

Fr. Brad Neely
5th Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle C
Sts Peter & Paul – Nez: Feb 07, 2010
Is 6:1-2a, 3-8; 1Cor 15: 1-11; Luke 5: 1-11

Our friend the prophet Isaiah
lived 8 centuries before Christ.
In the first reading today,
we hear of his vision---
a vision he had describing an encounter
between he and the divine.
In that divine setting,
the Seraphim cry out
*“holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts----
all the earth is filled with his glory!”*
[sound familiar?]----
Amidst this divine presence and song of praise,
the door shakes and the house fills with smoke.
Isaiah thinks, “how can I withstand this?----
for I am so lowly and sinful----
my lips are unclean,
and I have now seen the Lord.”
The Seraphim then takes an ember from the fire
and touches Isaiah’s lips.
With that, his wickedness is removed
and sins purged.
This is the scene of Isaiah receiving his vocation.
To the question, “whom shall I send?”
Isaiah replies, “send me Lord.”
He is sent by the Lord
and becomes a prophet of faith.
In times of crisis Isaiah prescribes trust in God,
and knows how hard the tests will be.
Isaiah is the preeminent Messianic prophet.
He is created by God, yet God---who is “other”
transforms him to another level
as servant and prophet.

Now, take Paul.
In his 1st letter to the Corinthians
he passes along the truth of Christ’s sacrifice---
the Christ who is the Messiah
about whom Isaiah prophesied.
God created Paul,
but he, too, experienced a profound transformation.
At the end of this passage, Paul says,
*“For I am least of the apostles,
not fit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.
But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and his grace to me has not been ineffective.”*
Paul’s life truly becomes animated in faith
by Christ’s hand.

So, two men living 800 years apart,

and owing their *true life*, their *true well being*
to the same God.

So in approximately 800 BC,
Isaiah **foretells** the Messiah,
a descendant of David,
who will establish peace and justice on earth.

In approximately 50 AD,
Paul **retells** of Christ,
who *has brought about* peace and justice on earth,
but also ushered in the kingdom of heaven on earth.
Paul retells of the one
who was crucified, buried,
and risen from the grave.
“After that,” Paul says, Christ *“appeared
to more than five hundred brothers at once,
most of them still living.”*

When we place ourselves in God’s hands,
we ultimately, as we know, place ourselves
in divine hands on earth **and beyond**.....
Isaiah and Paul’s lives on earth
were profoundly affected
by their receptiveness to God....
by the use of their human freedom
to respond to what God asked of them.
Imagine what life is like for them now----
in the heavenly realm---
having responded and given themselves fully to God.
Paul proclaimed that the Messiah---the Christ,
made life in this heavenly realm even possible.
It is safe to say that Isaiah and Paul
always credited God
with the **fullness** of their lives on earth,
and equated “life after death”
with the power and care of God.

There are many living today
who would testify to the same.
This all begs the questions:
How would one’s life be
if living with indifference to God?
What happens after death
if one is indifferent to God?
If one doesn’t believe they really need God,
do they believe they are in charge after they die?
What could they put together for themselves---
----without god----
---on their own----
after leaving this earthly life?