

Sermon for The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Scout Sunday

Date: February 10, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 6:1–13

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:12b–20

Gospel Reading: Luke 5:1–11

Sermon Text: Isaiah 6:1–7

Sermon Title: Have we Lost Respect for God?



Introit: Psalm 71:15-18; Antiphon Psalm 71:12

Hymns:

LSB 907 – God Himself is Present

LSB 621 – Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

LSB 785 – We Praise You, O God (v.1,3)

LSB 507 – Holy, Holy, Holy

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p.184



Pastor James Groleau
St. John's Lutheran Church
1200 13th Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
Office: (507) 433-2642
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau



Text: Isaiah 6:1–7

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne. The train of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim angels were standing above him. Each had six wings: With two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.

They called to each other and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory.” Their voice of each shook the foundations of the doorposts, and the temple filled with smoke.

So I said, “Woe to me! I’m doomed. For I have spoken unclean words I live among people with sinful lips, and I have seen the king, the Lord of Armies!”

Then one of the Seraphim flew to me. In his hand was a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, “This has touched your lips. Your guilt has been taken away, and your sin has been forgiven.”

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Grace and peace, in the name of our Lord Most High, Jesus the Holy Christ of God. Amen.

Have we lost our respect for God? Do we really think about who it is that we are approaching when we go before Him in prayer and praise? Do we really consider who it is we are addressing when we stand before the throne of the Lord God Most High? That is the subject I want to approach with you today.

I think it is particularly true in American culture, that we struggle with the idea of what life might be like under the rule of a monarch. We have no king whose whims are commands, and whose commands have complete control over our lives. Under the rule of a king you live as long as he says you do. If he says you are to die there is no appeals court to overrule him. He is the law, he is the religion, he is your life and your death. Good, bad, or indifferent, he alone has ultimate power over you and all that you have.

I believe when we talk of God as our King our mind thinks more along the lines of God as our president. Our president does not have ultimate power and ultimate control over our lives. He gets four years, then we fill out a job evaluation form on Election Day to see if he gets another four years. Ultimately he answers to us.

Now, speaking of America, I think that is as it should be. When it comes to people in authority they should answer to the people they govern. Power corrupts people. For that reason we, as the governed, should have some power over those who govern to prevent them from allowing greed and corruption to go too far. If it does go to far it is ultimately our fault for sending people to govern us that do not have the moral standards and skills appropriate for the job.

The problem, I believe, is that we think of God the same way. Although we may not openly say so we might be inclined to think: 'God answers to me. God's Word is not absolute truth, it only contains some truths. God's commands are more like good suggestions. God's decrees are something that you can take or leave as you see best fit for your own life.'

To take this example a bit further think of a scenario where the president visited your home. It is my intention to pick on the politically charged culture of our American society, so I'm going to select two presidents that might stop in to chat with you: president Obama or president Trump. Depending on your political view it is very likely that you will enjoy having one more



than the other in your home. My question to you is, which would you kneel down in front of to welcome them into your home? To which one would you grovel at his feet in respectful homage

at the honor of being in his presence? To which one would you say, “Live forever oh president! May your decrees be my only desire.” Which one would receive that kind of treatment in your home? Hopefully neither.

The president, we understand, is only a man and does not ultimately answer to us, the people. We would be respectful because of his office, we might be so bold as to suggest that he is right on this issue or wrong on that one. We would not think it too arrogant to share our opinions with him respectfully. You might feel honored at their presence. You might feel it is a wonderful opportunity. You might feel a little more special than everyone else in town because your home was chosen. However you would not pray, grovel, kneel and worship him.

We have the Scouts here today. Is that not what you are taught? The Scout Motto is:

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

First God, and then country... respect for authority. You are taught things like honor, valor, integrity and honesty as treasured qualities that should be found in any good Christian man. In all that you do you are led by those who display such qualities and you are encouraged to exemplify them yourself. ... but do you worship your leaders? When they enter the room do you bow in humble reverence. Probably not. That's probably good.



The problem is however, how that influences our view of God as our King. How would you treat Him? Think about it. How would you act if Jesus came to your home? Now think about who He is. He is the Author of Life – your life. He is your Savior and King. He is your Judge. He is the One who will determine whether you live in Heaven or Hell forever. How would you act?

Would you tell Him you disagree with His course of action? Would you tell Him He is wrong on this point or that point? Would you give Him your opinion on any issue believing He needs to know what you think? Do you think you know better than God Most High concerning what you, or anyone else needs, in this life or the next?

Now take it up a notch. What if you were to go to His house? What if you were to stand in the great throne room, in the palace, in the city of New Jerusalem, in Heaven. As you walk toward the throne of the Most High, the Ancient of Days, God, King, Emperor of the created Universe, and Author of Life, how would you approach Him?



I would assume you might be a little more intimidated by God than your favorite president (or Ted your scout leader.) Would you bow low and respectfully to your God? Would you speak first, or wait to be invited to speak? Would you really think you had anything to say that He really needed to hear from you? Let me remind you of God's own words in Job 38, a time when someone was given the opportunity to stand before God and complain to Him. God said:

“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress and stand before me like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements, surely you know! Who stretched the line upon it? ...”



That questioning goes on for two chapters. Then Job says, ‘I was wrong to question you.’ God say, ‘I’m not done...’ and goes on questioning Job for two more chapters.¹

We may, on occasion, think God needs our advice, but He doesn’t. We should be more like Isaiah in our Old Testament reading. Remember how he reacted when he realized he was standing before the throne? He said, “Oh, no! I am doomed.”²



Our Lord and Savior is not “Buddy-Jesus.” The one who slaps you on the back and says, “Oh! Never mind about that thing or this. Ha Ha. It’s all good.” That is not our God. Now it is true, God’s Word does describe Him as our friend, and our Brother. God is a loving and caring God who desires the best for us. That is why He is also our Savior. We just need to remember that He is also our God, our Lord, and our King. We live only at His pleasure.

God is worthy of our respect, our honor, our praise, and our adoration. Our very lives belong to Him, and we exist solely and only at His desire. If God desires that you should no longer exist could you by your own power and will, choose to continue to exist against His will? God has said you will live forever. As believers in Jesus Christ as our Savior we will live forever in a world that will never be plagued by imperfection again. However always, and only because, God wills it to be.

When we say God is our King we should consider that our lives are utterly, fully and completely reliant upon Him alone. We should be reverently thankful that God is a God of truth, whose promises never fail. When God says something, when God makes a promise, you can know, with all assurance, that He is telling the truth, and that truth will be the truth forever. That is the assurance we have in our God. He is not fickle. He does not change His mind on a whim. He does not go back on His Word. That is shown to us over and over again throughout the Bible. God is true to His Word. He never changes.³ He never quits. He never give up.



Can we really approach the throne of the Most High God and talk with Him? Yes!

He has told us that He is our loving Heavenly Father. We can share our pains and our joys with Him. In fact He has told us to do so. We can stand

1 Job 38-41

2 Isaiah 6:5

3 Malachi 3:6

before God without fear but we should take care to remember that He is still our God. He is still our Lord. He is still our King. All that we are, all that we have, all that we will ever be, is only because of Him and His love and His care for us.

Remember that in Jesus' name. Amen.

A SCOUT IS

TRUSTWORTHY

LOYAL

HELPFUL

FRIENDLY

COURTEOUS

KIND

OBEDIENT

CHEERFUL

THRIFTY

BRAVE

CLEAN

REVERENT