

WHO WILL GO?

Isaiah 6:1-8

When was the last time you were feeling down?

One of those days when you have to look up to see bottom?

All of us have bad days, or bad weeks, or bad months;
in some cases, the discouragement goes on for years.

Even great Christian leaders go through bad times--

Remember **Elijah? Moses? Jonah?**

Each cried out: "Lord, take my life!"

You have to feel pretty low to ask God for that!

Isa. 6:1a **Isaiah was discouraged**

One of his best friends recently died.

God took the life of one of the *few* faithful kings of Judah

2 Chron. 26:3-5, 16-23

-52 years as king

-Only one recorded failure

-Motivated by pride, enters the temple to offer sacrifice.

-He's struck by leprosy for the rest of his reign

and rules from his house--son occupies throne.

What a tragedy! What a waste!

-One bad decision--consequences: ruin a great reign!

Isaiah is undoubtedly looking back over the life of this great, godly king, "*Why, Lord?!!*"

Dealing with same basic problem we often deal with:

When we focus our attention on circumstances/problems-affairs of this life,

WE GET OUR EYES OFF OF GOD!

PROBLEM: WE GET OUR EYES OFF GOD

-we get a mistaken concept of God.

We focus on our circumstances, and lose sight of God.

SOLUTION: TO SEE GOD AS HE REALLY IS.

THREE MISTAKEN CONCEPTS ABOUT GOD:

These develop whenever we lose perspective; we get our eyes off God.

- felt even by genuine Christian, godly people:

THE GOD WHO IS FAR OFF Ezek. 9:9

"The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice. They say 'The Lord has forsaken the land; the Lord does not see.'"

-Doesn't see -Doesn't care

-Too busy--doesn't have time to care about me!

-Doesn't get involved in practical matters in our lives today.

-Practical atheists--"God is dead"--He doesn't make any difference!

=> Result: Produces one of 2 alternatives:

We feel all alone--no one cares.

We struggle to make things work the way *WE* want

We try to pull a fast one on God--maybe He won't notice!

We have to make things happen!--God isn't going to!

THE GOD WITH A WHIP IN HIS HAND

Two forms: "God's just waiting to get His hands on us

-To judge us—because of sin in our lives
 We know we've failed.
 God is an angry, vengeful God.
 He's just waiting for a chance to "get us"—to make us pay!

-To make us miserable

—Force us to do what we *don't* want to do
 "The gotcha God—If we give Him our life,
 He'll send us to the jungles of Africa.

=>Result: We fear God.

Satan uses concept to scare people

—so we don't get close to God—we keep our distance!

If I'm a sinner, I better fear Him

—I'm going to stay as far away from God as possible.

We're afraid to place our life in God's hands

—we don't trust Him—who knows *where* He might send us

—or what He might do with our kids!

THE GOD WHO IS MY "BUDDY"

True concept: God is our Friend!

—*"a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*

But many—like Israel—get so used to having God around we lose respect
 for the omnipotent God of the universe!

We fail to give Him the importance He deserves

—we take Him for granted!

=> Result: Produces lack of proper reverence

Produces failure to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

What's our concept of God?

Both in Scripture and in the treadmill of life . . .

OUR CONCEPT OF GOD IS DEMONSTRATED BY OUR LIFESTYLE

Tozer: "Every doctrinal error and every practical downfall
 can be attributed to a false concept about God."

***Behind every life separated from God
 lies an inadequate concept of God.***

Swindoll: "a shallow view of God will produce a cheap lifestyle.

Solution: **TO SEE HIM AS HE REALLY IS.**

To get our perspective back.

In O.T., Israel lost sight of who God is.

He was present in their midst.

Yet they took Him for granted.

"FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT"

Ezekiel presents this message:

Israel needed a fresh perspective.

They needed to start from the beginning.

They had to SEE GOD, as HE really is.

"THEY WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD"

Book starts there—a new revelation; a reminder of God's greatness!

This is the starting point for our problems also.

We get used to having God around.

We go to church and talk to Him.

We know He's nearby.

We pray regularly.

We take God for granted.

We get our eyes on ourselves.

We get our eyes on our problems. We forget about Him.

Then, when we need him most, **HE SEEMS SO FAR AWAY!**

We need a fresh perspective.

We need to SEE HIM AS HE REALLY IS.

This was Isaiah's problem –**Isaiah 6** –a lesson on perspective.

Isaiah's depressed about Uzziah's death. Asking God: "WHY?"

Then, **ISAIAH SEES THE LORD**

He needs a reminder that though the king died,

God didn't go anywhere. God's still on the throne!

When we left Guate., when we left SLC, we were asked:

What will we do without you? You've been our teacher!

We commented frequently, "I'm leaving; NOT God!"

THREE LESSONS ISAIAH LEARNS WHEN HE SEES THE LORD

1) **HE LEARNS HOW GREAT GOD IS** 6:1-4

He sees God's glory--His sovereignty and omnipotence.

He sees God's holiness.

2) **HE LEARNS HOW SMALL HE IS** 6:5 –how insignificant!

He's not WORTHY to do *anything* for God.

Contrasts angels' *lips* which praise HIM continually (3)--

with his own--with his people's (5)

Instead of praising, they're complaining! *Not US, right?!!*

He realizes how far short of God's standard he comes.

3) **HE LEARNS THAT GOD CAN MAKE LITTLE PEOPLE INTO USEFUL INSTRUMENTS** 6:6-8

Gratitude leads to servitude--to serving Him.

Swindoll, considering life of Moses:

"Every Christian is in one of three conditions:

(Moses spends 40 years in each!)

1) Moses spends 1/3 of life THINKING HE'S SOMEBODY SPECIAL.

2) Moses spends 1/3 of life RECOGNIZING THAT HE'S NOBODY.

3) Moses spends the last 1/3 of life learning that GOD SPECIALIZES IN MAKING SOMEBODY SPECIAL OUT OF NOBODIES!"

THREE CHANGES GOD MAKES IN ISAIAH'S LIFE

God cleanses him 6-7a

God forgives him 7b

God sends him 8 (He commissions him!)

God doesn't *send* him

until AFTER He cleanses and forgives him.

When Isaiah focuses on the Lord–God lifts him out of depression and makes him a useful instrument in His hands.

We need that–We need to see God AS HE IS.

How about you? -Depressed? Confused? Tired?

Has your load of sin weighed you down?

In that case, you need to see *the Lord as He is!*

He's the One Who sent His Son to provide eternal life.

He's the One Who can transform our lives, our attitudes,

And produce a new lifestyle that pleases God.

It's all about HIM!

We need to see HIM as He is!

Or maybe, you still think you're SOMEBODY special?

Maybe we need to learn who we are?

We, too, need to see the Lord as He is!

We need to stop thinking we can

(or should be able to) do it ourselves!

We need to focus on Him; to see HIM as He is!

Or maybe we need to learn that God can use *us* "warts and all"?

He can use OUR lips—contaminated though they may be!

God specializes in cleaning up contaminated lips.

We need to see the Lord as He is!

See what He is able to do in us.

Whatever our situation may be—we all need a new perspective.

-WE NEED TO SEE GOD AS HE IS-

A CORRECT CONCEPT OF GOD

WILL CHANGE MY LIFE! -INTO HIS IMAGE.

Seeing God as He is is the starting point to effective ministry.

No one has ever served God effectively without seeing Him

and learning these three lessons.

When we see God as *HE* is, . . .

We realize how insignificant *WE* are!

We realize how insignificant *our concerns* are!

We see the world as HE sees it—

We want to go wherever HE wants us to go

—to DO whatever HE wants us to do.

God always reveals *himself* before He sends *His people!*

* "Turn your eyes upon Jesus,

look full in His wonderful face,

and the things of earth will grow strangely dim

in the light of His glory and grace".

Have you seen *HIM*?

What about the followup question:

"Who will I send? Who will go for us?"