

Is It Well with Your Soul?
Isaiah 6:1-8

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“It is Well with My Soul” is one of the most well-loved hymns of all time. Most know that it is a hymn born in pain. Horatio Spafford was born in 1828 and lived 60 years before he died of malaria. He was a Chicago lawyer. He lived through the Chicago fire of 1871. In 1873, his wife and four daughters left on a vacation to Europe. At the last minute, Horatio stayed behind in Chicago. The ship they were aboard collided with another vessel. Only his wife was spared. In fact she telegraphed her husband from London two words, “Saved alone.”

Out of this tragedy came the words to that beloved hymn “It is Well with My Soul.” I want to take the words of that hymn today and turn it into a question for all of us—“Is it well with my soul?” As we close this year and look to another, what do you answer to the question, “Is it well your soul?”

I certainly want a passage of Scripture to guide our thinking so think with me about a familiar passage—Isaiah 6:1-8. Perhaps you have turned to this passage for many experiences of life. Let’s go there again this morning.

Text: In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe filled the temple. ² Seraphim were standing above Him; 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 called to another:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts;
His glory fills the whole earth.

⁴ The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ Then I said:

Woe is me for I am ruined
because I am a man of unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips,
and because my eyes have seen the King,
the LORD of Hosts.

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said:

Now that this has touched your lips,
your wickedness is removed
and your sin is atoned for.

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

Who should I send?
Who will go for Us?

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

Introduction: Isaiah 1:1 indicates that Isaiah preached these prophetic messages contained in the book during the reigns of Uzziah (also called Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The years covered are 740 B.C. to at least 701 B.C. Some would say that there is evidence that Isaiah's prophetic ministry lasted until nearly 680 B.C. We must remind ourselves that this time frame puts us in the midst of the divided kingdom (Israel in the North, Judah in the South). In fact, even though Isaiah's prophecy is focused on Judah in the South, the fall of the Northern kingdom would have happened during his ministry. "Judah faces extinction at the hands of the cruel Assyrians. In this crucial hour of national emergency, God sends Isaiah—a unique man with an unpleasant message. The nation of Judah is rotten to the core and ripe for judgment. Her habitual sins of idolatry, hypocrisy, injustice and corruption have not escaped the notice of her holy God. His righteous wrath will soon fall upon king and commoner alike, that all might learn that the Lord Almighty cannot and will not be mocked."¹

Added to the ongoing sin problem of Judah is the more immediate problem of the death of King Uzziah. Uzziah had reigned as king for 52 years. Uzziah's reign, for the most part, had been a good reign. He had led the country well. As a result, there had been relative calm and peace in the kingdom. His death brought about this sort of national panic of "What now?" (We are not the first generation to worry about how bad things are in a nation.)

I think if you were to ask Isaiah about this time in his life, he would have confessed that he had depended upon the good reign of King Uzziah rather than depended completely upon King Jehovah. In this atmosphere of national and personal panic, Isaiah is in desperate need of a fresh encounter with God. That is exactly what he gets as is recorded in Isaiah 6.

This is the background that lends itself to our asking some questions as we contemplate the bigger question, "Is it well with my soul?" How do we answer that question?

Is it well with your worship?

First of all, this is a passage about worship. Isaiah's experience shows us a couple of things that are absolutely essential to worship.

In worship, we get a glimpse of God.

This was a fearful time for Isaiah. The King had died. The Assyrians were coming. In the midst of these fears, while in the temple, Isaiah meets God. In this encounter, Isaiah recognizes...

God's Sovereignty—The first thing that Isaiah saw about God was His being seated on the throne and His robe. This description is a regal scene showing the absolute reign of the King of Kings. King Uzziah is dead, but Jehovah God, the one true God is very much alive and in control.

¹ *The Daily Walk Bible*, p. 809.

This is how worship calms our fears. We seem to need that regular reminder that God is on His throne.

God's Holiness—Next, Isaiah saw God's holiness. To say that we have worshipped, but not be led to see God's holiness is foreign to true worship. True worship always ends in seeing God's holiness.

God's Presence—The key term of these first four verses is the idea of filling. His robe filled the temple in verse 1. In verse 2, His glory filled the whole earth. In verse 3, the Temple was filled with smoke. The idea of filling reveals that God's presence is everywhere.

You cannot worry and worship at the same time. So, how is your worship?

In worship, we get a word from God.

We get a second essential about worship in this passage. Not only is the goal of worship to get a glimpse of God, but we also should get a word from God.

These two essentials have to be the goal of our worship—get a glimpse of God and get a word from God.

What about your sin?

In verses 5-7 the emphasis shifts away from God and onto Isaiah. At some point in worship, the emphasis shifts to the recognition of who we are in light of God's holiness.

Recognition of Sin

Step One: Conviction

Step Two: Confession

Recognition of Grace—God doesn't leave us feeling helpless in our sin, but shows us His grace.

The only way that we will be able to say that all is well with our souls is to also be able to say we have dealt with our sin. We have first been convicted of our sin and then we have rightly confessed our sin.

Are you fulfilling your call?

Are you in the place where God wants you to be? This is a passage about Lordship. When we see God as we should see Him, we see ourselves as we should see, and then we recognize His Lordship over every area of our lives. Seeing God changes us—It changes who we are, the decisions we make, how we spend our money, what we do?

God did not call Isaiah so much as Isaiah volunteered!

Is it well with your soul?