



'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.' Rev 4:11 NRSV

Hymn 11 StF

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Al- mighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Per- sons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the
glassy sea; cherubim and seraphim falling down
before thee, ho wert, and art, and evermore
shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide
thee, though the sinful human eye thy glory may
not see, only thou art holy; there is none beside
thee, perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and
sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in
three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Prayers. Father, we come to worship You and to give You our honour and praise. We come in the name of Jesus our Saviour and Lord and we come as we are because you have called us and we bring with us with doubts and questions, with hurts and weaknesses, hopes and dreams and plans. We come knowing that You will accept us and forgive us and we come that we might be made new so that we can be ready to go into the world once more to live for You because in You we find our hope, joy and peace. Amen.

Readings Isaiah 6:1-8, Luke 5:1-8

Sermon.

One of my favourite TV shows is the Repair Shop. I am always amazed at the skills and gifts that people like Steve, Will, Kirsten, Susie and of course the Teddy Bear ladies and others, use to repair and restore precious items for their owners. There are many poignant and heart-breaking stories that are told some of which literally bring tears to our eyes. Having trusted those skilful people with their very treasured possessions their responses when they return to see what has been done bring more tears. Many of them are very emotional and completely lost for words when they see the restored item and the only thing they can manage to say is 'WOW'.

In our reading from Isaiah 6 v 1-8 Isaiah's encounter with God gives him a glimpse of the greatness, the mystery, the majesty and the power and holiness of God - something which perhaps we have lost today.

By the time King Uzziah died, Isaiah was well established as a scribe in the royal palace in Jerusalem. It was a very respectable career and he was well used to living and working in the surroundings of the palace with the rich trappings and responsibilities and connection with the royal family. But God had other plans for him and so he had this amazing vision of God. Despite his background, his meeting with God was something else, as they say. Used to living alongside royalty, what he saw that day was unforgettable and it permanently affected his character. He had this incredible vision of the majesty, mystery, greatness, and power of God and it terrified him - it was awesome. It was definitely a WOW moment. God was seated on a throne, set apart, high and lifted up, and the hem of his robe completely filled the Temple. The seraphs he describes were a type of angel, strange half human, half winged creatures whose name is derived from the word for fire and this is the only place in the Bible where they are mentioned. They were guardians, hovering around the throne and they were awe-inspiring creatures, so powerful that their singing made the temple shake. And as Isaiah heard them sing 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts' he was terrified. Listening to the praise of these angels, and witnessing the holiness and power of God, he realised that he had no hope of ever measuring up to God's standard of holiness. The more clearly Isaiah saw God, the more aware he became of his own sin, and how unacceptable he was to God. His response was 'Oh no! I will be destroyed. I am doomed, I am as good as dead. I am a man of unclean lips, everything I say dishonours God, and I live among people who are also unclean'.

The love of God, seen in Jesus' life and ministry, and especially on the cross is wonderful, and because

Jesus showed us the love and compassionate nature of God, I think sometimes we can get a bit too matey with God. We forget just how far He is beyond our imagination and human experience

How often do we measure ourselves against someone else, and think we're not too bad, quite good in fact. After all we go to church on Sunday, pray, read the Bible, don't hurt anyone, try and do all the good we can when we can. We're all right! We are OK.

Are we? Who are we kidding?!? Our God is an awesome God, a perfect God, an all-powerful God, a God of love and of justice and we do not deserve to be in his presence for one second. So Isaiah was distraught. 'I am finished', he said.

The more clearly, he saw God, the more clearly he realised his own unworthiness and inadequacy, the more aware he became of his sin and his total inability to do anything without God. It was then, when he confessed his sin, that the seraph, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar, touched his lips and told him that his sins were forgiven. He was cleansed and purified and only then was he able to hear and respond to God's call on his life.

It is only when we recognise how great our God is, how unworthy we are, and realise the extent of his forgiveness, that we can respond fully and effectively to God's call on our lives, and receive the power to do his work.

In Jesus we see the unlimited, unconditional, extraordinarily extravagant love of God. When we look at Him we see what God is like – a loving Father, a Shepherd who cares for His sheep, so many pictures we get when we look at Jesus' life and ministry, at the way He treated the people He met, His compassion and His healing touch. When we begin to truly explore who Jesus is, we find that we are touching God and he is touching us. In our unworthiness He can and will heal us and bring us closer to Him.

In Luke 5:1-11 Jesus was calling his first disciples and after getting into Simon's boat and teaching the crowd he talked to Simon about fishing. After a disastrous night of catching nothing, Jesus told him to try again but in a different way. Despite his misgivings Simon did and he had a WOW experience. His response was to fall on his knees realising that he was in the presence of someone who was so much greater that he could begin to understand. He was completely aware of his unworthiness to be in the presence of this man that he recognised as Lord.

Jesus' response was to say 'Don't be afraid. From now on you will be catching men'.

I doubt that Simon really understood but nevertheless he left his old life, his ordinary everyday life, behind and went on a journey following Jesus.

Have you ever had a WOW experience of God in a church?

Have you had that WOW experience in your ordinary everyday life?

An experience that tells you without doubt that there is an awesome God who is far beyond anything we can begin to understand but that we can experience in the here and now, or is your God too small.

Here is a God who loves us unconditionally because of His extravagantly endless love for us. We can experience His transforming power in our lives and in the world. He is always there for you and me, alongside us in our difficult times, in our church and in the amazing world we live in. Let us look for Him and open ourselves up to experiencing His awesomeness and His power in our lives.

Hymn - Only by grace - You tube - <https://youtu.be/9-ixkmBOIUE>

Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand
Not by our human endeavour
But by the blood of the Lamb
Into your presence you call us
You call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us
And now by your grace we come.
Now by your grace we come.

Lord if you mark our transgressions
Who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
By the blood of the Lamb. (Repeat)

Only by grace can we enter

Prayers

Lord, You have made us and You love us. You want us to live in fellowship with you and with others and so we pray for your troubled world, for a fallen and hurting people. So many people see you simply as a remote power, a punishing God, someone to fear or they deny your very existence. We pray for those who are angry and bitter and living lives without real hope, for nations that are filled with hatred and aggression to one another and those who destroy lives and people. May they know Your peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who try to find security in what they can see, hear or hold, and not in the God who holds space and eternity. We include people who we know and love. May they see Your love in our lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for ourselves knowing that we constantly let you down, not honouring you in our lives as we should. We pray for your forgiveness and ask that you give us your strength to carry on. Amen.

Hymn O Lord my - God StF 82

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed;

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I
wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

Then sings my soul

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:
Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come with shouts of
acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, 'my God, how great thou art!'
Then sings my soul

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and give you peace. Amen