

(Men Who Saw God) 1. Isaiah

by Roy Hession

The sermon explores the profound impact of seeing God through Isaiah's vision and its implications for personal revival and service.

Duration: 54:55

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1

Topics: "Isaiah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of 'when I saw him' based on Isaiah 6. The preacher highlights the importance of truly seeing God and how it can lead to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our relationship with Him. The preacher emphasizes that our actions should not be mechanical or formulaic, but rather a genuine response to encountering God. The sermon also draws parallels between Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6 and John's vision in Revelation 4, showing that this encounter with God is not limited to one person or time period.

Transcript

Will you turn, first of all, to the book of Revelation, chapter one, verse seventeen. Verse seventeen of chapter one, And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

This first chapter of the book of Revelation gives us a full-length portrait, an awesome one, of the Lord Jesus as it was seen by John in his vision. This book is called The Revelation of Jesus Christ, and it begins with just such an awesome revelation of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. And the sight of the Lord Jesus Christ in this vision had a profound effect on John.

He says, When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. That such a vision of the Lord should have a profound effect on him is not surprising, because the Jews always thought that if they were ever vouchsafed a vision of God, they would die. Indeed, God himself had said, No man can see my face and live.

And when some Old Testament, and here a New Testament character, had a vision of God, and they didn't die, they were of all men most surprised. Why, Jacob says that, doesn't he? When having wrestled with that man of the brook Jabbok, he realized that that man is the Godhead with whom he's been wrestling, and he says, I've seen God face to face, I'm still alive. My life is preserved.

It was a grace indeed, when a man saw God, and his life was preserved. Little wonder then, that any new vision of God, either in dream, or in waking moments in a vision, or by some spiritual means, little wonder that such visions had a profound effect on the one who saw them. And I felt it right that the theme of our Bible readings this week should simply be that of, When I saw him.

And we should look at various people in Bible times who saw him. But not only that they saw him, and of course what they saw in him, but especially the effect that that sight of him had on them. But it was so appropriate that the chorus we sung this morning was, But we see Jesus.

That's just not something sort of elevating, and comforting, and you know, rather nice. When we see him, there will always be a profound effect on us. Indeed we could say, under this title, When I saw him, where revival begins.

It begins with seeing by the Spirit's operation, the Lord. Because the effects of that sight are the cause of so much else, of a new day for us in our Christian lives. Sometimes people come amongst the saints, or in a conference like this, and they see certain things happening.

And they see certain Christians doing certain things. And they can't quite understand it. They see and hear people repenting, over all sorts of things that they've never repented of.

And not merely one day, but the next day there's something else. And this is all very queer. What in the world are these people doing? Always repenting.

And then they also see people exulting in God, in a way that they've never touched perhaps. All this praising the Lord. And they don't understand why it is when they see these things happening.

And the reason is, that such people are not seeing what the others see. When they see what the others see, it'll have the same effect on them as it has on the others. And they'll be doing the same thing, that at first they were so doubtful of, and so critical of.

You see, you see people. You can see certain things happening in them. But those things are a consequence of something else, of seeing the Lord.

And you will never be able to figure it out, while you look at what people are doing or saying. The only thing is to be vouchsafed the same vision that others are having. And then you'll be doing the same.

Unless we should think that if we feel we are in a in-circle, doing certain things. How mechanical even that can be. Doing the in-thing amongst a certain group of Christians, doing a little repent here and there.

How mechanical it can be, unless we are seeing Him. And when we see Him, it may be we'll be doing something much deeper than we've ever done before. It won't be a little formula, a little repent here and there.

It may be God getting down to the deepest things in our lives. So there then is our theme, when I saw Him. And this morning I want you to look with me at Isaiah 6. And our theme this morning will be when Isaiah saw Him.

What happened? Yes, what did he see? But what happened to him? Isaiah chapter 6. In the year that King Uzzah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, and His train high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphims, each one had six wings. With two He covered His face, and

with two He covered His feet, and with two He did fly.

And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, woe is me, for I am undone. Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then, in His abject misery, flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal, a hot stone, the margin of the old revised version, in his hand, which he'd taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin, authorised version, purged. But, just a thought has come to me, I must jot down in my notes in case I forget it.

And thy sin is expiated. That's what it is literally, according to my margin. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me.

The very reading of it is heart-subduing, isn't it? And so we see this occasion, when Isaiah saw the Lord, and were given here to see what he saw. But the interesting thing is the profound effect it had on this man. Indeed, it was a new chapter in his life, and his life and service for God was never the same.

And I'm sure this was one of the most crucial experiences that he had. We wouldn't have had all that we later had from his mouth and pen, but for this, the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. And it all began when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple, and the seraphims proclaiming his holiness.

He was given to see a scene that was going on all the time in heaven, but which he'd been oblivious of, but when he saw what was happening there, it had this profound effect about which we will think in a moment. Now the interesting thing is that Isaiah had been a preacher for five chapters, before he saw the Lord in this way. How many years those five chapters of sermons covered, I don't know.

But you've got them. It's only in chapter six that he gives us this story of this personal encounter he had with God, which seems to suggest that all those years he'd been a preacher, but he'd been working without vision. And that's a terrible possibility.

To be a worker for God, serving him in one sphere or another, either in full-time service or in what we're pleased to call our free time, though really all of us are in full-time service, but we may be seeking to serve him, plodding on without new vision. Indeed, it's only in this chapter that he hears the word from the throne, Go! Who sent him before, during those five chapters? Maybe he was a self-sent man. Do you know the little poem which says, How eager, rash to go, The man God never sent, How backward, diffident and slow, God's chosen instrument.

But there was nothing very diffident about Isaiah in those early chapters. He was on the go. But God's go doesn't come to him until chapter six.

I think that's challenging then. You can be a worker for God, but without vision. And I want you to notice the occasion of his vision of the Lord.

He says, It was in the year that King Isaiah died, that he saw also the Lord. He saw Isaiah die, then he saw the Lord. Now, I don't know if you're familiar with the tremendous story of King Isaiah.

He began as a godly king indeed. And he sought the Lord through the prophesying and counsel of a prophet that lived in his day. The prophet was called Zechariah.

He wasn't the Zechariah who lived, of course, after the restoration from Babylon, but another man. And he sought the Lord. And we're told as long as he sought the Lord, he prospered.

Prospered in the realm of farming and husbandry. Prospered in the realm of building. He was a great builder.

And prospered in the realm of military affairs. He had a mighty army. He was marvelously helped, it says.

Till he was strong. And when he was strong, it says, it's in Chronicles 26, if you want to make a note of it. His heart was lifted up to his destruction.

And he went into the temple. And he dared to offer incense in the holy place. Now, God had been very careful to separate the office of the priest and the office of the king.

In order to show that the king, king as he was, was not above the law of God. He was never allowed to occupy himself with priestly affairs, but he thought he could. Why shouldn't he? And so he goes in to offer incense in the holy place.

And the high priest and eighty others of the priests followed him, appalled. They said, oh king, it appertaineth not to thee to offer incense, but only to the sons of Aaron. We beg you, desist.

He was angry, he went in, I'm going to. And suddenly they saw a white patch appear in his forehead. They knew what it was.

He'd been smitten with the dreadful disease of leprosy for his pride. And he hastened to go out from the holy place. He had to live in a separate house to the day of his death.

And it was in the year that he died, when Isaiah saw what God did in judgment to even a king when he exalted himself in pride, that Isaiah saw the Lord and he realized the holy God he had to do. Now you and I are about safe this sort of vision? Oh yes, it's common enough. It must come, in one degree or another.

And very often there's a special occasion which precipitates for us this seeing of the Lord on the throne, high and lifted up. The occasion will vary. There was for instance one occasion when the whole church saw the Lord and it had the same effect on them as it had on Isaiah at the church at Ephesus in Acts 19.

And they came along, several vagabond Jews, exorcists. There are people who profess to be exorcists today. Take it all with a pinch of salt, test the spirits.

And these men were trying to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Not everybody who mentions the name of Jesus is necessarily to be welcomed in this sphere. And they said to a man in whom there were demons, we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches, come out of him.

And instead of coming out of that man, the man in whom the demons was leapt on them and attacked them. And these exorcists had to flee for their lives. And when the news of this came, they saw the Lord.

They saw him high and lifted up. They saw they couldn't likely trifle with the name of Jesus. And deep conviction of sin came on the whole assembly at Ephesus.

They'd been playing with the account. They'd been playing with black magic. They hadn't got entirely free.

And you know they brought out all their books of black magic, worth a tremendous sum. And they had a great and glorious bonfire of all those things. And it all happened when they saw the Lord.

And the occasion of their seeing the Lord was this particular incident. It may not be that sort of incident. Sometimes it often is.

Years ago I was in the States and I met a businessman and his wife to whom God had given a very special ministry of sharing Jesus with couples. They were in tremendous demand at dinners and banquets because in the American churches they have what they call banquets, couples' banquets and young people's banquets. And this couple had a tremendous testimony of a new thing God had done in them individually and in their relationship with other people.

And they were being made such a blessing. And he told me how it all began. He was a deacon or elder in a Presbyterian church and their minister was discovered in a moral fault.

It shook and shocked the whole church. And the diaconate or whatever it is called in a Presbyterian church had to handle this matter. And there was nothing for it.

This man had to leave the ministry. It was in the year that that happened, he said, I saw the Lord. I saw the holiness of the God with whom I had to do.

And I saw areas in my life where I too was playing with sin, not perhaps to the same extent that my minister had, but nonetheless in God's sight it was sin. And he said I was broken before God. And there were many things I had to share with my wife and my wife with me.

And the result is that God gave us a brand new marriage and an experience of sin that was new. And now we're sharing that with other people. And the occasion of his seeing the Lord was the scandal that broke on the church.

Now it isn't always as dramatic as that. But there very often is an occasion. For some people they have a person giving a testimony in a meeting.

And they suddenly find themselves in the awesome presence of God whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Yes, the occasion will vary. Well, he saw the Lord.

What did he see? He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train. Well, the train isn't very important, but his train alone filled the temple. Above that throne he saw the seraphim.

This is the only place where the seraphim occur in scripture. Cherubims, but seraphims. And in looking at a little book of reference this morning it seemed to suggest that they were the highest order of angels.

And these seraphims had wings, six of them. With two they covered their faces, with two their feet. And with only two they did fly.

And they called one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. Could men but see it.

And as they spoke those words, the foundation of the temple shook. And Isaiah shook too. And the whole place was filled with smoke.

Which was a symbol of the glory of God. In more than one place the smoke and the cloud filled even the earthly temple. It betokened God's very special presence.

And the Jews used to call it the Shekinah, cloud of glory. And poor Isaiah found himself in the midst of this, having to look at it. Seeing what he'd never really seen before.

And it had a profound effect upon him. I rather think as I look at it, that that which impressed him most was what he saw in verse two. Because in verse five he says, It is what he saw in verse two, it seems to suggest, created this effect on him.

What did he see in verse two? He saw those seraphims, creatures greater in power and might than ever he could be. Of scintillating beauty. And he saw their supreme concern was to hide themselves before the face of him that sat upon the throne.

They had six wings and with four of them they were hiding their faces and hiding their feet. And with only two they did fly. And in a flash he saw what he'd been doing.

Their concern was to hide themselves lest their beauty should detract from the far superior beauty of the one upon the throne. But he'd been doing the very opposite. Worker, preacher, activist, his great thing had been to display himself.

Be seen, be known, be heard. If you've got gifts then demonstrate them, let it be seen. You mustn't be put back when you've got gifts.

And he saw this had been the motivation. He hadn't been hiding himself, he'd been displaying himself. And he began to see to what extent his pathetic beauty, so to speak, had detracted from the beauty of the one upon the throne.

They were using only two wings to fly. But old Isa, he'd been going harder. Oh, six wings! Oh, no hiding there! Activist! And at bottom, to be seen, to be known, to be heard, to be acknowledged.

And when he saw that, he said four things. Then said I, woe is me! In the previous chapters, Isa had been pronouncing woes on other people. If you'd like to count them up, there are six of them.

Woe unto you that do this! Woe unto you that do that! Woe unto some preacher! Six woes on other people. But here's the seventh woe. And do you know what's happened? He's pronouncing it upon himself.

Oh, this is the turning point for every one of us. Oh, it's always the other person, woe unto them! If you hear of sometimes missionaries, or ministers, or speakers like myself who go around, it's oh, how difficult the congregation is, woe unto them, woe unto them. How seldom do we hear the word, woe is me, I'm the problem, I'm the man.

But that's what happened to Isa. Woe is me. Those of you who were here last week will remember how John Coniston told us the story of how God gave great revival in the Dinka country in Africa where he and Muriel were working.

How the Holy Spirit worked so mightily there. And how they had a difficult motor boy who was away from God and was a problem to know how to handle him. He was so difficult.

But one day some of the Africans went past his hut where he lived, and they heard cries and wailing coming from within. They wondered what it was. And they went inside.

And there was this hard, proud, difficult man, sitting on his bed, going backwards and forwards, weeping and crying out and saying, I have seen the Lord. He had had the same sort of experience that Isa had had. No longer woe is this and woe is that person, it's me.

And then he went on to say that he was undone. The RSV says lost. I think the literal Hebrew is cut off, but I like this word undone.

You know he undoes you. And he isn't in a great hurry to do you up again. Oh he will, he intends to.

But perhaps not so quick as you thought. I've seen people undone, it's been months. I said, oh God, bring him through.

Because all they seem to be able to say is woe is me. I think it was true in my own case. When the Lord began to give me a new vision years ago of himself, I saw sin, and I kept on seeing sin.

And I'm afraid when I tried to speak it was very, very negative. I was undone. What I thought had been my good points, I saw to be my sin.

I was undone. I remember when Dr. Joe Church and the other brethren came back to England back in 1947 to share with us then what they'd been learning in revival in East Africa. I got on the telephone to him, and of course I was saved in Southwold in the little boy's house party to do with the CSSM which he ran in 1926.

And here he was back here in England to speak about revival, and by this time I was an evangelist. I was interested in revival. I always had the picture that perhaps God would give revival in one of my campaigns.

And I had everybody repenting around me. Of course, I'd always be on the platform directing things. And I got on the phone to ask if he'd come to a conference and so on.

And he said, you know, Roy, people in England have the queerest ideas about what revival is. They think it's the top blowing off. It's really the bottom falling out.

I laughed at that rather good way of putting it as I thought. Thought I might use it in one of my sermons. But I little knew how shortly afterwards the bottom would fall out.

That my comeliness would be turned to corruption. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction.

But I little knew how shortly afterwards the bottom would fall out. That my comeliness would be turned to corruption. Being undone.

Woe is me. Not woe is anybody else. I am all undone.

And then he goes on to say, for this reason, I'm a man of unclean lips. What did he mean by that? That he'd been giving way to secret profanity? In fact, I did read one commentator who suggested that's what he meant. You know, he'd been sort of using the wrong words when the hammer hit his nail, his thumb.

Oh no, it's something much deeper than that. Unclean lips. You see, the lips are the tools of the heart, aren't they? And if the lips are unclean, the heart's unclean.

But more than that, I think that the lips for Isaiah represented his service. He was a preacher. If there was one part about him that was consecrated, it was his lips.

He had golden lips, wonderful lips. But in that day, he saw that his very service was utterly unclean and completely unacceptable to God. Because of the secret and continuing motivation of that service.

To be known. To be great. To have his place in the sun.

And that's what he saw. And he says, it all comes as a result of, for mine eyes, have seen the king. Well now, that's what Isaiah saw.

He said, well that's very interesting, I don't know that I've seen that. But what I want to say is this. That this vision that he saw in chapter 6 was not laid on specially for Isaiah's benefit.

You might have thought so. Come on, we'll deal with this. Let's have a stage show and we'll lay it on.

Just for his benefit. The extraordinary thing is this. Centuries later, John has a vision of what's going on in heaven in Revelation chapter 4. And it's almost identical.

The same throne. The same one sitting on the throne. The same living creatures.

Worshipping that one upon the throne. And they have also six wings. And they're saying almost the same words.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Apparently, dear friends, this is something which is going on all the time. At this very moment it's happening.

Creatures greater in power and might than ever we can be, are worshipping, casting what crowns ahead before his throne. And their supreme concern is to hide themselves. To abase themselves.

Lest their beauty should detract from the superior beauty of the one upon the throne. And I believe God wants me, and I especially know this is true for me, and I believe all of us, to see this vision for ourselves. You don't have to wait till it comes over you.

It is a fact. Right now. If you were given to see, you would see nothing more than Isaiah saw.

And nothing more than John. And how would you feel? When the temple shakes, wouldn't you shake? When you saw this awesome self-effacement before God, wouldn't you feel that deep down the motive in your life has been the reverse? To display yourself. To be seen.

To be known. To be heard. Some of you older Christians may know the name of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis.

She was one who had some share in the Welsh Revival, and in the early days of the Keswick Convention. And her writings have been a great blessing to people all over the English-speaking world. Though she's not read so much in England because, well, many other writers have come on since, and so on.

But there are books which ought to be read. Some of them at least, especially wonderful. And in one of her books she tells us how things really began with her in a deeper way.

From which her ministry sprang. It seemed as if she had a vision. I don't suppose it was exactly a sort of a trance.

Don't think that. She doesn't suggest that. But she seemed to see the Lord holding up in front of her a bunch of dirty, filthy rags.

And she said, Lord, what is that? He says, it's thy service, my child. My service, she said, but it's consecrated service. Yes, she said, consecrated flesh.

Just the old Adam, with the old motivations, consecrated to me. And frankly, I'm not the least bit interested in the flesh, whether it's consecrated or unconsecrated. If you want to know what the flesh is, especially in Paul's writings, drop off the last H and spell it backwards.

S-E-L-F. And she accepted that deep verdict upon ourselves. And I'm having to accept it all the time.

How easy, without realizing it. And yet you do realize it. You can be working in what we call the flesh.

To display self, to have your way. And by the way, when I say without realizing it, when you say, Lord, there's something wrong, I don't know what it is. Do you know what he says to you? You do know what it is.

Of course you do. A moment, quietness. And if you weren't clear before and you're honest now, he'll show you.

This sort of thing. In other words, what we're touching on here is what we may call the intrusion of self into holy things, into the Christian life. The most terrible thing.

It is the prime hindrance in our own lives and his working through us in what you may call revival. The intrusion of self. And it intrudes even into holy things.

Indeed, in the book of Leviticus, as an unusual phrase, it talks about the iniquity of your holy things. And the mere fact that you are engaged in holy things doesn't mean that they're not absolutely unclean. It seems to me that there are three main forms of the self life.

And I think all the various other forms can be headed, put under one or other of these heads. There's first of all self-will. What I want.

What I ought to have. What I want to do. The pleasure that I should have.

Self-will. You can put self-indulgence under that. But it's self-will.

And even in the Lord's work, you know what you want. I know it isn't the same as the other brother wants. But you want it and you push for it.

In the marriage relationship, self-will. The central letter of the little word sin is I. Self-will. And oh, what battles I have with this.

Only this week I've had a hard battle. Along these lines certain letters have come about certain matters which I didn't think they were respecting my rights. And I know what I wanted to do and say and answer.

Of course, all in the name of the Lord. All supposedly for his glory. But self-will.

And I had to be broken there. We haven't time to mention all the various forms of this first basic form of the self-life. Self-will.

Then the second. Self-effort. Almost as culpable, just as culpable as the first.

What begins with you is then carried on by you. And we have the responsibility. We're trying to do what we want to do.

All for God in his service maybe. But it's self-effort. And it never works.

Someone has said it's easier to bring oil out of a stone than holiness out of the natural eye. But how we try. And how we try to push God's chariot along for him.

He's the head of the ark. And God is the foe of man's self-effort. And when we try to do things he said, I thought you asked me to be your saviour in God.

I thought this was my show. Apparently it's yours. Self-effort.

And then self-glory. Because really we want the praise. Really we want to be noticed.

Really want to be a little bit of credit. You know these things by your reactions. When somebody else gets the glory.

You're jealous. Or when you criticize somebody else for being so pushing. Do you know why their egocentricity troubles you so much? Because it's crossing your egocentricity.

At least I speak for myself. And even the sharp eyes of ours. It isn't real discernment.

They're doing the thing that we'd like to do. But we don't seem to have that sort of temperament when we want to. Self-glory.

If you want to see the opposite of these three forms of the self-life, turn to Romans. 11.36 We haven't got time to read the whole of this little passage. It's a beautiful passage beginning at verse 33.

Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God. And so on. But then it goes on in verse 36 to say, For of him, through him, and to him are all things.

Of him. He's the initiator of what's to be done, not me. Not my bright idea.

Not what I want. Of him. But my self-will is getting in the way.

Intruding into holy things. And not only of him, but it's through him. How weak he allows us to feel in order to give himself a chance to do what he wants to do.

You know, you've never been too weak for God. Often too strong. Weakness is never any problem to him. In fact, it's an asset. But oh, we're so strong. But he wants it of him.

Through him. Not by might or power. And that's in Zechariah, this text I'm quoting.

And it means not by the might of one man. Or the power of many men. Committees want to have a great man.

Or a lot of people. But by my spirit. But our very efforts are getting in his way.

Not only of him, through him. But to him are all things. If he's begun it, and he's the doer of it, he gets the glory.

I read somewhere. Of a man whom God had greatly used. And was using in the outpouring of the spirit.

And the great harvest that was being reaped for God in the days of the Welsh Revival. And the one who tells the story was accompanying this man back home late at night. After having seen precious and wonderful things happening in the meeting.

He walked along quietly, did this one who had been leading things. And then suddenly in the night hour he lifted up his voice. He said, Oh God you could do so much.

If you could trust us not to take the glory. Could that be the limitation? That we do and would take the glory. Just let me stay a few more minutes on this question.

This pride, this self-life in Christian service. I don't think we help one another very much. In this, sometimes we say about another Christian worker, you know, God is blessing him in his new parish.

Or blessing him in his new pastry. Or blessing him in the Bible class. What do we mean? God is using him.

Dear friends, God's not blessing him. He's blessing the people to whom he's sent. They're so desperate, they're so needy that God's even prepared to take up a bit of rubbish like him and use him for them.

He's not blessing him. He's blessing them. And because we get this sort of thought into our eyes, we have the impression, I do alas, I'm as bad as anybody else in this.

We regard being used as a prize. Which we want. I remember Stanley Vogt giving a testimony once years ago at our conferences.

And he said this morning, I think it was at a team meeting, he said, I finished my time of prayer with God, I said, Oh God, use me today. And God says, what's that to you? Follow thou me. You see, it's a prize.

And while you regard it as a prize, you'll never get it. You'll become jealous, you'll become so discouraged. Why am I not being used that way? God isn't giving you the prize.

They're going to have the prize. But I think we all, so naturally, think otherwise. And sometimes he will use you when you're in desperate need yourself.

He's got a lot to deal with you. Meantime he uses you, but later he'll have you on the map about certain things. They got the prize.

They got the blessing. Of course it's a privilege and so on, but we can overplay that. Far too much.

And as I say, we don't always help one another. Encourage one another. Praise the Lord.

He's done it. And the devil is a great discourager. You know, some congregations have never once been known to thank their pastor or their vicar for the way that ministry's helped them.

They want to make him proud, but you don't know how discouraged he feels. Oh, there's a place for encouragement. Don't let me decry that.

But oh, God help us when we start regarding being used as something for us rather than something for them. We should be very happy for others to be blessing to them as well as ourselves. But of course, being the men we are, not without seeing sin and not without repentance.

And so he said, and so we say, woe is me. I wonder if we're going to begin to say that. Any leaders here? Not your people at home.

Woe is me. This is the man who's in need. It's a tremendous thing to have it revealed to us.

I've had it only this morning on various lines where self has intruded into holy things. And you know, I find that when God breaks me, what I wanted, the thing that he gives is so much better. And when he's broken you are the thing you want, you know that the doing of it is going to be done by him and not by you.

And the glory is going to go to him. Of course, all this is absolutely destructive of oneness among the saints and oneness in their domestic life. Just the self-love, not seen, not repented.

And oh, it needs a new vision of the Lord upon the throne. And all that's going on there to show us what we hadn't seen before. Then we can say, woe is me, I'm undone.

Yes, being undone is quite a thing, I can assure you. I lost my ministry when God began to undo me. For years I've been up and down England as an evangelist.

And they've been a great blessing. But when God began to undo me, I found I couldn't preach as I did. I lost my confidence.

People said, what's happened to him? A dear brother, a friend of mine, was used mightily in Brazil. He was the first to introduce Youth for Christ to Brazil. An American dear friend of mine.

He was the first to reap a harvest in Brazil. In the Presbyterian churches in Brazil, there'd been hardly an invitation for people to get right with God there and then. He was the first to do it.

And how he was blessed. What power attended his ministry. William McNagender and myself went out to Brazil at his invitation.

And we shared our testimony how God was dealing with us. And he began to see himself. He saw the Lord high and lifted up.

I hated to see it. He was undone. He lost his touch.

The old strong eye. Sometimes he was going along with it, sometimes he said, Oh, I'm making a mistake, I'll just go back to the old big way. And I said, Lord, how long are you going to leave him like that? Oh,

God's done him up all right now.

He's been brought undone himself, but built up in Christ in a new way. And there in Los Angeles. Oh, a man who's been put through it.

He's being used of God on sweetness and blessing and the river. It isn't always as long as that. It doesn't always need to be.

But he's gone to undo us. What we thought was comeliness has got to be seen to be corruption. That it's I, no more let it be my working, nor my wisdom, love and power.

But the life of Jesus only flowing through me hour by hour. And what you want to do is to start with the first thing. Don't try and get an overall blanket conviction or blanket blessing.

Start with the first thing. It may be something that's come between you and others because of I intruding. Get that right.

And I want to tell you when in this, that or the other matter you and I begin to say, woe is me. There'll be the second then of this passage. Then through one of the seraphims.

They were fairly worshipping before the Lord. And singing and praising his holiness. When suddenly there penetrates up to their throat.

The cry of a prophet in distress. Like that dinker I see in the lawn. They say to one another, excuse my imagination being given a little play.

What's that? Hey, that sounds like somebody repenting. You see, it's that old self-sufficient preacher. He's down on his knees.

Lord, can you spare me a moment from the holy exercise of worship? And the Lord says, I certainly can, you go. Get a live coal from off the altar. And he flew to him.

I want to tell you, when you and I start repenting, you get the exclusive attention of heaven. If you want to have all the attention of Jesus, you start repenting. You'll find all the saints will give you exclusive attention as well.

When in a fellowship meeting someone starts repenting, not because they're shocked. They're so praised, so full of praise and thanks. And so this seraph went with this hot stone from off the altar.

And oh, thank God, there is an altar. And there's been a precious lamb laid upon that altar. And the work he's done for us is finished.

It's anticipated just these sad conditions in our lives. And the Holy Spirit comes to apply the value of the blood of Jesus to that which you and I confess to be sin and self and ugly. And the seraph said two things, your iniquity is taken away.

Something subjective. Oh yes, not only in God's eyes, but in me. He cleanses.

And I know that which was standing before me is taken away by the worth and value of the blood of Jesus. And then he went on to say, and your iniquity, your sin is taken away and your sin expiated. The first is subjective, the second is objective.

My sin expiated, where? On that altar. It is finished was his cry, finished every jot. Sinner, this is all you need, tell me, is it not? When he from his lofty throne stooped to do and die, everything was fully done.

Listen to his cry, it is finished. Finished every jot. Sinner, this is all you need, tell me, is it not? Till to Jesus' work you cling by a simple faith.

Doing is a deadly thing, doing ends in death. Cast your deadly doing down, down at Jesus' feet. Stand in him, in him alone, gloriously completed.

You know you cannot be more right with God than what his blood makes you when you call sin, sin. Not even the archangel Gabriel has a better righteousness before God than the feeble saint has or the wickedest sinner who humbles himself. Such is the power of the blood of Jesus.

Then he can say go to you, then he can say go. Before perhaps you were self-sent. I must say one last thing about this.

It is difficult to know when you are sent by God or sent by yourself. The devil can tie you up in knots, he's tied me up in knots. As a young Christian I was asked to do a piece of service.

I hadn't been given any service to do by the Lord or by anybody else. And when they asked me to be the secretary of this, I said oh yes, very gladly. And afterwards I was convicted, my real motive was pride.

So I wrote and said I'm sorry I can't do that piece of service to a very dear saint who was in charge of things. The reasons I can't go into now, I decline. And he met me and he talked to me, what was the real reason? Well I said it was only pride that led me to say yes so quickly.

And do you know what I got from him that's so helpful? Alright, pride is sin, repent. But that doesn't mean you haven't got to go on with what he was asking you to do. Because if you waited till there was no pride, you might wait forever.

In that which God sends you to do, yourself can still intrude. That doesn't mean you're not to go on to do it, that's what the devil wants you to do, to quit doing it. Because you can't do it without sin or without pride.

But you can, because when it comes you can go to the cross, you can go to Jesus. The live coal can touch your lips again and you go on doing what he wants you to do, newly cleansed. So there's what happened when Isaiah saw the Lord.

Let us pray. With our heads bowed, shall we turn to that chorus number 10 in the sheet, in the middle. The end said, if my people will be humble and pray and seek my face, my presence.

Just sing it in prayer. If my people will be humble and pray and seek my presence and repent of all their evil, then from heaven I will hear. If my people will be humble and pray and seek my presence and repent of all their evil, then from heaven I will hear.

Shall we say together the grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

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