

TEXT: **Isaiah 6:1-5** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** 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. **3** And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." **4** At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. **5** "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

That last verse is telling. My eyes have seen the king, the Lord almighty.

When Isaiah said this, he was already a believer and a follower of God. But this event exposes that prior to this, he was not seeing as clearly as he needed to be. And when he began to see clearly, he became aware of the greatness of God, but at the same time the wretchedness of his life without God.

And the event that transpired was that Isaiah began to see God through a new lense.

TITLE: **The Right Lense**

INTRO:

1. In order for us to experience a passionate, vibrant, life-giving, on fire relationship with Jesus Christ, we must be viewing him through the right lense.
2. So first, let's uncover the lense Isaiah had been seeing God through.
Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw
3. The lense through which Isaiah had been viewing God through was a great king by the name of Uzziah.
4. Now, as is the case with every illustration I am going to share this morning, we need to know that the lenses I am describing are not bad. In fact, all of them are good. Very good.
5. And Uzziah fits into that category.
6. Israel had a history of having a good king for a while (a king who followed God wholeheartedly). And then a so, so king (a king who followed the Lord in some areas but not in others). And terrible kings (kings who were evil and anti-God).

7. And of all the kings in the history of Israel, Uzziah may have been at the top of the list as one of the greatest kings ever.
8. Listen to this description of Uzziah in **2 Chronicles 26:3-5** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem. **4** He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. **5** He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.
9. So, for 52 years, Uzziah set the bar high. He loved God wholeheartedly, he sought God earnestly, and he obeyed God faithfully. And the result was that God gave him success.
10. Again, I remind you. Those are all good qualities.
11. And on top of that, he had a positive impact on a future prophet by the name of Isaiah.
12. Isaiah was born in about the 13th year of the reign of Uzziah. So, for the first 39 years of Isaiah's life, he saw and experienced what it was like to live under the rule of this great king.
13. And what he saw and experienced caused him to want to become a follower of God. Again. All good things.
14. But the significance of this event that occurred in Isaiah chapter 6 was that king Uzziah died. And as great and wonderful a king and influencer as Uzziah was, it wasn't until Uzziah was no longer there that Isaiah began to see God and himself more clearly.
15. Why is that? Because **for 39 years, Uzziah had been the lense through which Isaiah viewed God.**
16. Now, lenses are very important to me. (illustrate)
17. Back here, hopefully, is my brain, and one of the ways my brain comprehends things is that the images of the world around me pass through the lenses that are my eyes. (how many are still with me?)
18. But in my case, there is a problem with the lenses of my eyes. I do not understand one single solitary thing about how the eyes work, what I do know is that since my mid-teens, the lenses which are my eyes have been progressively getting worse.
19. To the point that if I try to see with just my eyes, I see nothing but a blurry mess.

20. I literally cannot even see humans in front of me. It's just all a jumbled mess.
21. So, in order to help me see clearly, the doctor has prescribed these lenses, these glasses, and as I look through them, my vision becomes nearly 20/20.
22. Without the proper lenses, I can't see anything clearly, but with the proper lenses I can see many things clearly.
23. Now, let's go back to Isaiah. For 39 years, Uzziah was the lense through which Isaiah saw God.
24. Which would have been ok except for one major issue. Uzziah was not a perfect lense.
25. As great a king as he was, he was also still human and as a human he was flawed.
26. So, Isaiah is trying to see God, which is a very good thing, and his purpose for trying to see God was to know what God was like and therefore know how to live and relate to him. (are you still with me?)
27. But because Isaiah was trying to view God through the imperfect lense which was Uzziah, Isaiah couldn't see clearly how great and awesome God was, and neither could he see how wretched he was without God.
28. But in Isaiah 6:1 that changed. Look back there with me.
29. **Isaiah 6:1** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord
30. Allow me to put into my own words what actually happened.
31. Isaiah reports, in the year that king Uzziah died, I was no longer seeing God through the lense of my king, now I am clearly seeing the real king. Who is exalted, lifted up, sitting on a throne, and his kingly robe fills the entire throne room.
32. And he is so great that angels fly around him proclaiming, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.
33. But then (verse 5) I also saw how sinful and unclean and in need of a savior I really am.
34. So, Uzziah, the imperfect lense is removed. And now the lense I am seeing through is none other than God himself. The perfect lense. The lense who magnifies and clarifies everything perfectly.

35. And as a result of now seeing clearly, I see the world differently, and myself differently.
36. So, what does that mean for us? How does that apply to us? I'm so glad you asked.
37. We too are susceptible to mistakenly seeing God through not only people, but things, or circumstances, or situations.
38. And if I am here, and I am trying to see God through the people and the stuff of life, my picture of God will be very distorted. And as a result, so will my picture of who I am in relation to God.
39. But if I am here, and I purpose to see everything and everyone through God, then I will see clearly where to go and what to do and how to live.
40. Let me give you three illustrations. There could be thousands of illustrations, but I will pick three.
41. Keep in mind that none of these illustrations are bad. Having them in our life is not bad or wrong. But trying to experience these things without seeing them through God opens up the door for a very painful and frustrating life.

Money.

1. Money is not bad. Say it with me. Money is not bad. Paul told young Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:10 that it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil.
2. An unhealthy love of money is bad, not the money itself. In fact, I like money.
3. But if you and I try to view God and the world through the lense of money, rather than viewing money and the world through God, headache and heartache are sure to follow.
4. How can we tell which is the lense? Money or God? Let me give you a few examples.
5. If we view God and the world through money, we will tend to see ourselves and what we do as the source of our money.
6. But if God is our lense, then the source of our money is what God does for us.
7. If money is the lense, then one of several things can happen.

- The drive to work harder to make more money. Don't misunderstand. Hard work is good. We are told in the bible not to be lazy. The pressure is on us and not on God.
 - The drive to cling to money. In other words, the fear that if I don't hold on tightly to money, then I will lose it all. The problem is that the bible says give and it shall be given. And if I am clinging too tightly, I might miss God's direction to give where He wants.
 - The drive to spend money for happiness. If I can just get that then I will be happy. But the bible teaches us to be good stewards of God's money, which makes God happy.
8. On the other hand. If God is the lense through which we view money, then these things happen.
- Yes God. I know I am to work hard. But Lord, you are my provider. You are my source. My trust is in what you can do, not in what I can do.
 - Yes God. I can invest and give where you say without worry, because it's all yours in the first place.
 - Yes God. You are the one who brings me joy. The stuff is ok, but what really fulfills me is you. The stuff is just icing on the cake.
9. I hope that is making sense this morning. Just as the lenses in my glasses are important, so are the lenses with which we try and view and relate to God.

Health.

1. When I was younger, I took health, energy, and drive for granted.
2. I burned through life like there was no tomorrow.
3. But I've learned the hard way that health, energy, and drive changes.
4. When I was younger, I would power my way through whatever came my way. I don't think I consciously depended on myself, I think I just through that because I was strong and full of energy, I could take on anything.
5. I lived by the mantra, I can do all these things through the strength and energy I have. The lense is the health. I saw everything through the lense of health.

6. Buddy Jones, who moved with his wife Sarah a couple of years ago, was as quoted as saying, when we are young, we worship our health.
7. Our health can become an idol in our lives. If we are not careful, we can depend on our health and on our own strength, to the point that we don't rely on God nearly as much as we should.
8. I know that certainly applied to me in my younger years.
9. My life has changed. I began learning several years ago that health is fleeting.
10. I can't burn through emotional, physical, and spiritual energy like I used to.
11. Now I look at the world and all the things I have to do, and I think, oh no. I can't do all that. And that reality is pretty sobering.
12. So, I find myself many mornings praying before I get out of bed. Oh God you have to help me. I'm not going to be able to get any of it done today if you don't help me.
13. And normally when I pray that prayer, the scripture that pops in my mind is Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.
14. The lense is God. (not that I'm good at it all the time)
15. If I am seeing through the wrong lense, my health or my strength, I can either become prideful, or I can become overwhelmed with fear and worry.
16. And neither of those is God's desire for our lives.
17. It is when we understand that all power and glory belong to God, and not to us, that we are seeing through the proper lense.

Understanding.

1. When the lense I use to view God and the world is my own understanding, then everything has to make sense to me. And whatever I don't understand I tend to reject.
2. And that means I reject most of what God wants to do in my life.
3. I am saying more and more to people, if we are going to make a list of all the things I don't understand, it's going to be a long list.

4. But when God is the lense through which we view the world, we don't necessarily have to understand. We can trust. And when we trust, it only has to make sense to God.
5. That's why it says in **Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.
6. When the lense that we use to see God and the world is our understanding, then we will be very limited in what God can do for us and through us.
7. When you and I view life through God, then it's up to God to tell us where to turn, and our job to simply obey.
8. Our job is to take on the yoke of Jesus Christ and trust him to lead the way.

The Pastor.

1. Just as Isaiah was seeing God through the lense of King Uzziah, it is possible for us to see God through the lense of the person we see behind the podium each week, and the person we relate to when times are difficult.
2. I hope you will hear my heart this morning. Because I understand the place of love that that type of lense comes from.
3. It is a lense of trust and appreciate and for that I am so grateful.
4. Since the announcement a couple of weeks ago, I have had several people say to me, pastor, you can't leave, you are the reason I am here.
5. Again, I know that comes from a place of love and trust and appreciation for me. I am so blessed by the support of so many.
6. However, you don't need me to see God.
7. In fact, you shouldn't even want me as the lense to see God.
8. Because I am flawed, and I misunderstand, and I sometimes have difficulty keeping my emotions under control.
9. Because I sin, I fail, I get angry when I shouldn't and I sometimes do nothing when I should take courage and do something.
10. Your relationship with God doesn't need to be viewed through me, your relationship with God needs to be one on one with God.

11. My prayer, as strange as this may sound, is that some will be able to say, in the year that Pastor Jeff resigned, I saw the Lord. High and lifted up. I was able to see how great God is. And it changed my life.
12. Because when you view God one on one through him, then you will see clearly.

Conclusion:

1. And when we view the world and everything in it through God. If we will surrender to see it through His eyes, and let him be the lense, then that view fans the flame of our faith.
2. It will help us grow up spiritually.
3. When we trust God as the provider of our finances, our health, our understanding, and everything else that we need, and whatever we face must pass through him, our faith grows and flourishes.
4. But when we try and see God through the lense of anyone or everyone and everything in this world, it's like dumping a bucket of water on our spiritual flame.
5. And in return we wind up feeding doubt, worry, stress, fear, misunderstanding, heartache & headache.
6. Money. Health. Understanding. Pastor. And thousands of other things. They are all wonderful. But none of those qualify to be the lense through which I view God and the world. Because they will distort my view of reality.
7. Only Jesus is worthy to be the lense. When we view everything through him, it changes our perspective.
8. If you need to change lenses today. Admit it. Confess it.
9. Ask the Lord to help you view everything through him, and not the other way around.
10. Give yourself grace. It takes practice. Each day. Each circumstance. Each situation. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you put the correct lense into place.
11. Lord. I seem to be focusing on a person or a thing. Help me to focus on you.
12. Lead in prayer.