

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8

The Triune God Is Holy and Yet Forgiving

Isaiah 6:1-3

I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dontrell knew he shouldn't have said the words that he did. He probably shouldn't have even thought about them. But the words sort of tumbled out of his mouth before he had a chance to stop them. And his teacher heard what he said. "This assignment stinks." Dontrell knew it was a rude thing to say. And he could see that his teacher was disappointed by what he had said. Because of his outburst, the whole class was looking at him. He wanted to disappear, or at least hide somewhere in the classroom where no one would see him.

Everyone knows that "uh-oh" feeling. Sometimes we feel it when we've said something we shouldn't have said. Sometimes we feel it when we've wandered somewhere where we don't belong. Sometimes, we have to tell the truth to someone who's very big and we feel very small.

Isaiah knew all about the "uh-oh" feeling. When he was anointed as a prophet of God, he suddenly saw just how great and holy God really was. He had a vision of a holy place that sinful human beings shouldn't be able to see. Standing in the throne room of God, the Almighty King, Isaiah saw that God is perfect—and that Isaiah was not. "Uh-oh! I shouldn't be here! I can't tell the truth to someone so holy! I've said things I shouldn't have and done things I shouldn't have! Woe is me!"

But God changed Isaiah's "woe" to "whoa!" Instead of punishment, God gave Isaiah a promise: "I forgive you! Your sins are paid for (that is, atoned). Your guilt is gone." In all his power, our holy God makes us holy by making an atonement for our sins.

The teacher called Dontrell to the front of the room. But rather than a punishment, the teacher saw an opportunity: "Let's see if this assignment stinks or not... we're going to work through it together!" The teacher taught, and Dontrell got to be the teacher's helper. In his grace, God puts us to work, too! Our holy God forgives our sins and makes us holy, allows us to see his power, and then puts us to work in his kingdom. We have a God who forgives, strengthens, and sends... the whole earth is full of his glory!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What kind of person sits on a throne?
- How many times did the angels call God “holy”?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Artists sometimes picture angels as cute or gentle creatures. How did the angels Isaiah saw compare?
- God’s holiness was so pure that even the angels would not look at him. What made Isaiah so afraid to look at God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Isaiah refers to himself as “unclean” because of his sins. Think of another picture that we could use to describe the problem our sins cause for us?
- The angel said that Isaiah’s sins were “atoned for” with a coal from an altar. What does “atone” mean? With what were your sins atoned for?

Closing Prayer:

God, you are holy. That means you are perfect both in your power and in your love. Help me remember your perfection every day of my life until I see you face to face in heaven. Amen.

Hymn: CW 190:1 – Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!