

**Behold Our God**  
***Walking Naked for God***

**August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Text - Isaiah 20:1-6**

**Scripture Reading - Isaiah 20:1-6**

We all know that God wants us to stand boldly for Him.

- **Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- **Romans 1:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,...

- **Luke 9:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Nothing brings us more guilt and shame than when we fail to do so.

- Lunches at Morgan Park
- Yesterday at the Tires Plus

We have lots of excuses for our failure.

- Too shy
- Too busy
- Too much of a hypocrite
- Don't feel called / Evangelism isn't our gift
- They won't listen / It won't make a difference
- Don't know enough / Don't know how

But John sums up the root cause for most of us in John 12:43.

- **John 12:42-43 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him,

but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> *for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.*

If there was ever a man who loved the glory that comes from God more than the glory that comes from man and who was willing to stand boldly for Him, it was Isaiah. This morning we want to look at what had to have been one of Isaiah's boldest stands and try to figure out where he got the strength to take it.

### **Isaiah 20:1-6 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>In the year that the commander in chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod (leading city of the Philistines) and fought against it and captured it (712-711 / Hezekiah / Assyrian attack 701) — <sup>2</sup>at that time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet," and he did so, walking naked and barefoot. <sup>3</sup>Then the Lord said, "As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush (southern Egypt / northern Sudan), <sup>4</sup>so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, the nakedness of Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Then they (Ashdod) shall be dismayed and ashamed because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their boast. <sup>6</sup>And the inhabitants of this coastland (Ashdod) will say in that day, 'Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And we, how shall we escape?' (They'd looked to these mightier nations)

Obviously the main point of this text is NOT that we should be willing to walk naked for three years in public if God calls us to.

- Chapters 13-23 are a series of woe oracles against the nations surrounding Judah.
  - o Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Tyre, and Sidon

- All of these oracles were designed to increase Judah's confidence in God and decrease their confidence in their neighbors.
  - God's people had been tempted to look to other nations for help rather than God throughout their history.
  - Ahaz had asked for help from Assyria against the Edomites and Philistines (2 Chr 28)
  - Hezekiah would soon be tempted to do the same.
- Thus, the main point of this particular woe oracle is clear. Judah should not look to Egypt and Cush for help against the coming Assyrian invasion because they were about to be defeated by Assyria and led away as captives. Instead they should look to God.

But for our purposes today, I want to focus less on the main point God was trying to make through Isaiah and more on *the way* He was trying to make it.

- **Isaiah 20:2-5 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> at that time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet," and he did so, walking naked and barefoot. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, "As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush, <sup>4</sup> so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with *buttocks uncovered*, the nakedness of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Then they shall be *dismayed and ashamed* because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their boast.

- Ancient pictures of conquered nations show this was common practice
- Primary purpose was to shame
- Some question whether completely naked, naked all the time, etc.?
  - Even partial nakedness considered full nakedness at time
  - "Buttocks uncovered"
- Public nakedness (even partial) *my worst nightmare*

What empowered Isaiah to walk naked for God?

1) Convinced of God's existence

- a. You're not going to be radically obedient to someone you're not absolutely sure of.
- b. **Isaiah 6:1-4 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" <sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.
- c. I believe there remains a shred of doubt in many people's minds because they haven't had a mountain top *experience* with God like Isaiah's.
  - i. Pray for that experience
  - ii. Lean on nature and *the Word*

2) Compelled by God's forgiveness

- a. **Isaiah 6:5-8 (ESV)**  
<sup>5</sup>And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" <sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." <sup>8</sup>And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."
- b. **1 Corinthians 15:9-10 (ESV)**  
<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
- c. **Romans 12:1 (NIV)**  
<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's

mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

3) Clear on God's call

a. **Isaiah 6:9-10 (ESV) - General**

<sup>9</sup> And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

b. **Isaiah 20:2 (ESV) - Specific**

<sup>2</sup> at that time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet," and he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

c. **Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) - General**

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Acts 1:8, 2 Cor 5:17-20)

d. **Acts 8:29 (ESV) - Specific**

<sup>29</sup> And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

- i. Ex. Letter writing yesterday

4) Content with God's results

- a. Isaiah was more concerned about obedience and faithfulness than results

- i. **Isaiah 6:11-12 (ESV)**

- <sup>11</sup> Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, <sup>12</sup> and the Lord removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

- b. All we can do is be faithful seed planters

i. **1 Corinthians 3:5-7 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

c. We need to trust God with the results

i. **Isaiah 55:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

May God give us the strength to be...

- Convinced of His existence, Compelled by His forgiveness, Clear on His call, and Content with His results