



## Life Groups in Central Telford Parish

### Summer 2016 "Encounters"

Week beginning 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## Isaiah 6:1-8: Isaiah and the Holy God

- **Welcome**

Who are you in awe of?

- **Worship**

Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and spend a time in either silence or with appropriate music playing.

Imagine the scene ... a cavernous hall with a throne so high that you can only see the bottom of the occupants robe ... smoke billowing and angels flying all around ... not the cute little cherubs but fearful seraphim ... the noise of praise like thunder around you ... How do you react to this assault on your senses? Do so!

- **Word**

- ❖ What does God look like to you?
- ❖ Does this image challenge or reinforce this?
- ❖ In what ways?
- ❖ How does this relate to the God you "see" when you pray?
- ❖ And reading this, how might it affect the way you pray?

In the Bible, when a writer repeats a word, it is for emphasis. When the writer uses the word three times, it is meaning an absolute truth ... so when the angels call "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty*" (v3), it is a statement of the absolute holiness of God.

- ❖ What does the word "Holy" mean to you?
- ❖ What does the idea of God being Holy mean to you?
- ❖ How does this make you feel?
  
- Why did Isaiah react the way he did in v5?
- What did it take for him to recognize the situation he found himself in?
- What does it take for us to recognize that (1) God is holy and (b) we are far from holy?
- What does that say about the way we regard sin?
- What does it say about the Cross of Jesus Christ ... ?
- ... and how lightly we sometimes take our salvation ... ?
- ... and how easy it is for us to take Communion without proper respect for what it symbolizes?

Before Jesus was born, the system of sacrifices was that of animals in the Temple and there was a perpetual fire consuming them which was never to be extinguished (Leviticus 9:24, 6:12,13) ... it is seen as God's holiness cleansing the offerings and the people who offered them. Isaiah being touched on the mouth by a coal from the altar (v6) is a sign of both cleansing and him being anointed to be a prophet.

A BIG question! In Matthew 5:48, Jesus says "Be perfect (*holy*), therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

- ❖ What does "holiness" look like in reality?
- ❖ How can we be perfect/holy when we are always sinning?
- ❖ Isn't it a bit of a depressing and impossible challenge?
- ❖ How can we possibly deal with this?

The word "sanctification" describes what happens to us when we grow in our faith ... When we accept that Jesus died on a Cross for our sins, in God's eyes, we are perfect. But in the worldly sense, we go on sinning and the Holy Spirit needs to gradually work in us to make us more like Jesus. The more we commit ourselves to God, the more the Holy Spirit is able to do and the more we become like Jesus – and so we want to commit ourselves to God and the process begins again. This is what we call "sanctification".

Peter says "... *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" (2 Peter 3:18)

Paul says "... *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 1:6).

John says "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17).

**Holiness is beyond us in our own strength ... but in Jesus, we are holy in Gods eyes and in the work of the Holy Spirit, we will grow towards holiness if we strive to be disciples.**

- **Walk**

- ❖ What stops people striving in their faith?
- ❖ What is stopping us as individuals in the process of sanctification?
- ❖ How can we aid the work of holiness / sanctification?
- ❖ What do we need to do, practically, day by day?

Spend some time listening to God and sharing any words, pictures, verses you think he might be saying to you as an individual or as a group. Be bold and brace – share with one another and discuss what you sense God is saying. Pray for any other specific issues people are facing in the Life Group.

- **Next Time ...**

Week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> July:

**Jonah 3: Jonah and the Compassionate God**

