Isaiah 6:5 Then I said, “I am doomed! I am ruined, because I am a man with unclean lips, and I dwell among a people with unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies!”

I am wondering, as you listened to all the readings for today, did you kind of figure out what the theme or what the point of the readings were all about? The readings were established by what was called: The Inter-Lutheran Committee of Worship. The work was initially done in 1973 and after a thorough study by our WELS pastors it was determined in 1977 that the readings were well chosen and good. The fact is that every Sunday when you hear the various readings for the various seasons of the church year, the readings all have a common theme and purpose for the church year. This particular Sunday has the general theme: “*Jesus reveals himself as the holy Lord and moves people to follow him.”*

Now go back and think on all the readings. Clearly the Isaiah reading is the call of Isaiah to be a prophet of the Lord. The Epistle lesson is a bit more subtle but clearly you can see the point of the reading to our general theme. For that matter, verse 12 is really the heart of the matter. It said, **“Since you are eager for spiritual gifts, seek to use them abundantly in a way that will build up the church.”** And then there is the Gospel reading where Peter, Andrew, James and John are called to serve the Lord, to be those who “catch” people. If you would, I would tell you that the words of verse 12 serve as the theme behind all the readings. All the readings are about those who will serve and build up the church for the Lord.

Of course, now I have to pause for just a moment and make sure you grasp what is meant by “the Church.” We are not just talking St. Paul or the WELS or any particular denomination. We are talking “the Holy Christian Church” defined as “all those everywhere who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior from sin.” The Church isn’t as much a physical entity as it is a spiritual entity but a spiritual entity with a visible presence in our world. Again, we note that the physical church has certain “marks” to it. The Bible helps us to grasp that the marks of the church are, “the gospel is preached and the sacraments are used.” And remember the Gospel is not just that I use the name of Jesus but that I clearly tell you that Jesus suffered and died for your sins and then rose from the dead as proof that He is the Lord and Savior of all.

With all of that in mind for today, let’s look at our text, really at all of them, and see how the wonder of Jesus might indeed impact all of us. Our theme will be: **HERE I AM. LET ME SERVE!**

Can you imagine being in the position of Isaiah? Isaiah is in the midst of a vision sent by the Lord God. It is clear that Isaiah sees the throne of God but more, he also sees that **“the train of his robe filled the temple.”** Yep, there was the sense of a building, the sense of a place of majesty and awe where there are seraphim hovering and praise being proclaimed.

Just stop there and contemplate what is revealed. In truth, this vision of God’s throne room and the beings around it is in complete accord with other similar visions of God’s Word. Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation all have similar visions of marvel and majesty. What I can tell you is that every vision of God’s heaven is given that we grasp the scope and marvel of the greatness of the Lord. I don’t think it coincidence that 4 separate times, 4 separate men give very similar and majestic views of God’s wonder. This is the Lord revealing himself, revealing his awesomeness for our eternal good. What is also clear is the complete and eternal nature and power of the Lord God.

Notice the song that we are told is sung. **“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Armies! The whole earth is full of his glory”** In our liturgy we sing, *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!”* Here is a song of praise and glory to the Lord, spoken by heavenly and awesome creatures to reveal God’s absolute goodness and wonder. A God who fills all and is all to all that there is! And did you hear the reaction to this song? The very foundations and thresholds shook with power and might. The temple there is filled with smoke! In some of the other visions when songs such as this were sung, the same thing is reported along with every creature before the throne, angels, seraphim, cherubim, the Elders and saints all falling down to give humble homage to the Lord God. It is clear in every vision. God is great. God is God and there is no other to be served, worshiped and praised!

In a way, I think this aspect of God is missing from most peoples’ lives. We tend to forget, in view of the liberalism out there, that God is not a person, not a being that is going to be bargained with or argued with or, in truth, even a being that we will be able stand up to. We need to keep in mind this picture of God the Almighty and maybe once again learn to be absolutely terrified of Him before we decide we will disobey His Word or tell Him to take a hike. I am telling you that fear driven, boot shaking awe needs to be one of our clear thoughts of Him!

Our text affirms what I just said as our attention is then turned to Isaiah. Isaiah says, **“I am doomed! I am ruined, because I am a man with unclean lips, and I dwell among a people with unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies!”** Isaiah realized the absolute lowliness, unworthiness and undeservedness of himself before the Lord God. He is literally trembling, before the Lord God as has every man who has been confronted by the ominous glory of God. Time and time again God’s prophets who have a vision of God are always struck by the overwhelming glory and power of the Lord. It is clear to them and should be clear to us that God is not to be trifled with.

And while we are at it, consider what our Gospel reading for today revealed. Here is Peter and his fishing companions who have fished all night and not caught a thing. At the command of Jesus, they go back out to drop their nets. It is the wrong time of day and the wrong place to fish, but they do it because Jesus says to. The catch of fish is tremendous. It is so vast that it is clear to all the professional fishermen there that this is a miracle, something so extraordinary that “miracle” is the only way to speak of it. And did you see Peter’s reaction? **“He fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord.’”** Even though Jesus is in a state of humiliation, Peter can still sense his majesty and awe because of the miracle, and Peter, no doubt along with the others, realizes his complete unworthiness to be in the presence of the Lord.

Here is what I can tell you. I don’t care who you are. If you don’t have a healthy fear, a sense of complete awe and wonder at the Lord God you are missing something. And if you are so full of yourself that you think you can stand before the Word of the Lord and speak falsely about what God has said and decreed, then I have double concern for you. I pray that whatever Pastor you have serving you that you clearly and surely gather from that person that it is the Lord God and his Holy and true Word that governs his every statement and action.

Please note that Isaiah’s status is going to change but that it has absolutely nothing to do with Isaiah. All the action is from God. God allows the seraphim to go, to take the coal and to touch Isaiah’s lips. In this action, in this grace of God we see cleansing and forgiveness, we see Isaiah purified and exalted to serve. Isaiah was there trembling, only sure of doom and ruin. But the Lord of His care and compassion brings forgiveness and worthiness.

It is because of this gracious goodness of the Lord that all the rest happens. After Isaiah is changed and made new, then the Lord brings forth the further invite. I say “invite” because the Lord’s voice is only directed at Isaiah, there is no one else to answer but Isaiah! **“Whom shall I send? Who shall go for us?”** There is only one person to answer here. It is Isaiah. Isaiah cleansed, forgiven, made new in the Lord. The questions are to help Isaiah to grasp what the grace of God has brought for him. He is no longer doomed and ruined, Isaiah has been changed and made a servant of the Lord.

What a marvel to hear the cry of this servant, **“Here I am. Send me.”** Be careful. All too often we put the wrong emphasis on these words. We think the words are a reflection of Isaiah’s self-ambition. They are not. These words are what the Lord has brought. The best Isaiah on his own could utter is **“Doom, ruin, unclean.”** It is because of the Lord that Isaiah, the new man, the man called, cleansed, forgiven and chosen by the Lord can utter these words. It is God who has brought the joy and marvel of these words through the forgiveness and new life only the Lord can give.

Isn’t the same thing true of Peter and his companions? They are going to become followers, servants of the Lord, the “catchers” of men not because they had determined they were worthy and could but because Jesus invites and Jesus lets them know He will cause this to be. Matthew’s record of this event has the words of Jesus, **“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”** The servants of the Lord are chosen by the Lord and made worthy by the Lord and his grace. It truth it is really no different today. We follow the Lord, we are servants of the Lord not because we are fit for the job but rather because the Lord has made us fit, the Lord has called us to serve and follow.

Why? Well, that’s where the words of our Epistle lesson come in. They remind us of the way it is. The Lord, because of Jesus, pours upon us through the Holy Spirit new abilities and gifts. Our whole life and attitude is changed. Our reading reminds us, **“Since you are eager for spiritual gifts, seek to use them abundantly in a way that will build up the church.”** We want to serve the Lord. In our speaking and our actions we want to serve the Lord. We want to be people who let the Light of Jesus shine in our lives. We want that for no other reason than that we want souls, other souls to grasp the wonder and joy of Jesus for them too.

So as you go about life, your life, ask yourself if what you are doing is going to serve the Lord. Will my words exalt Jesus? Will my actions reflect Jesus? Can we say, **“Here am I. Let me serve!”**

By the way, isn’t that what the Epistle lesson has been about for the last three weeks. Not just speaking of the spiritual gifts of the Lord but then speaking to us of being sure to use those gifts to serve the body of the Lord. We first do that as we live to God’s glory. Are you a husband, wife, worker, boss, or child? Serve the Lord in those roles. Do your fellow workers and neighbors recognize that you are a Christian because Jesus just shines forth in what you do, say and are? Do you serve the Lord in this way?

But also recognize that we are also to serve the Church that Jesus has given. You do realize that it is in the church where clearly the greatest opportunity to serve the Lord is found? Our praise and worship here together is serving the Lord and each other. Our working together to support, sustain, and proclaim the message of Jesus is the very mission of this church. So many ways to do that. Maybe it is just that wonderful smile you share with others at our services or maybe it is in some other way, as you do something just for the Lord that your faith shines out. Like the other night. I called on a few members to help with a power problem here at the church and they came right away to render service to the Lord. In truth, when it comes to serving the Lord, it is here, in the church, where the most direct opportunities spring forth. I pray when opportunity arises you are heard to say, Here am I. Let me serve.

Clearly this text is about Jesus and his call for us to serve. Heavenly Father, in Jesus help us grasp the wonder of your love for us that we serve you. Amen.