**Worship and Mission (Isaiah 6:1-8)**

 God’s self-revelation brings us first to true worship, and then to mission.

 Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters, as we draw our topics from the prophet Isaiah today and stir up topics related to worship and mission. In a short few moments from now, we will have the honor of dedicating and baptizing a child to God as a sign, just like the sign of circumcision was done in the Old Testament. That sign was given for the people of faith to perform, in other words, the Israelite people who believed and followed God. Today, we’re going to talk about faith as it is expressed in worship and mission. Each of our individual baptisms was received on the foundation of faith. Specifically, a child’s baptism is performed with the vision that the child will live in the True Faith throughout his or her life. An adult’s baptism is performed upon his or her public expression of faith, after which the same faith-filled life is expected from them. In both cases, faith plays an indispensable role. Therefore, today, we are going to speak about two expressions of it, namely worship and mission. Once again, I am saying to you that God’s self-revelation brings us first to true worship, and then to mission. Let me explain…

 When you realize the holiness of God, do not ignore your impulse to worship, but rather express your faith to the Lord, and get ready afterwards to serve Him. In Isaiah’s time, King Uzziah, who had been cursed by God and lived away from the Temple because of his disobedience to the Lord, had just died. The people were not in a good spiritual state, similarly. The looming exile to Babylon was not very far off… In this dark and hopeless mood in the nation, God gave Isaiah an encouraging picture of reality through a vision. It was almost as if God was saying, “*Although the world is dark and seems hopeless to you, do not grow weary, but rather see my royal power and holiness, worship me, and get ready for my special mission for you.”*

 As we already know, a human being is not able to withstand an encounter with the perfect holiness of God. The imperfect feels dirty before the Perfect One. That fallen, sinful state was exactly what Isaiah felt before God. However, God had a purpose in bringing Isaiah before Him. The prophet did not remain helpless before God; Isaiah’s forgiveness and atonement came from God Himself. From God came the invitation to service, and not after some time, but immediately. Notice that God did not say to his angels, “*Come let us leave him to rest, since he has just newly been cleansed of his sin and is probably tired…”* This is because of the fact that when God forgives, it doesn’t come with ulterior motives and other secondary contingencies. When we confess the truth, the Lord forgives; period. For this reason, He could freely ask his question and reveal his plan to Isaiah by allowing him to hear it. For Isaiah, as soon as he was cleansed of his sin, he immediately readied his heart for whatever was coming, even without knowing what his task might be. Why did he do this? It is because he trusted God. When you realize the holiness of God, do not ignore your impulse to worship, but rather express your faith to the Lord, and get ready afterwards to serve Him.

 An old man once dreamed unhappily about his past. He saw before him a long list of things in his life which were wrong, and for which he was sorry and ashamed. In his dream he was about to seize a sponge and rub these things out of his biography, when, to his amazement, he discovered that wherever there were deeds of gold shining through the story of his life they had been wrought there by regret and sorrow over past transgression, and that if he wiped out those wrong acts he would at the same time destroy whatever of nobleness or beauty there was in his character.

Thus, it is that even our sins and follies, repented of, can be made stones in the walls of a godly life.

The message of this illustration is exactly what I’m saying. When we realize or understand God’s true holiness, it is appropriate to first confess (our sins and sinfulness), and then to worship in His Presence. However, once we remember that we have been forgiven by Christ (unlike Isaiah), we must not ignore God’s call to go and be a witness to Him, passing on His Word. In Isaiah’s case, that Word was one of punishment at first, but later, after the 40th chapter of the book, it would change to a message of comfort. The important thing was that Isaiah did not ignore God’s invitation. He worshipped God and then obeyed Him.

My dear brother and sister: once you understand the Lord’s identity - his holiness specifically - which brings you to receive forgiveness and a renewing of your faith through worship, do not ignore the call of God to service or mission, based on your gifts and abilities. May worship propel you toward mission. Let us not only be those who store up knowledge within ourselves but let us become those who put spiritual knowledge to use. May God’s courage be upon us, and may we be driven by his holiness and forgiveness of our sins to be witnesses to Him, just as Isaiah was, wherever we find ourselves to be.

When you realize the holiness of God, do not ignore your impulse to worship, but rather express your faith to the Lord, and get ready afterwards to serve Him. God’s self-revelation brings us first to true worship, and then to mission.