



September Series: Big God

Message #2 – Encountering Our Big God

Getting the Nod

Pre-Sermon Video: You are My God

President Kennedy was shot in 1963. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. The Space Shuttle Challenger disaster happened in 1986. The planes hit the World Trade Center Towers in 2001. There are some of you who can remember some all of these events that changed our nation.

If I were taking a poll here this morning, nearly all of you experienced life-changing event. There is a year in your life that sticks out in your mind.

Illustration of the Lion and the Young Girl: Few people have encountered a lion on its terms and lived to tell about it. One who did was **Beryl Markham**. In her autobiography **“West with the Night”** she tells of the time as a little girl growing up in Africa in the early 1900’s when she came face to face with a lion. She was running playfully through the fields surrounding her family’s farm and suddenly came within twenty yards of the lion. The lion lay sprawled in the morning sun; it was huge, with a thick black-mane, his tail was moving slowly, stroking the rough grass like a knotted end of a rope. His body was sleek and easy; rusty-red, soft looking.. He wasn’t asleep, only idle. She stood there, scuffling her bare toes in the dust.

Then the lion raised himself and began to look her over. She knew the rules about lions. She did not run. Trying not to look scared she walked away very slowly and began to sing a song. Then she started to trot toward the rim of the low hill where she hoped some thick bushes would give her protection. **She writes:** The country was gray-green and dry, and the sun lay on it closely, making the ground hot under my bare feet. There was no sound, no wind. Even the lion made no sound, coming swiftly behind me. What I remember most clearly of the moment that followed...a scream that was barely a whisper, a blow that struck me to the ground, and as I buried my face in my arms I felt the lion’s teeth close on [my flesh]. I remained conscious, but I closed my eyes and tried not to be afraid. She said, “It was not so much the pain as it was the sound of his roar. It was an immense roar that encompassed the world and dissolved me in it. I shut my eyes very tight and lay still under the weight of the lion’s paws. **That encounter enlarged her respect on the immensity of lions.**

I have encountered life-changing moments. In my drug using years... I was heading down a terrible path and was arrested while in the Air Force for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. No charges were filed, but in 1979 I made horrible decisions and by the grace of God received a wake-up call that did just that... I woke up to the corruption of sin in my life. Evil was my guide; and pleasure was the ship that sank my life. **But I encountered a wall. A PAINFUL WALL!!! It stopped me in my tracks... it was immense...and I had only one option... to change the direction... I had to turn around. My sin was overwhelming... but I learned that God was immense and awesome! I chose to follow the BIG GOD!**

Transition: We have all encountered walls before. Something that rocked our world and forced us to change direction. **It often comes in the vessel of pain.** Pain at some time in our lives, whether it’s physical pain, emotional pain, the pain of losing someone, or even spiritual pain. Pain has a way of

changing people and changes the way we look at life and relationships. **But I have to tell you... the most powerful and transforming encounter you will ever experience is the encounter with the God who is Big... and He is holy.** You will get a fresh outlook on life when you touch/encounter Him. An example of that kind of encounter is in the story of Isaiah. Chapter 6.

Connecting Us

What would it be like if you were alone and God walked in the room? What do you think would happen to you? Well, let's check out Isaiah's encounter...

NKJV | Is 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because 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." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Transition: What Happens When We Encounter Our Big God?

God's Take on Himself

What Happens When We Encounter Our Big God?

1. He Changes our Perspective of Troubles. (Vs. 1)

- In the year that King Uzziah died...
- Uzziah became King when he was **16 years old**. He ruled Judah for 52 years. **He was loved by his people**. Prior to his rule, the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed and the city was vulnerable and unsafe to attack. **Now the city was secure**.
- **There was great spiritual prosperity**. Uzziah did right in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles. 26:4). He had **great military prosperity**. "God helped him against the Philistines" (2 Chronicles 26:6,7). "**Built towers in Jerusalem** . . . built towers in the desert" (v.9). **Had 307,500 soldiers**. There was **abundant food**. "**He dug many wells** .
- **He instituted great technology**. "Invented . . . **bulwarks and catapults** to shoot arrows, and great stones" (v.15). He brought to the kingdom **economic prosperity, military power, and political influence**.
- **But at the same time, Uzziah sinned, and he became proud because of his power and his success**. He went into the temple to **offer sacrifice**, which was only for the priests to do, and **80 priests withstood him**. **God struck him with leprosy, and he spent his last years ruling as a leper**.
- **Everything fell apart!!!** It is pretty hard to forget when someone that influential passes from sight, or when something that traumatic happens in our lives. And so, Isaiah brings to people's memory a time everyone would remember; the year Uzziah died, 740 BC. It was a sad time for Isaiah.

- **Uzziah had been like a Winston Churchill in WW2.** He had been there during the war and in the rebuilding. But now Uzziah is gone... and Isaiah is troubled... but this encounter changed his perspective.
- **Application:** **When your dreams collapse, you can go to the Lord.** When life is full of pain, go to his footstool. When the pain seems unbearable, cry out to Him. Pull off the plastic mask and come to Him. **He will change your perspective of the trouble.**
- **Illustration of the Carpenter and God's Hanging Tree:** A carpenter had been hired to work on an old farmhouse, but his first day was horrible. A flat tire. His electric saw quit. At the end of the day his truck wouldn't start. So, the man who hired him took him home. As the carpenter walked toward the house... he stopped and touched the branches of a tree right outside the door. He then smiled and walked into his house happy and kissed his wife and kids. Curiosity got the best of the employer, so the next day he asked about the tree. The carpenter said, Oh, that's my God hanging tree. he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So, I just hang them on God's hanging tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again." He paused. "Funny thing is," he smiled, "When I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there's not nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

2. We Learn the True Definition of Awe. (Vs. 1-3)

- **I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isa. 6: 1b-3)**
- **Something is lost in the American Church today** that I pray will return. We lost the AWE and wonder of God's majesty and His holiness.
- **We are caught up in terms of what He can do for us.** God becomes sort of a genie; you rub your little theological lamp and poof...
- **Our Big God is to be revered.** Cathedrals were built with large, tall naves, ornate stained-glass windows, and the worshipers inside felt a sense of awe when they came to worship.
- **We want God to be our pal.** We want our place of worship to cater to our comforts. We are the consumers of religion and the church is our peddler of religious wares. While we serve a God of love, we must never forget that He is a holy, fierce, fearful God.
- NLT | Heb 10:31 **It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**
- **God is holy. God is majestic.** God is fearful. He is mighty. He is awesome. He is transcendent. In fact, in Exodus 15:11, it says He is glorious in holiness. The beauty of the Lord is the beauty of holiness.
- **Application:** And it is because of his holiness alone that we are to worship Him. We approach God in worship because He alone is holy. Not for what we may get out of it. Not for the goosebumps of the music. It is reverent. He is not our bud. He is not our homeboy. He is not our superhero. **He is the Almighty God. That has never changed and it never will.**
- **Illustration of the Grand Canyon:** I stood in awe at the edge of the Grand Canyon. It literally took my breath away. It was immense. If, we could stand in awe of God we would not fear anything in our lives. When was the last time we stood in awe of God?

3. We Find Out That Even in His Holiness He Wants Relationship. (Vs. 6)

- **Isaiah saw himself for who he really was: A man. A human being.** A person struggling with life and with himself. A person who was not perfect and he knew it.
- **Not the kind of person a holy God would want to have around.** That is how Isaiah felt that day when the Lord appeared to him in the Temple. No one can stand in the presence of God without becoming profoundly and devastatingly aware of his own wretchedness, sinfulness, and brokenness.
- **It was one of the worst years that the man of God could remember, it seemed all hope was lost,** the nation had lost its king and what seemed their security and yet the man of God knew the only thing he could do is go to the House of God and begin to worship. **AND GOD MET HIM THERE!!!! God wanted to change... and connect.**
- **Application:** I know some of you have been under attack, you thought you was about to lose your mind, lose your life, the people you love, it seems like it's one attack right after another, and after another. **God wants to meet you right where you are. As the BIG GOD!**
- **Quote by Richard Moss:** "The greatest gift you can give people you love is the purity of your attention." That's true in your relationship with God.

4. We Need His Holiness to Sanctify Us. (Vs. 6-7)

- NKJV | Is 6:6-7 **Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."**
- **When the fire of the Holy Ghost is burning in your life and in the church,** we will truly meet with God, we will be struck by the greatness of God. We will sense his power, his faithfulness, his forgiveness, his care, and all of the other attributes of his person.
- An encounter with God begins with seeing his character. And when we do that, we see our own unworthiness.
- It was the holiness of God that revealed Isaiah's unholiness. When God truly meets with us, and we have encountered the BIG GOD, we are convinced that we need to be cleansed of our sins and the nature of sin.
- NKJV | 1 Jn 1:9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- **Application:** Without God's sanctifying power, we are nominal at best and lack the power to overcome our troubles.
- **Illustration of Sanctification as dirty laundry:** Sanctification is a fancy church word that simply means cleaned up and ready to use. Your laundry that has been washed, dried, and ironed is sanctified because it has been cleaned and prepared for use.

5. Big God Wants Us to Go. (Vs. 8)

- NLT | Is 6:8 **Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."**
- **What is God saying to Isaiah? Yes, it has been a bad and devastating year... but I'm telling you that it is a new year... and let's go! There's much to do!!!**
- **Application: 2020 has not yet been written down in the history books!** God is still calling His people to greater things and greater impact!!! Why? Because He is a BIG GOD!!!

Transition: Let's close with a comparison... us versus God.

Drawing the Net / Challenge

Final Thought: Because we have sinned, we can't brag to a perfect God how good we are. I mean, we can't impress the engineers of Boeing with an airplane that we made from paper. We don't brag about how far we can drive a golf ball in the presence of Rory McIlroy. You don't look LeBron James in the eye after shooting a jump shot and say, "I got game."

And you certainly can't boast about your goodness in the presence of a perfect, holy God. The only thing we can do in the presence of God is to acknowledge He is holy, and He is a Big God!!! **But never forget that He loves us and pursues us because we are His treasure and He needs us to go!!!**

This Week's Challenge: Do you feel undone? Are your troubles giving you the perception of failure? Have you hit a wall? Have you lost your AWE? Are you living in a spiritual life of dirty laundry? Is your journey of faith filled with potholes that's creating soul damage? Seek Him and His fire!!