

Rooted—Week 2: God

What motivates you? I'm going to mention a few things and let out a cheer if it motivates you:

- Money?
- Deadline?
- Making someone happy?
- Unexpected house guests?
- Having lots of followers or likes on social media?
- Proving your point on social media?
- Guilt?
- Accomplishment?
- Peer pressure?
- Pride
- Fear of your spouse?
- Faith in God?

There are a hundred different things to motivate us in a hundred different directions at any given moment. What is it that motivates us to follow Jesus and keep our lives rooted in Him?

Isaiah was a young man when God appeared to him in the temple and called him to speak to his people. But God forewarned him that the people wouldn't listen. For 150 years, the Assyrian empire had been growing and expanding and absorbing other nations. Tiglath-Pileser came to the Assyrian Throne in 745 B.C. and continued to expand the Assyrian empire threatening surrounding countries— a few years later, around 740 BC, Isaiah receives his call as a prophet.

Isaiah was being called to minister in an apparently hopeless situation. The people of Judah were deep in sin and their hearts were hardened to his message. They would get deeper and deeper in sin. The nation of Judah was going to be attacked by Assyria. 200,000 would be taken into captivity, 46 walled cities in Judah would be destroyed, and only a remnant would survive. And that remnant would be persecuted.

Isaiah would endure lifelong Assyrian threats, threats from his own people, see his nation ruined, and see his kings ignore his warnings and be defeated.

What motivates a guy like that? What keeps him going against such steep odds? Ultimately, Isaiah changed the world. When it comes to the prophets, Isaiah is the big kahuna, the most major of the major prophets. He paved the way for the Messiah. His 66 chapters in the Bible have become some of the most studied, the most memorized, the most inspiring words of Scripture. They are still shaping lives and changing the world today.

If we can answer the question, "What motivates Isaiah?" we might find some help for what motivates us. What can keep my life pointed in the right direction, when the world wants to pull me apart in 13 different directions? God wants us to help change the world too.

Isaiah was motivated because he saw God. We really need to see God this morning, because that's what changes everything. Turn to Isaiah 6:1-8. Let's see what Isaiah saw.

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said:

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!"*

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

What do you want to bet that got Isaiah's attention? King Uzziah has died. He was a good king. He was godly king. What will happen now? God gives Isaiah a glimpse into the heavenly throne room, the heavenly temple, and guess what? The throne is still occupied. God still sits upon the throne. He is high and lifted up on throne that is over all other thrones. Regardless of who wins elections, regardless of the party in power, regardless of the latest opinion poll or the latest trends in church attendance, regardless of the sabre rattling of China, or the posturing of Kim Jong Un watching a missile launch, God is still upon his throne high and lifted up?

I. Seeing God Should Amaze Us.

The first thing is that seeing God should amaze us. God gives Isaiah and us this amazing vision. Everything about this vision communicates the power and majesty of God. A throne that his high and lifted up? Check. A royal train that not only stretches out, but it fills the entire room. Check. And the attendants in the royal court. These aren't just your run of the mill counselors and advisors. They are seraphim, angelic spiritual beings almost beyond Isaiah's ability to even describe in words. And all they do is speak of the holiness and glory of God.

God is Awesome and He is a God of Perfection! When was the last time you were amazed by God?

Just think of the wonders of creation.

We have so many things that have happened in our world that are amazing. In 2014, we successfully landed a spaceship on a comet. This is a comet that is 57,570,653 miles from earth. It is moving through our solar system at a leisurely 84,000 mph. And it's only about 2 ½ miles wide, and we landed a spaceship on it. That's amazing!

Do you want to know what's more amazing? That comet is comet 67P. It is only one comet out of an estimated 1 trillion comets that exist in our solar system out in the Kuiper belt and the Oort cloud all orbiting our single star. Our sun is just one of 400 billion stars in our galaxy home

We've never seen gravity, but we can feel its pull. You can't find the human conscience on an Xray or MRI, but we see its evidence in the legal systems of this world. We believe in a lot of things that we can't see when we see the evidence of their existence.

When we see God and see that he is so amazing, what is our response? Two things I see in this passage.

A. Humility

The first is humility. When we see how amazing God is, we will be humbled. Listen to Isaiah's response to seeing all this in verse 5.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

When you see who God is, it helps you realize who you are. He's God. I'm not. Isaiah's gut response here is there is no way I can stand before a God who is that great, that powerful, that amazing. I am a sinner and I live amongst a sinful people and I have seen what I am not worthy to lay my eyes upon.

B. Honor

Our second response to seeing how amazing God is to honor him. If even the Seraphim in the throne room of heaven can do nothing but give him honor, what do you think our response should be?

Think of how much honor we give to things that aren't really worthy of it. We honor athletes and musicians and actors and politicians and influencers who what? They lie. They cheat on their spouses. They abuse those closest to them. They use others for their own ends. They say one thing on camera and do something different when they think no one's looking.

We should be giving honor to the one who really deserves it. This is why worship is so important. It's a weekly reminder of who really deserves our honor. It gives us a chance to recalibrate what impresses us and to shove a few idols off perches they don't deserve.

II. Seeing God Should Change Us.

Seeing God should amaze us, and number two, seeing God should change us. It's not enough to be amazed by God. We need to be changed by God. When we recognize who He is, we realize who we are, and it's not who we should be.

I am so thankful that Isaiah's vision of God doesn't end in verse 5 with Isaiah saying, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Look what happens next.

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Once Isaiah recognizes who God is and realizes who he is, God changes him. He deals with the unclean lips. In a very picturesque way, God cauterizes Isaiah's wound. He cleanses the infection.

This is powerful picture of confession and repentance. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." God already knows about your sins, but can you be honest with yourself and before him about it. God is waiting and ready to cleanse you from all your sin.

We can't see directly into the throne room of heaven like Isaiah, but Jesus gives us direct access to the throne of grace.

14Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus does for us exactly what God does for Isaiah here. He takes away all your guilt, all your shame, all your failure.

I caught a bit of the evening news last Monday, and they were talking about how Albert Einstein's pipes, his smoking were going up for sale. The asking price was \$22,000 dollars. That might seem like a lot of money, but it's a bargain compared to these other things.

- Babe Ruth's 1920 jersey: \$4,415,658
- James Naismith's founding rules of basketball: \$4,338,500
- Mark McGwire's 70th home run ball: \$3,000,000
- Babe Ruth's 1923 bat: \$1,265,000

Why. A piece of cloth. A piece of paper. A baseball. And a piece of wood are worth millions. Why? Because through them, people hope to come into contact with greatness.

Now, get this, Through Jesus, we come into contact with true greatness. Seeing God for who he really is should change us!

This hot coal to Isaiah's lips doesn't mean he will never say anything stupid ever again. It certainly doesn't mean that the people around him won't say unclean things again, but it does mean that Isaiah is now a changed man. His lips are now intended for a higher, holier purpose.

If you are Christian, it isn't just your lips that have touched. It's your whole life. Does your life evidence the forgiveness you've been given?

To serve God, we must be clean instruments. You are called to be holy. You are set apart. Do you know that's what church means? The word for church in the New Testament, means those who are set apart.

You are not just an animal with animal instincts and animal desires. The expectation for animal behavior is not too high. When dogs greet they smell each others' rears; When momma birds feed their young they chew the food first and then spit it into their babies' mouths; When a dog throws up it will sometimes lick up its vomit; pigs sleep in their own poop; male lions will eat every male cub in their pride. WE ARE NOT ANIMALS!!

I want you to see God so clearly that you'll be willing to do whatever it takes to be made more holy. Get married (Stop having sex outside of marriage). Get clean. Get help. Get saved. Get baptized!

Quit looking to everyone else as your standard of comparison. Look to your amazing God who created in his image, who saved you to have a relationship with him, who called you to a high and holy purpose.

III. Seeing God Motivates Us.

Seeing God amazes us. Seeing God changes us, and thirdly, seeing God motivates us. Look at verse 8.

*8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."*

God changes Isaiah to call Isaiah. Isaiah, for his part, was so compelled by the glory of God and convicted of the need for action that he couldn't help but say, "Here am I, send me!" Isaiah knew that God was ready to get some work done and He was willing to be used.

What is God calling you to? When you see how amazing God is and He changes your life where will you be willing to go? How are you telling God this morning, "Here I am, send me! Send me!"

Last spring, if you were in town you heard the explosion. Some 10,000 small propane tanks caught fire at the former Pinnacle Plant.

Now I knew the fire department wouldn't want everyone running over there. I also knew what everyone would be doing. You could see that pillar of smoke for miles around. Our fire department guys just plug your ears here, because I have a confession to make. I didn't want to get too close. I just wanted to get close enough to see. So I turned by Sonic and went back into Mary Willis' neighborhood. There's just something about a fire that just makes you want to watch it burn. I got over there and streets were packed with cars, and people had brought out their lawn chairs and were sitting in front yards to watch the fire. About this time, I started coming to my senses and thought I better get out of here, so I went back to the office. I wondered later what would have happened if that big 33,000 gallon tank went up?

When I was in high school an apartment building in our downtown burned to an empty shell when a boiler exploded. It seemed like all 10,000 people in town showed up to watch the fire. I wrote a poem about it that got published later.

Here why I tell this story. John Wesley said, "Let a man get on fire for God, and people will come to watch him burn."

How are you on fire for him?

God wanted people to be redeemed and brought back to Him, so He called Isaiah to go and reach them.

God wants you to be redeemed and brought back to Him, so He's called me to go and reach out to you.

God wants others to be redeemed and brought back to Him, so He's called you to go and reach out to them.

Will you join me in saying, "Here am I. Send me!"?

ⁱ [Discovery Supports Astronomers' Paradoxical Views of the Universe](#) from [Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum](#)

ⁱⁱ Zehavi, I, and A. Dekel. 1999. Evidence for a positive cosmological constant from flows of galaxies and distant supernovae [Nature 401: 252-254](#) [401: 252-254](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, p.75