

Isaiah 66:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

² For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

We are entering the final chapter of Isaiah. Our friend Isaiah has been used of the Holy Spirit to pierce our hearts and to bring us great joy. He has told us the truth about **our God, our world, and ourselves**.

And in this final chapter he will tell us about **true and false worship**.

In fact this whole book has been about true and false worship. He has brought our attention, time and time again, to how quickly and easily we fall at the feet of the next **self created idol**. He has shown us in graphic terms how detestable that is to God. He has made us look at our failure to trust God and the fear it results in. He has shown us people who stand like a rock in the face of spiritual adversity and those who are blown around like leaves in the wind. We have seen the ultimate of humanism with the person who says "**I am and there is none besides**" and we have seen the God who cries out in an almost humiliating fashion, "**Here I am, Here I am**".

Isaiah has shown us the true state of the world. God created the heavens and the earth. And He created all of us. And He maintained the full right of ownership of that which He created. But Adam and Eve decided that there was something to be gained by self determination. They decided to try it their way, thinking that it was somehow better than being ruled by God. And they tripped a switch that unleashed hell on earth. In their effort to **enrich** their existence they **brought destruction to it**. And that is always what we do when we **go our own way**, when we **ignore** what God says.

Then Isaiah shows us over and over and over again the commitment that God has to His people, even when **they** are not committed to **Him**. We needed nothing less than a Savior. We had no idea what that would require of God. We weren't even asking for His salvation. But God was fully aware, when the sin line was crossed, what would be required to ever have fellowship with another human being. If He were to have fellowship with a sinful human being, (which makes you wonder why He would ever want to), He would need to provide a Savior. If ever an ideal environment were to come, it would have to be at the **complete destruction** of that which God created the first time.

None of these things were surprises to God. It is what He had in mind from the beginning. Isaiah shows us just how **great a need we have** for a Savior and **the enormous price that God will willingly pay** to completely and totally restore us. Everything is affected by sin. And every price will be paid to remove it forever. The salvation that God is providing is huge.

And this is being held out to us. We can **be in the number** that He saves. We can have a new name and a new body in a new world. Is that what you want? He holds it out to you and says Here I am, Here I am.

So let's take a look at the true worship that Isaiah has been calling us to.

Isaiah 66:1-24 (NKJV)

¹ Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

Now, what is the point here? Is God telling these people, don't concern yourself with rebuilding the temple? Is God saying that Solomon should not have built it in the first place? Is He belittling all those efforts?

No. Of course not. He commanded that it be built and he gave instructions for how it should be built to please Him. God never **prescribes** what He **forbids**. He does not tell you **how to do** something and that **you must not do** it at the same time. He isn't like we are. He is consistent.

So what **is** this telling us?

There is always something in us that wants to place more emphasis on **how** we worship than on **who** we worship. We are so quickly distracted into this style or that style of worship. And gradually we are prone to replace the worship of God for God himself. We can worship the worship.

The Jewish people had fallen into that trap. They thought the temple was the important thing to retain God's presence. They thought **the tool was the job**. God is making that point clear to these folks and to us.

God doesn't need a building. His hands are not tied in the least if there is no temple. He isn't waiting for this people to provide Him this building so that God can then do His job. God is never beholding to anyone.

We cannot understand what it is to have no feelings of need. In fact, you and I fall into much of the sin that we choose by trying to meet **our own needs our own ways**. We are a needy bunch. And we are always beholding to someone to provide those needs. We do need food, clothing and shelter. And we need to have the means to have those things provided. God has no such need.

He says Heaven is my throne. Basically He is saying, "even if you tried, you could not provide me an adequate space to contain me. What I have already is far superior to anything you would hope to give me."

Then He says the earth is my footstool. He is saying, "Do you really think that giving me a 30 foot by 30 foot room in your temple is really something I need?" Do you think that is the ultimate worship of me? The whole earth is what I rest my feet on. We get the picture of God sitting in the heavens with the stars and sun surrounding Him and His feet resting on planet earth.

And then He says, **Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?** He is asking- "And what kind of house do you hope to build for me that will really hold me? That I really need? Where am I going to lay down and take a nap. How do you hope to provide for me something I need? Do you really think all these noble efforts are going to impress me? Do you really think these are the things I want from you?"

One of our greatest problems in our worship of God is what psychologists call projection. There is a danger when dealing with anyone else that we project who **we are** and **why we do things** onto them. And when we do that it **blinds us to who they really are** and **why** they are doing things. We have to get over ourselves before we can really listen to another human being. We have to assume that **we do not know what we think we know**. And that is hard. I think marriage is probably the best school to teach us to get over projection. We learn pretty early in marriage that this creature sees things in a completely different way than I do. So I better not read in too much until we have talked.

Well we also do that with God. We figure that if God loves us there must be an angle. There must be something He needs that He wants from us. Why else would he treat us good? So if we want Him to keep treating us good, we better provide Him with the thing He wants.

So here these worshippers are saying to themselves, God wants a temple. God wants something to live in. So we better give Him one. That will make Him happy and then we will get what we want.

And what does God say about their misconception? He destroys it. He shows their projection of themselves into God's motives to be as absurd as it really is. **² For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD.**

God is telling them, think about this. You want to build a temple. Out of what? And where did that stuff come from? I'll tell you where. It came from out of nothing. I created it. Now do you really think that stacking a bunch of rocks together for Me is really what I am after?

I made the heavens. I made the earth. I made it all. You can remove your angles and your foolish false worship of me. You can stop thinking right now

that you are giving something I need from you. That isn't it at all. You have missed the whole point.

This is often the basis of performance based religion. We work because we think God needs it from us. We think we will do this thing God needs and it will earn us something. And normally, if we go far enough in this thinking, we get to the place in our thinking that **if I do more than everyone else**, then I am **entitled to a little sin**. I mean fair is fair, we think. I will do lots of evangelism so I can sin my favorite sin. Or I will do acts of service at church so I can do my own thing over here. Yeah, our hearts are the trickiest people we know.

So God doesn't need this kind of worship. It is not going to warm His heart. It will not endear Him to us. It will not buy Him off.

Notice the premise of these false worshippers. Underneath it all they think that God needs something. And ultimately the false worshippers think they have something to offer God that God wants and needs. That is a huge problem.

OK. If that is not what He wants, then what **does** He want? What is God really after? If it isn't us **providing** Him something or **repaying** Him something, what is He really after?

Without reading the verse, how would you answer that question? What does God really want from you?

When you think of going out from here and serving Him this week, what does He really want from you?

The answer might be a little shocking.

"But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

God wants this kind of worship. He wants someone who is poor and contrite and trembling.

Now what good can that possibly do for God? What advantage can God possibly get from that? No building. No fame. No strokes. There is nothing there we can think of.

But that is what He wants.

"But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

What is poor?

Poor- It refers to those who are suffering, in a state of poverty, oppression, misery from various causes:

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.

These are people who **do not have** the resources they need to take care of themselves and **they know it**. There is no sense of independence. They see themselves as being dependent upon some outside source of provision.

Contrite- An adjective meaning crippled, smitten. It refers to the result of a physical accident or attack.

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.

This is not a cocky person. Their spirit has been crippled. It has been smitten. They have a broken spirit.

Tremble- An adjective meaning trembling, reverential.

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.

This is a person who does not **misuse** the word of God or **twist** the word of God. This is a person who **submits** to the word of God reverentially. They fear **to not do** what God says.

Is this really what God wants in a person? Is this still the one that God will hear? Does it sound very familiar to us?

Well, let's look at what Jesus said.

Matthew 5:3-12 (NKJV)

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There are some who take these words to say that simply being in bad situations makes you favored with God. But that is not what it is saying at all. All of these unfortunate conditions are **the result** of God's work in a person's heart. These are people for whom **the Holy Spirit** has done His work.

All of these conditions are **the results** of spiritual progress.

Now why are so many of these attributes so desperate, so needy, so.... undesirable? We might even say negative?

Does God delight in bumming out His people?

No. We must never make a mistake about this. God loves us with an infinite love. And what He does for His children is always in their long term best interest. There will be an eternity where there will be no suffering of any kind for His children. But **that day is not this day** and we had better not be confused about that.

You and I need weened from this world. We gravitate toward the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life like a plant seeks the sun. And those things will destroy us.

So God puts us through the boot camp of life. His Spirit works on us until we can see the truth. WE NEED GOD. WE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT HIS PROVISION AND FELLOWSHIP. LIFE IS EMPTY WITHOUT HIM. AND THERE IS NOTHING GOOD IN US THAT DRAWS US TO HIM OR HIM TO US.

We are poor. We do not have any of the stuff that will sustain us. We have nothing to offer to God to impress Him. We are destitute of goodness.

If God is at work in us there is only one reasonable response to our sinfulness. **Contriteness.** Do you remember being broken by the conviction of a sin that you have committed? Do you remember crying out to God, knowing exactly what you deserve, but begging God to forgive you? The humble person, the person who truly sees the truth about himself, knows that this is **not the exception. This is the rule.** We become crippled and smitten by our understanding of our fallenness. There is nothing about us that can impress God. There is nothing by which we can gain His favor.

Ultimately repentance is all about this. It is coming to the end of ourselves. It is seeing ourselves as we truly are, as if a brilliant light shone through the darkness and showed us every hidden crevice about ourselves. And what happens? We cry out like the tax collector in Jesus story- **I AM THE SINNER.** It is no longer, I did this bad thing but didn't know any better. It is no longer, yes I sinned but anyone would have done what I did in my situation. It is no longer I could not help myself. It is just my weakness. No. It is seeing to the heart of the matter and saying I, ME, the Self that I am is **the insurmountable problem.** The Jon that God sees clearly is the problem. And that is painful. That creates mourning. That is a recognition of poverty. That creates a voracious appetite for holiness, something that I am not. It moves us to a meekness where we must behold God's face to know that we are ok. And it moves us to take on characteristics that would have never happened in our self seeking frame of mind. We begin to extend mercy because we have received mercy. We begin to make peace because we have been given peace. And we are even willing to spend ourselves in light of the great love that spent itself for our salvation.

But it all starts in our recognition of abject spiritual poverty. We do not have anything to offer. We cannot build God a temple so we can make some kind of deal with God. All our pride lies in a heap at the foot of the cross. And we come to Him just as I am. And we get that the good deal is the deal that **we get**, not the deal that **God gets**.

And lets look more at this statement.

And who trembles at My word.

Our brother Ortland, who I am afraid I will miss a great deal when we move to First John, says some things worthy of repeating here.

He says this.

What complicates this (trembling at My Word) is that God uses preachers to communicate his Word. And every preacher is imperfect. Every preacher gives the listener some reason not to listen. We preachers don't mean to, but we do. Our responsibility is to minimize the complications. Your responsibility is to overlook the complications and listen to God. Paul commended the new believers in Thessalonica: "When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" ([1 Thessalonians 2:13](#)). When you can see in your Bible that the minister's message is coming from that Bible, it changes everything. What you are hearing is not his brainstorm; you are hearing the Word of God. And receiving it not as the word of a man but as the Word of God is the true worship of deeply reverent listening.

Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word - Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.

It is very easy to listen to a sermon or even to directly read God's word and look for those things we want to hear and to disregard those things that we do not want to hear. But **evaluating** what God has to say is very different from **trembling reverentially** before it. If I am saying something that is wrong that I cannot support, tell me. I think I have proven to be very open to that kind of correction. And I make mistakes. But do not think that any application of God's word can be blown off because it has come through a flawed human. None of us get a free pass.

Let me ask you, what would our lives be like if we trembled before every word of God that we had access to? Would the devil have ever established strongholds in our lives? Would we have so many of the regrets that we live with? Would we not have pursued Gods word before jumping into so many of the things we did? Would it not have rescued us from so much?

One of the bigger problems with us is that God has to get our attention before we will listen. I know as a child, my dad had to carry me out of many church

services to a quiet place before he would fully get my attention, until I became completely prepared to listen.

I vaguely remember being curious about what was going on in the pew in front of us as I was beginning to crawl my way to their feet.

How much trouble we save ourselves if we will fearfully and reverentially listen to God's Word as if **it knows everything** and **I know nothing**, as if not a single one of my excuses has a bit of truth in it. As if **God is true** and everyone and everything that goes contrary to God's word **is a liar**, including my strong emotions and my impressions of what truth is.

And not only do we save ourselves trouble. This is what pleases God. Is that not what we really, in our heart of hearts, want? Do we not want to know that our Savior and brother Jesus is smiling? That is not an exaggeration or some wishful thinking. People smile when they are pleased. And we are told that it is **well pleasing to God when we are faithful to Him**. And the only way we can be faithful to Him is to obey what He says and trust who He is. Anything **else** displeases Him and **this** pleases Him. It isn't very complicated.

When we are humble and contrite, we are finally in the state of mind to be fully sane. We know we have a God who knows everything and who loves us and only wants what is best for us. Now what is the most sane thing that person can do? Is it not to want to **hear from God**, to **get direction** from God? To obey God? To have a word from God? To know truth from God? That is the reason that it is so important to God that we become those things that God will respond to.

**"But on this one will I look: On *him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,*
And who trembles at My word.**