

Lesson 6: Isaiah Meets the Holy God

AIM:

General: 1) To introduce the prophet Isaiah, of the southern kingdom- well-born and well connected; to briefly look at the political situation and the 3 sections of the Book of Isaiah.

2) To look at Isaiah's call [Ch 6]

i) his experience of the holiness of God. ii) his discovery of his own unworthiness, iii) his experience of forgiveness. iv) the surrender of his life to God.

Personal: 1) To encourage the children to become aware of God's holiness and their own unworthiness compared to Him.

2) To lead them to accept Jesus' forgiveness and call to them.

STARTER: [5 mins]

Keep ready 5 samples of cloth or paper of each kind: 1) very clean and white, 2) less white, dull, slightly dirty. Quickly divide the class into 4 - 5 groups and give each group the less white sample. Ask them to examine it and write a description of it. It should not be too dirty

Now give them the very bright piece and ask them to describe it. Ask them if they would like to change their description of the first sample.

Bring out:- When we look at something that is very, very bright, shining and clean, compared to it, other things begin to look dirty... eg. You may think your P.T. shoes are clean, until you go to school and see someone who has polished their shoes very well and you realise that your shoes are pretty dirty!

- Today we are going to see how the prophet Isaiah had an experience like this. It was such a dramatic and gripping experience that his life changed completely after it.

INPUT: [20 mins]

Before we read about Isaiah's experience, let us look at what kind of a person he was, where he came from and the scene at that time. (Write on the black board- WHEN? WHERE? WHO?)

Students look up Is 1:1 and give the answers-)

1. WHEN- During the reign of Uzziah, Ahaz and Hezekiah
2. WHERE- In the southern kingdom of Judah.
3. WHO- Isaiah, son of Amoz [not the prophet Amos!]

By the way, the whole Book of Isaiah is not the work of the Prophet we are talking about. There were actually probably 3 different prophets: Chs 1-39 belong to Isaiah, son of Amoz; Chs 40 - 55 came about 150 years later and Chs 56 - 66 were written still later.

Scholars say that the first Isaiah came from an important family of Jerusalem- he belonged to the ruling class and was a scholar... he had a bright future ahead of him... but something happened one day which changed his life Lets read about it-

Read Isaiah Ch 6: 1-4

Isaiah must have been in the Temple, maybe in the middle of a worship ceremony when suddenly he had this vision.

- Read this same passage again quietly and then describe what it tells us about God- what feeling do you get ... [God is high like a great king...exalted i.e., lifted up... holy and full of glory...]
- How would you describe it all in one word? [HOLY] Holy means 'set apart', 'separated' from all that is impure or unclean...Nothing in all the world can be compared to God...In the Hebrew language there is no way of saying 'absolutely holy' and so we hear the word repeated 3 times- 'Holy, holy, holy!'
- As Isaiah realised God's holiness and purity what happened inside him?
Read verse 5 (Just like the clean white cloth made you realise the first piece was dirty, Isaiah realised how sinful and impure he was... and the people around him were)
- What else did he feel? [I am doomed- i.e. I am lost- there's no hope for me- I can never hope to go where this holy God!]
- Was Isaiah right in saying 'I am doomed' or not? Can people like us go near God who is so holy? Explained.

DEBATE: [15 mins]

Let the students discuss this question in 3s for 3-4 mins. Let them jot down points to explain. Then have a mini-debate. Ask one representative from each group saying 'YES' to come up and stand on one side of the class, while one member from each group saying 'NO' to stand on the other side. Let each speaker have a chance to give their opinion and later others can refute (argue about) what they have said. Finally bring out-

Isaiah was right in saying 'I am doomed' because- 'the wages of sin is death'. God is so pure and good, it is impossible for a sinful person to approach Him and mix with Him. And everyone of us is sinful... no one can say, 'I am good enough for God!'

BUT God does the impossible. He did the one thing that could be done- He washed our sin away by sending Jesus to die for us. In this way he broke the power of sin and death. So now there is a way to come near to God - by repenting and accepting his gift of forgiveness. So both teams were right. Let's see what happened to Isaiah-

Read verse 6-7

- ⇒ What was the sign of God's forgiveness? [Burning coal touching his lips]
- ⇒ What is the sign that we have of God's forgiveness? [Sacrament of Reconciliation...when the priest dresses us and gives us absolution]
- ⇒ After this Isaiah must have been a new person.

Read verse 8

As a response to God's forgiveness and love, Isaiah joyfully surrendered his life to God. He was ready and willing to be God's messenger. For 40 years he spoke God's words to the people of Judah urging them to turn to God with all their hearts... but sadly, Isaiah's words fell on deaf ears like the rebellions prodigal son, only disaster would make the people come to their senses.

(Give the students 5 minutes to fill in the Isaiah section of their frieze. They could draw the vision with pencil and write- God Is Holy. We Are Unworthy. God Forgives Us.)

PRAYER: [10mins] (Form a prayer circle)

Let us ask God to help us to see Him more clearly and realise, like Isaiah did, how holy He is...

Close your eyes and put aside all distractions. Give God this time 5-10mins and allow Him to lead you into His presence Imagine the vision that Isaiah saw- God- great and high on a throne with His glory filling the whole temple

Life your hands and sing, like the angel did-

Let all that is within me cry Holy [2]

Holy! holy ! holy is the Lamb that was slain...

Let all that is within me cry 'Jesus' etc.

Read: Luke 18: 9 -14 ... Let us like the tax-collector, realise our unworthiness and bow before our Holy God.

(Teacher prays aloud)

Lord God, Holy God, we are sinful people... we cannot come close to you on our own...

forgive us our sin and take us close to you... .[pause"]...

Thank-you Jesus, for dying for us and taking our sin.

Help us to remain with you and to serve you. Amen.