. He said it would be different if you were young and you had passion.

But you're old and you have passion. Well, I'm not that old. It's not the years, it's the mileage.

Even a zealous honeymoon sort of love that people tell us to promote is not strong enough medicine to keep alive a passion. Rewards in heaven are not strong enough medicine to keep alive a passion. Unless, of course, you have defined reward in heaven correctly as God.

Maybe it's because I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed or the brightest crayon in the box. But sometimes I see things about God in Scripture. More often I hear things from other men far wiser than myself.

And they mesmerize me. It's not because of my spirituality. It's because of their great thoughts.

And most people today are raised on a Christianity with no thinking at all. It's kind of an oompa-oompa circus popularism type of keep everybody going. But going where? And going why? But to look at Christ.

Do you realize it is not a vain effort? It is not a stupid thing. It is not a waste of time to stay up all night to find a thought about Him. Sometimes I hear Dr. Piper speak and speak about glory.

Then I'll hear a young man parrot the same thing and know he understands nothing of what he's saying. It's not just about gaining the rhetoric or learning the words, but to sit with Him, to tarry with Him. Brother Charles, it was such a challenge this afternoon to cry out.

And knowing that the true child of God never cries out to know Him in vain. Never. And that's an absolutely amazing thing.

No doubt, I will know Him in a greater way. No doubt if I tarry here. But all these little foxes, everything from intellectual endeavors purely for the sake of intellectual endeavor, theology for the sake of correctness, TV and noise and clamor and this and that.

A poet once wrote about Christ coming in from the wilderness. He says, weak from the journey, the long passing days, hungry to worship, to join in the praise. And He comes into the temple.

Shock met with anger that burned on His face as He entered the wasteland of that barren place. And then He makes a cord and another cord and ties it to another cord and chases out the money changers. And it says, the noise and confusion gave way to His Word at last.

Sacred silence so God could be heard. There are so many things that steal us from Him. But we ought to be careful.

In Isaiah verse 1, He says, in the year that King Uzziah died or in the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with a train of His robe filling the temple and seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings. With two He covered His face and with two He covered His feet and with two He flew. One called out to another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of His glory. The foundations of the threshold trembled at the voice of Him who called out while the temple was spilling with smoke. Then I said, woe is me, for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Now just sit for a while. Now if you have to leave, I remember Leonard Ravenhill saying this one time, if you have to leave, I'll understand.

I'll understand your carnal is what I'll understand. But I won't say that. I'll think it, but I won't say it.

In this, here the title, Lord, is translated from the Hebrew word Adonai, which makes a lot of cult figures and such make us think that possibly this is God. There's a reason for it, because sooner or later we're going to find out that this One that Isaiah sees, John tells us it's the Son. But in verse 3, it's translated from the Hebrew word Yahweh, the One Isaiah sees as God.

This statement does not contradict much of what you hear in Scripture. We're always hearing in Scripture, aren't we, that no one sees God. No one has ever seen God, and that's true.

But let me say this, Isaiah does not record that he saw the divine essence of God in all His glory. But as Albert Barnes writes, a manifestation, our vision of Jehovah, a striking symbolic representation of Him, a symbol of His presence. So mighty is this God that even in the throne room, the full knowledge of Him is absolutely impossible.

Now you say, tell me something practical about this. It's the only reason eternity doesn't get boring. Streets of gold.

Gate of pearl. Finite objects. They can ultimately be discovered and known.

I heard a scientist last night at 2 in the morning why I was watching the Discovery Channel. I have no idea. But he said science was an endeavor and part of the joy was the journey.

And he said it would never happen, but he would fear if they would come to the end of knowledge. Well, I can assure them they will not. But in an eternity of eternities, you will not come to the end of the knowledge of Him.

As a matter of fact, that will be the reason of what you're doing there. That's the whole theme of heaven is to know Him. And you say, oh yes, I can't wait to get there to know Him.

Have you never read the Scriptures? You got there on the day of your conversion. This is eternal life. I give them eternal life.

And this is eternal life. To know Him. So don't talk to me about, oh, I can't wait to get there to know Him.

The journey started a while back. We betray ourselves with the things we say. Stephen Sarnak, he agrees with the prophets of old and he says this, they saw not the essence of God, but some images and figures of Him proportioned to their sense or imagination.

The essence of God no man ever saw nor can see. Calvin said this, we ought to be aware, and I love this, that when God exhibited Himself to the view of the fathers, referring to the Old Testament saints, He never appeared such as He actually is, but such as the capacity of men could receive. God must condescend.

This is how large, how great this God is. And it is not greatness of quantity alone. It's not that He's like us, just bigger.

He's not like us at all. And ultimately, that's the meaning of the word holy. He is unique.

Though men may be said to creep on the ground or at least dwell far below the heavens, there is no absurdity in supposing that God comes down to them in such a manner as to cause some kind of mirror to reflect the rays of His glory. There was therefore exhibited to Isaiah such a form as enabled Him, according to His capacity, to perceive the inconceivable majesty of God and thus He attributes to God a throne, a robe, and a bodily appearance. But notice how cautious He is when Isaiah speaks of God.

He follows in that Hebrew tradition of avoiding some description of form, some description of face, some description of presence. Now there are two reasons for that I believe. One is, of course, we shall make no false images.

That is why I may be very offensive here. All your pictures of Jesus, get them away from me. Get them away from me.

They're special to me. You're wrong. How dare you? When Scripture, when the writers of inspired writs refuse to give you that, how dare you take it upon yourself? You say, but it's so precious to me.

It is so precious to you. An image made. I believe, Brother Charles, it might have been you or someone who told me about a man handing out tracts in India or somewhere and each of the tracts or something had a face of Jesus on it.

Handed it out to a little girl and she came back later weeping or something and the missionary asked her, what's the problem? And she said, oh sir, I thought He was so much more glorious and precious than this. Again, listen to what Barnes writes. It is remarkable that Isaiah attempts no representation of Jehovah Himself.

He mentions His robes, the throne, the seraphim, but mentions no form or appearance of God Himself. In this there is great sublimity. There is enough mentioned to fill the mind with awe.

There is enough concealed to impress us deeply with the sense of divine majesty. But think about this. Even in the small glimpse, and you say, what do you mean small glimpse? This is one of the greatest glimpses in all of Scripture.

But I'm speaking relatively. Compared to the one being glimpsed, it is minuscule. It's absolutely nothing.

And yet, think about this. In these things that are said in this passage, as low as they are compared to the one that is shown, there is enough in these few verses to occupy the greatest scholar in a glorified body throughout all of eternity. An eternity of eternity.

Now, here's the amazing thing. We go up to John 12, verse 41. And John says this, these things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

These things Isaiah said, because he saw whose glory? The glory of the Son of God. There is a real sense in which at times I think the term crystal centric is abused. But this is indeed a crystal centric universe.

The Father has deemed it to be so. The Father created through His Son. The Father sustains through His Son.

The Father reveals Himself through the Son. The Father redeems through the Son. The Father will judge all men through the Son.

Now, the Father is all about the Son. And it would be a wise thing if He jumped on the bandwagon. He's all about... And when I pray for my little boys, I think about the foolishness, the treachery of ministry.

And so I pray, Father, not that they be preachers or missionaries or writers, but for Yourself, You would take the heart of these children and give their heart to Your Son. If they're sweepers and janitors, yet their heart burns for Christ, they are worth more than a thousand spuries. These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Again, Barnes writes, John affirms that it was the glory of the Messiah that Isaiah saw. And yet, Isaiah affirms that it was Jehovah. It was Yahweh.

And from this, the inference is irresistible. People don't talk like this anymore. That John regarded Jesus as the Jehovah whom Isaiah saw.

The name Jehovah is never in the Scriptures applied to a man or an angel or any creature. It is the peculiar, incommunicable name of God. This passage is therefore conclusive proof that Christ is equal with the Father.

And you say, well, what import is that? Why is that important? If He's not equal with the Father, there's no redemption. You say, but why? All these silly songs of yours. Most of them you need to cut out.

Now, you didn't sing them here. I'm just saying yours because I like to blame people for things. But you know, oh, if God searched all the world and couldn't find a perfect man.

God searched all of heaven and couldn't find a perfect angel. A perfect man and a perfect angel could not die for your sins. The One who died for your sins had to be of infinite worth.

He had to be man. He had to be God. James Montgomery voiced, I agree with R.C. Sproul who said that when the Lord took him home, it was the judgment of God on America.

He was a fine man. What Isaiah saw was the closest thing in all of Jewish writings or tradition to an actual portrait of the living and holy God. Yet, that vision with all its breathtaking splendor, John applies to Jesus.

Without questioning it would seem, John takes the most exalted vision of God in the Old Testament and says that it was a portrait of a carpenter from Nazareth who was about to be crucified. So great is John's opinion of Him. How great is your opinion of Him.

You can speak of Christ with a view to lesser glory and you can fail miserably, but you can never speak too much of Christ. He will exhaust you. He will absolutely exhaust you.

And this is the pain of preaching for you young men. Preaching is not about simply the communication of morality. Preaching is not a passion because you want people to do well.

Preaching is a task of a painter without a brush. It is absolutely impossible. Your whole task in life is to do something that you know from the outset you will miserably fail in doing, and that is to paint a picture of Jesus Christ.

And this is what you endeavor to do. Now, you'll hear men, men of old, and they rightly would say, but a man catches on fire and the whole world will watch him to burn. That's true.

We need to be men on fire. But men on fire about whom? The pastors in Peru recently, they all gathered around me and said, Brother Paul, what must be done to change our churches? They're starting to grow theologically. They're beginning to recognize things about genuine conversion, the sovereignty of God.

But I want you to know, harp on those things and you will not create men full of fire. It has to be men who burn for this heavenly vision of Jesus Christ. And I told those Peruvian brothers, you must be passionate about Christ.

We want our people to be passionate. They can't be passionate lest you're passionate. I want so-and-so to know the passion of Christ.

I want so-and-so to be saved. Will you trade Him for a well-directed television program? Will you trade Him for a scientific endeavor? Will you trade Him for entertainment? Recreation? Now entertainment, recreation and such, they all have their place. But so often, Christ is traded, bargained at a cheap price for such things.

And I'm living proof here that you don't have to be smart to understand great things of God. Read other people. So I went to hear Brother Paul preach.

And all he did was quote other men. Well, these men are better than I am. Like one preacher I heard one time, he said, when I was young, I preached the greatest sermons that's ever been preached.

And I thought, well, that's rather big of yourself. And he said, yes, I preached Charles Spurgeon sermons and I preached Whitfield sermons. It doesn't have to be original.

It just has to be true. It goes on. Sitting on a throne, these words communicate the settled, undisturbed sovereignty of Him who does according to His will in the hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, who works all things after the counsel of His will.

Oh, look at this. This One who does these things became a man. The One who walked upon the earth as a carpenter's son is here described by Isaiah as lofty and exalted.

The Son is seen above all authority and power in heaven and on earth. Matthew Henry writes this. This throne is high.

Now, that's profound. This throne is high and filled up above all competition. Just make Jesus Lord of your life.

The only thing you can make is an idol. It's never been required of thee to make Jesus Lord. That has been done by God who has made Him both Lord and Christ.

Your task is to join the rest of heaven in reality and stop living in a delusion. Above all competition and contradiction. The contradiction of sinners against Him as He walked on earth.

No contradiction now. No contradiction. What is this man? This fellow says, we know who our Father is.

As though they were saying, you're born out of wedlock. He suffered great contradiction of sinners. But on the day of judgment, there'd be no contradiction whatsoever.

But think of this. Because there is no contradiction against Him, there will also be no contradiction against you. When He is revealed, we are revealed with Him.

When He is vindicated with the last vindication, so shall His bride be vindicated with Him. So don't work too hard for your vindication now. And don't fret over the cause of evil men or their slander of the true church.

All is going to work itself out. The fact that He sits upon the throne assures you. Oh, I love what Manton says.

You know in the Old Testament under the Levitical law, when it's time for a slave to go free, but he says, no, I love my Master. I love my wife. I love the children that have been given to me.

And so they take him and they put him against a beam. They take an oar and they pierce his ear. So Jesus, so the Son of God said, Father, I love my spouse.

I love these children that You have given me. I will become obedient in the form of a servant. Pierce my ear.

I will be their guarantee. The One who sits upon the throne does this. And guess what? Even though, yes, we rightly say He did it for the glory of God, but never forget in all your high speaking, He did it for you.

He did it for you. We can sometimes be so careful of protecting God's glory that He says, I have another motive also. I love My people.

It's not just this forced thing. This thing without passion or love. I'm going to demonstrate My glory.

I'm going to do certain things. I'm going to make contracts with the Father. It's not that cold.

I love My people. I've set My love upon them. And you say, but why? Why has He loved me? This is answered in the Old Testament with a tautology, with a taunt.

He says, do you want to know why I loved you? Okay, I'll answer you. I loved you because I loved you. And what is that because I loved you? And what is He saying? My love for you springs forth from Me.

You haven't wrestled it out of My heart. You haven't drawn it from Me. It is freely given.

Now, the train of His robe filling the temple. I've written, the robe which filled the temple seems to portray the expanse of the Son's majesty and the extent of His sovereignty. They reached everywhere this majesty and glory.

They reached everywhere and filled absolutely everything. Dillich says this, he saw the Lord, and what more? He saw the all-filling robe of the indescribable One. As far as the eye of the seer could look at first, the ground was covered by this splendid robe.

There was consequently no room for anyone to stand. There is no place on this earth where men can stand that they are not being touched by the robe of God's sovereignty and glory. That's a great comfort for the believer.

What a comfort. As Brother Charles said, we need to cry out our weaknesses that others might pray for us and such. I feel at most times my greatest offense against my Master is that I do not believe Him.

I trust Him, but in the way the disciples trust Him when He said He was going to Jerusalem and they didn't see a redemptive purpose in it and they said, well, we'll go too to die. Nothing good will come of it. Oftentimes my faith, I'll jump off the cliff.

I'll do what you say. I'll probably be destroyed and everything will be ruined, but I'll do it anyways. And then I worry and I mope instead of resting His robe.

There's no place where a man can stand that the robe is not there. That's also a great fear for the unbeliever. You cannot escape Him.

It goes on. Matthew Poole writes, his glorious robes reached down to the bottom of the temple and were spread abroad in the temple, which was an evidence of more than ordinary majesty. More than ordinary majesty.

An extraordinary majesty. You look at the greatest thing you can find on earth. You look at a sunset or the Grand Canyon or the giant whale as it moves through the Pacific Northwest.

You stand in awe of these things. But that is a minute majesty. That is an ordinary majesty.

A natural majesty of a creature not too much unlike yourselves, but a vision of Him. That is no ordinary majesty. Now the seraphim.

This is the only passage of Scripture where the reference to the seraphim is found. It means burning or fiery ones. Stanley Horton writes, their purity was indicated as they reflected the dazzling brilliance of the glory of God to such a high degree that they seemed to be on fire.

Now here's something very, very important. Do you know how it will say that not even the heavens are clean in His sight? He finds folly among His angels. That doesn't mean heaven is dirty.

Nor does it mean that there is sin in His elect angels. What you need to understand is something that's going on here. Listen to what Horton says.

They reflected the dazzling brilliance of the glory of God. Two words you need to hang on. One is inherent.

The other is derived. God's holiness is inherent. It springs forth from Himself.

It is His own. His glory is inherent. He is not like the pale moon that reflects the light of another source.

His glory is His own. Now these seraphim, which are so glorious, that I suppose if they themselves were revealed on this planet in all their glory, it might consume the planet. And yet, theirs is a dull reflection, a bouncing off, in a tiny, minute, finite way of the glory of God.

But there is one, Hebrews tells us, in chapter 1 verse 3, that is the exact representation of His glory. And do not think for a moment that some of the heretics in the first several centuries supposed that that glory that Christ reflects and reflected was like the Father played the Son and He played the moon. But it was His own.

His life was His own. Now, due to their proximity to the throne, I believe it may be deduced that they are the grandest and holiest of created beings. They're closer to the throne than any other creature that we know of.

Now, Charles Spurgeon. Listen to him. You ask me to tell you something about these seraphim.

How can I? They have covered their faces and covered their feet. Since nothing is to be seen, what can I tell you? Neither would it be right for us to speak concerning them. For manifestly, it is their desire to be hidden.

Who will violate their wish to be concealed? They cover their faces, they cover their feet, and therein they did as good say to us, look not unto us, but look on Him who sits upon the throne whose attendance we are. Don't look at us! What's wrong with you? Why look at the lesser glory? That's like for us to go to the museum and there's the water lilies. They're painted.

Magnificent piece. And while you're gazing at that or while I'm gazing at that, I'll make you the one with the dull heart. While I'm gazing at that with my refined culture appreciating the beauty, you're saying, why won't you look at my stick man? Why won't you look at my stick man? Go away, boy, you bother me.

You see, but you're thinking to yourself, but surely these things are something of a representation of Yahweh, of God. Are you kidding me? I learned this from R.C. Sproul. What's more like God? The seraphim or a worm? The answer is neither.

Let me give you an example. I'm 6'2". Brother Scott, how tall are you? 5'10"? With heels on? Alright, I'm 6'2", he's 5'10", and so I boast about being closer to the sun than he is.

That's absolutely absurd! Absolutely absurd. Now here's the problem. They stood above Him.

These seraphim. A possible translation is they stood above it. The robe.

Dalich writes, the seraphim should not indeed tower above the head of Him who sat upon the throne, but they hovered above the robe belonging to Him with which the hall was filled. Now I see this going as possibly both ways. It is maybe possible that they were not above Him.

That they hovered above His robe and not above Him. But then there's something else that's a possibility. When you know who you are, it really doesn't matter what others do.

I have no problem with these seraphim hovering above Him. He's seated upon the throne. Do you think He fears competition? Do you think that He's going to say, oh, they're higher than I? We hear all the time, especially in the area of kings and queens back in the past, of kings who would not allow anyone to be taller than them in the throne room.

Would not allow anyone to sit higher than them. All this is preposterous. There is no competition here.

Each having six wings. Rolison writes, the general idea of the six wings was probably rapid flight. The carrying out of God's bequest was speed swiftly.

But now listen to this. But in the divine presence, the wings were applied to a different purpose. One pair veiled the seraph's head from the intolerable effulgence of divine glory.

Another concealed the feet soiled in their various ministrations and unmeet for the all-pure presence. The third pair alone sustained the seraphim in midair as he hovered in readiness to depart on any errand on which Jehovah might send him. Believe us, R.C. Sproul has said, they covered their face in honor.

They covered their feet recognizing they were creature and not God. I myself have my own inference. We are all so busy about doing the will of God.

With all our might and all our strength, put forth all six wings, we say, and fly with all our might to serve the Lord. I tell you, these seraphim teach us that there are times when we need to retract those wings to worship. He needs not service, but we need worship.

Martha, Martha, flying here and there. You're so swift to move. But young men, listen to me.

In my older years, and I'm not that old, but I'm older than you, I have learned this. It is much more difficult for me to stay put than it is for me to move. Retract those wings.

Use them in worship. Give your strength and force to the seeking of His face. With two, he covered his face.

To cover one's face was a common symbol of both reverence and humility. Matthew Poole writes, covered his face out of profound reverence as being so sensible of the infinite distance between God and him that he durst not presume to look directly upon Him and judged himself neither able nor worthy to behold the brightness of His glory. The word here that I want you to catch is sensible.

Sensitive. Now that's a problem in our age. And it is created by a lack of the knowledge How can you be sensitive in His presence unless you know something of who He is? I find it quite amazing that in the Sermon on the Mount, I believe that Jesus gives us the perfect psychology of prayer in the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, I am sensitive that He is my Father and by the Spirit of God, I cry out, Abba, Father. But then again, I do not rush in where angels fear to tread, for my Father is in heaven. And

there He rules.

John Gill, my slandered friend John Gill, writes that they were unable to look upon the dazzling glory and infinite perfections of His being. And so they did as Elijah, who wrapped his face in a mantle when he heard the still, small voice of the Lord. And as Moses before him did, being afraid to look upon God.

John Calvin, even angels cannot endure God's brightness and that they are dazzled by it in the same manner as when we attempt to gaze upon the radiance of the sun. Matthew Henry, though angels' faces, doubtless, are much fairer than those of the children of men, yet in the presence of God they cover them because they cannot bear the dazzling luster of the divine glory. And because being conscious of the infinite distance from the divine perfection, they are ashamed to show their faces before the holy God.

And with two He covered His feet. Another gesture of reference towards God. It is believed by some that in the covering of feet, the seraphim were recognizing they were creatures and not God.

Thomas Boston writes, even the confirmed angels cover their feet with their wings as if they would tell us that perfect, created holiness is but dark and smoky light before uncreated holiness. Now listen. Created holiness.

Uncreated. Holiness of God. And then the holiness of the holiest creature is just a reflection.

It is something sent out. And what you must realize is God not only must create something good or create something holy, He must sustain it in its goodness and sustain it. One of the greatest problems that we have as Christians is we're confronted with a sin.

And we see it. It becomes apparent maybe through study of Scripture or a sermon, and we fight against it and we enter in violently and we fast and we pray and we get others helping us and we study Scripture and memorize Scripture that talks about our problem. And then gradually it seems that we're delivered and that we have victory and we rejoice in that, but then we take that problem as though it was a book to be read and put on a shelf.

We never need God again regarding that problem we've overcome. That's not necessarily true. Let me give you an example.

Let's say that you know that you're going to be very busy next week. You have no time for eating. So on Sunday, you eat for 12 hours so that you won't be hungry the rest of the week.

It doesn't matter how much you eat in those 12 hours, you're going to be hungry the next morning. We are constantly in need. Little branches do not separate themselves from the vine after taking a long draw of sap and then go run around and play in the field.

There's a constant need for Him to flow into us. And with two He flew. The greatest angels in glory were at the beck and call of the Son of God.

They were created for Him. We would do well to remember we were not only created, but redeemed and recreated for Him. So many of you are so frustrated at times.

You're frustrated in your work. You're frustrated physically. You're frustrated everywhere you go.

And you don't realize that that is a demonstration of God's grace on your behalf. He purposely frustrates you in every endeavor until exhausted you realize I belong to Him. I belong to Him.

John Calvin writes, the two wings with which the angels fly mean nothing else than their ready and cheerful performance of the commandments of God. And one called out to another and said, the idea here from what I can see is of continuation as though one kept calling to the other as in Revelation 4-8 where we read, and day and night they did not cease wholly to say, holy, holy, holy. Now Delitz, the old Hebrew scholar, he says this, and I tend to agree with him because it's a splendid thing to think.

He said, whilst these seraphim hovered above on both sides of Him that sat upon the throne and therefore formed two opposite choirs, each arranged in a semicircle, they presented a repetitive worship to Him who sat upon the throne. The meaning is not that they all lifted up their voice in concert at one and the same time, but there was a continuous and unbroken song. One commenced and the other responded.

Like we will do sometimes. Sing hallelujah to the... Sing hallelujah to the... It was holy, holy, holy. And then the other side, holy, holy, holy.

And the other side, holy, holy, holy. Beautiful to the saints. A terrifying sound to the sinner.

And the only difference is redemption. Holy, holy, holy. The word holy comes from the Hebrew word kadosh, which demonstrates or communicates separation.

It refers to that which is set apart, separate, unique, in contrast to the profane or common. The holiness of God refers to His uniqueness, His transcendence, His separation. In the midst of creation, He stands alone.

No one is like Him or can be compared to Him. To compare the Son with even the most splendid created being would be infinitely more absurd than comparing a minuscule spark to the midday sun. He is incomparable.

The threefold declaration of the Son's holiness often called the triagion, is the strongest form of the superlative in the Hebrew language. It serves to exalt this one attribute above them all. Of all things that may rightly be said about God and His Son, the most essential and foundational statement that can be made is that He is holy.

Now you think, yes, He's holy. We must be holy, therefore. We must do all the right sort of things.

You've missed the idea completely. We ought to do the right sort of things. But you've missed the idea completely.

Holiness refers to God's uniqueness, His separation. And you say, that's right, Paul. Therefore, we need to separate from the world.

Again, you're missing it. Holiness is God recognizing Himself as God, doing all things for His glory, loving Himself, loving His own glory, beholding His own beauty to such an extent that He realizes that if He turns His eyes away from Himself to look at any created thing, it is an act of condescension. It is a humbling work of grace for God not to look upon Himself.

We are holy when our hearts are given to the same thing. He is unique. He is separate.

There is none like Him. He is all I desire. Who do I have in heaven? Who do I have on earth but Him? Charles Spurgeon writes, being pure in heart, they, the seraphim, gazed upon the Lord with open eye and adored His holiness.

Their whole souls were filled with the contemplation of that one all-embracing attribute. And in responsive song, they said, each one to his fellow, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. This is the supreme glory of Christ that in Him is seen the holiness of God.

Charles Hodge writes, there are seraphim around the throne who cry day and night, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Now listen to this. This is good.

This holy, holy, holy gives expression to the feelings of all unfallen rational creatures. All unfallen rational creatures. When they have God in view, they think of holy, holy, holy.

They cry out, holy, holy, holy. Now, we are to be conformed to that same song, don't you see? We are to be sensitive to that. We are now rational creatures.

We've been given understanding. Our natures have been changed. We are to be sensitive to this.

We are to be people who recognize, acknowledge, and grow in our knowledge of the holiness of God. And we are to seek to respond to that. They are representatives of the whole universe in offering this perpetual homage to divine holiness.

We're almost finished. Is the Lord of hosts. The title Lord is translated from the proper Hebrew name for God, Yahweh.

This is a powerful reference to the deity of the Son. Isaiah testified that He beheld a vision of Yahweh. And the Apostle John testifies that Isaiah beheld the Son.

So we have two inspired writings from the Old and New Testament joined together to testify of the Son's deity. The word host comes from the Hebrew word, which may refer to a host or army of men, angels, planets, or stars. It may even refer to the whole of creation.

In any case, it speaks of the Son's universal lordship and absolute sovereignty. Every created thing is under His dominion. And the combined power of all created things is under His rule.

If all of creation in heaven on earth came together as one mighty host and arrayed the full force of its might against the Son's rule, it would have no effect. It would be null. The whole earth is full of His glory as the temple was filled with His robe.

The earth is filled with His glory. There is no place beyond the reach of His omniscience and sovereignty. There is no place on earth where His glory is not manifested.

That's why science will be so judged on the day of judgment. I don't simply believe that He will call men to account, nor that He will simply call nations to account, but He will get all the vindication due Him. He will call together engineers.

He will not ask them, why did you not find My glory? He will say, why did you ignore it? He will call together science. He will call together medicine. He will call together even the arts.

Every skilled hand that plucked a string, every one who danced ballet, He will say, why was it not unto Me? Let me say something about the holiness of God before we go on. I know the night is long, but don't worry. I'm not tired.

Now this comes from a very, very special man. Part of this actually came from reading Robert Raymond who I greatly appreciate. It is important to understand this is me, not him.

I don't want you to get mad if I say some things and you think it's him when it's me. It is important to understand that although the holiness of God often refers to His moral excellence or purity. You do that.

It is not to be limited to such. He is wholly separate or transcendent in everything that He is. Now listen to this.

The triune nature of God is an expression of His holiness. There is no other being so incomprehensible, mysterious and wonderful as He. To say that God is spirit is an expression of His holiness.

There is no other being so free and unhindered. The truth of God's perfection, eternal nature, self-existence, immutability, omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience are all expressions of His holiness. There is no other being so great and worthy of reverence.

God is holy in all that He is. Robert Raymond says this, Now when Isaiah saw this awesome scene and heard these four creatures singing, he was immediately struck with his moral impurity. But what is often overlooked is that the seraphs are sinless creatures.

And yet in the presence of God the Son, they feel it necessary continually to cover themselves all over by their wings. Because clearly for them, His holiness was His separateness from them. His transcendence over against their creatureliness.

You say, what does all that mean? Isaiah, of course, he cries out. He covers himself. He pronounces a curse upon himself.

He says, I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. And you think that is the cause for his brokenness. And it was.

But how do you explain the seraphim? They have no sin. Holiness is not just about He's sinless and I'm sinful. He is God and no one else is.

And the foundation of the threshold trembled at the voice of Him who called out. The trembling was caused either by the power of the proclamation or the truth of it. Not even the heavens can bear or contain the glory of the Son.

Now, just listen to this thought for a moment. The trembling was caused either by the power of the proclamation or the truth of it. Young man, power of the Holy Spirit.

That is indeed something you need. Power in preaching. But the power is in this, that God is revealed through preaching.

That truth is revealed through preaching. The threshold shook. The bars, the doors, they shook.

Because of the truth of the proclamation. The glory of the God being described. And this is your wonderful and terrible task.

The best you can do is lock yourself in a room many hours a day and seek for God in His Word. Dalish writes, the building was filled with reverential awe throughout its whole context and in its deepest foundation. The temple was filled with smoke.

It's like in that earthly temple when the ministers couldn't even minister within its confines because of the glory of God. How much greater was Isaiah's experience. Then said I, woe is me, I am ruined.

This is where we'll end. This is the cry of a man filled with an overwhelming sense of despair. The phrase, I am ruined, is translated from a Hebrew word which means to cease, to cut off, destroy or perish.

In the presence of the Son, the prophet Isaiah is reduced to nothing. As one who ceases to exist, who is cut off or destroyed, he is broken into pieces by a glimpse of the glory of God in the person of the Son. But in light of the seraphim's response, Isaiah's reaction is not extreme.

If the Son's glorious presence has such an effect on the greatest of heavenly creatures, why would it not crush those made of clay? John Calvin writes, there was no feeling in him which was not overpowered by the presence of God so that like one who had lost his senses, he willingly plunged himself in darkness or rather, like one who despaired of life, he of his own accord chose to die. So much for our flippant verbiage of surely the presence of the Lord is in His place. Yet, at the same time, there was none born greater than John the Baptist.

But those in the kingdom have greater privilege. There is a sense, and we need to hold this in attention, we must not be flippant of God, but at the same time as the children of God, we do run in where angels fear to tread because of the power of the blood of Christ and the love that decreed His giving. There is a sense that we play as children in the folds of those robes.

I want you to hold this in attention. John Trapps writes, infinite is the distance and disproportion between the high and holy God and me. It's what Isaiah said.

A loathsome leopard, a sordid wretch, the nearer a man draweth to God, the more doth rottenness enter into his bones. Now mine eyes have seen thee, saith Job. Therefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

Depart from me, Lord, said Peter. I am a sinful man. Who art thou, Lord, and what am I? Thou art an abyss of essence, truth, and glory, and I am an abyss of nothing, of sin and of misery.

This is a man before God without Christ. This is a man possibly experiencing that great crisis before he sees the grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This is a healthy attitude if it takes us by the hand and leads us, plunges us, into the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But if we remain in this place, we will die. Another thing I think that's quite interesting, very interesting. Isaiah looks upon the Lord and cries out, I am sinful.

Woe is me. Peter, when Jesus revealed Himself to him with the great catch of fish, he does the same. Depart from me, Lord.

I am a sinful man. Upon Isaiah's recognition of his sin and cleansing, he was sent out on his commission. And Jesus told Peter, I will make you fishermen.

The one that was in the boat is the one that is here in the temple. Dalish writes, to stand here in front of Jehovah of hosts, the exalted King to whom everything does homage, and to be obliged to remain mute in the consciousness of deep uncleanness, excited with Him, excited within Him, the annihilating anguish of self-condemnation. Annihilating anguish of self-condemnation.

But, the Father said, My people are unclean. And if they go without a sacrifice, the justice due them will destroy them. And the Son said, Father, lay their debt upon Me.

Isaiah had an angel and a burning coal. We have a Son come down from a throne with blood of infinite value. And so now, we rejoice.

We rejoice. Ever keeping in our mind a tension of sonship. My dear brother could have preached another thirty hours.

He would not have been able to express what we are now in Christ. People ask me at times, they'll say, Brother Paul, why do you talk a great deal about sin? It's because I want you to love God. Why do you talk about our depravity? Because I want you to be able to esteem Him.

That's the illustration I always give. I bought my wife an engagement ring three years after we were married. And I asked the jeweler fellow, I don't know if you call them a jeweler if they're at Walmart.

No, I wasn't at Walmart, but it was close. And I said, I want a diamond ring and I have this much money. And they always look at you with that look.

And so he goes back. He rumbles around. He comes out grumpy.

And he hands me a ring. And I said, a diamond ring. He said, that's the diamond.

I said, where's the diamond? And then what he did, the salesman that he was, he rolled out a piece of black velvet. And he sat that ring on that black velvet. And I said, oh, there it is.

I'll buy it. Isn't it amazing? There are times when I will preach on depravity and men will storm out of the church furious. But in the same church building, in the same chapel, other men are so happy.

They're almost as giddy as a little girl with her first crush. What is the difference between the two? Conversion. Conversion.

Anything that will make my Master's glory appear. Let all flesh be abased. Let every man be counted a liar, but God true and glorified.

Israel, this is your God. And you do well to seek Him. Thanks God.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17009.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-washer/where-does-passion-come-from/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net