

## ISAIAH'S CALL: ISAIAH CHAPTER 6

### THE CONTEXT:

Read Isaiah 1:2-4: What is the relationship between God and his people like just before Isaiah's call?

Read Isaiah 1:18-20: How comforting is this sneak-preview of Isaiah's message?

**Getting the overview** – Read of all of Chapter 6: In a few words, what is the main theme of each of the following sections? What sub-headings would you give them? Take just a minute or so on each.

Verses 1-4

Verse 5

Verses 6-7

Verses 8-13

### READ VERSES 1-4

- Uzziah had been a godly and powerful king, but ultimately he became proud and this led to his downfall: he died afflicted by leprosy as a punishment from God. **What, by contrast, is God (the true king!) like? Pick something from each of verses 1, 2, 3 and 4 to help us get a clear vision of our God.**
- *In daily life, what can get in the way of us seeing God for who he really is? How might we encourage each other to hold on to a clearer vision of our King?*

### READ VERSE 5

- **What response does this vision of God bring about in Isaiah?**
- Sometimes our own personal confession can be limited by our failure to grasp the reality and extent of our sin. *How might the fact that Isaiah's confession of sin in v5 follows his vision of God in v1-4 be helpful in overcoming this?*
- Notice the particular sin Isaiah's confession focuses on. **Why is 'lip cleanliness' such an important issue...**
  - *...for Isaiah?*
  - *...for us today?* (see Luke 6:45)

### READ VERSES 6-7

- **Why was the altar important for the relationship between God and his people in the Old Testament?**
- **What is Isaiah's role in being cleansed from his sin here?** How do we see the grace of Jesus foreshadowed here in the way Isaiah's sin and guilt are dealt with?
- Isaiah is about to be commissioned as a prophet – God's mouthpiece – so his sense of having 'sinful lips' might seem a significant barrier. *How might this encourage us if we're thinking about how we might serve God?*

### READ VERSES 8-13

- Knowing that God's grace has cleansed him, Isaiah readily accepts God's call – an encouraging contrast to his sense of personal 'ruin' in verse 5! **Is his message primarily to be one of salvation or of judgement?** Look at the impact of Isaiah's message on the minds (v9), hearts (v10) and land (11-12).
- If this emphasis on the inevitability of judgement seems a shock, it's worth noting that *this* is the part of Isaiah chapter 6 that is frequently quoted in the New Testament (Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Acts 28:26). **How can we understand this 'decree of hardening' in the context of God's love and grace? Discuss:**
  - **What are we *all* like by nature?** Compare Romans 3:23 to God's nature in Isaiah 6:3.
  - **To what extent is the hardening of hearts and the closing of ears and eyes really 'unjust', given our nature? What do we really deserve?** See Romans 6:23a.
- Given our nature – just like the nature of God's people we saw in Isaiah 1:2-4 – it's verse 13 that should be the real shock! **Where do we see undeserved hope in verse 13? See Isaiah 10:20 and 11:1-3. Why would God do this? See Ephesians 2:4-5.**

**Closing thought:** How could we use the pattern of this passage in our own walk with God?

**VISION OF GOD → CONFESSION → GRACIOUS CLEANSING → ACTION**

**You could use this as a model for prayer now!**

**Prayer:**

- For our church life.
- Prayer for your group.
- Who can we share the good news with?