

TRINITY SUNDAY

Isaiah 6:1-8

Let us begin by using our imagination to picture a temple. Not a church like this, but a huge cathedral, the largest church that we have seen or can imagine.

Now, imagine that God appears to us in this temple. We look up and one whole end of the building is opened to heaven. And when we look up, there is God on a throne. And the Almighty is so big that the mere hem of His robe fills the entire temple.

Flying around Him are these heavenly beings with six wings. Even they are shamed by God's glory and hide their feet and heads in respect. They call to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory". Their voices shake the foundations of the church.

That is what Isaiah saw as he prayed in the temple in the year that King Uzziah died. This revelation of God's awesome glory caused Isaiah to fall on his face and cry: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts". If heavenly beings covered their feet and heads before God, what would happen to a mere mortal like Isaiah? Would Almighty God destroy him; sweep him away like an insect? How big is our God? Not how physically big is God really, but how big is God in our mind, how big do you imagine God to be? There was an American Christian who used to talk about this. He would refer to one of the biggest building in New York, the

World Council of Churches Headquarters. It looks like a big box and many referred to it as the “God box”.

We all try to stick God in a box and limit what God can do. We all have a certain experience of what is possible and what is impossible. And when someone suggests something that is beyond what we believe is possible, we deny it. Our limited perception of reality leads us to conceive of God in mere human terms, and so we have trouble allowing God to be bigger than our limited vision allows us.

Today is Trinity Sunday and the doctrine of the Trinity is an example of us overcoming this tendency to put God in a box.

The doctrine of the Trinity states that there is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Other religions cry, “Foul! No fair. You Christians can’t do that. That is saying that three equals one, and we all know that is impossible”. And in essence we are indeed saying that three equals one. We say we serve one God in three persons. Where God is concerned three does equal one. It is beyond our realm of experience to understand how Jesus could be the Son of God, and one with the Father all at the same time, but He is. We Christians have experienced one and the same God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even though that seems inconceivable to some.

God is bigger than our limited human minds can imagine. God is greater than the greatest we have experienced. God is beyond even our greatest fantasies. Imagine the biggest structure you can think of. Even that isn't big enough to hold the hem of our God's garment.

The Old Testament Psalmists knew this. And one wrote, “What are humans that you are mindful of them”. We are like bacteria: too small for God to bother with us. Our planet is just a speck circling a yellow dwarf star in the corner of an obscure and

ordinary galaxy. If such an Almighty God really were to notice us, it would be as a nuisance. Yet God does notice us and care for us.

Remember Isaiah in the temple. He thought his doom was sure because he had seen God. And he cried, "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips." And God heard Isaiah's cry. And one of the angels, who do God's bidding, took a live coal from the altar and cleansed Isaiah's lips.

Here was pesky little unclean lipped Isaiah and there was Almighty Holy, Holy, Holy God. God had every right to destroy Isaiah for his uncleanness. But because Isaiah mourned his sin, God cleansed him.

Isn't it amazing that God would save a wretch like Isaiah? But that's God's amazing grace; grace that would save a wretch like me. John Newton wrote about this amazing grace in the hymn by the same name. Did you know that John Newton had been a slave trader. But he turned to God and mourned the thousands of lives he had ended, or put in chains. And God forgave him. God is so big that he forgives everyone who confesses their sin to Him. But this is no cheap grace. The price God paid for this forgiveness makes the grace even more amazing. God gave Himself for us. In Jesus, God came in the flesh to suffer the punishment we deserved for our sins.

Who are we that God died for us. Who are we that God should even notice us. Yet God is so big that He forgives us and He even numbers the hairs on our heads.

So, is our God too small? Have we tried to put God in a box and say, "No God can't do that". Do we think for a moment that our problems are too big for God? Do we think it is beyond God's sphere of influence to save our marriage or our job? Do we think that God is too little to heal our illness? Do we really

think that our sins are too great for God to forgive them?
Don't try to limit what God can and can't do. Let us open our mind to the possibilities of what God can do in our life. Let God be the Almighty in our mind and heart and soul. Give God all our problems because He is big enough to solve them. Give God all our sin and despair because God alone can forgive and heal.

Then we will see: God is the Almighty who made us. God is the one who saves us from our sin. And God is the one who gives us strength to live.

AMEN.