



**GRAY'S  
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**Trinity Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Isaiah 6: 1-8 & Matthew 28: 16-end

Our two readings on this Trinity Sunday have been about the opposite of Lockdown. In contrast to the restrictions we've had to put up with over these past few weeks, both Isaiah and Matthew urge us to look up, and go out.

The prophet Isaiah was depressed. He looked around and all he could see was idolatry and injustice. But then he goes into the Temple and has this vision, a vision of God which takes his breath away - "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up - and the angels worshipping him, crying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory". It's been wickedly suggested that the words "and his train filled the Temple" is why Church of England Vicars are so obsessed with steam engines, but you'll be pleased to know that that's the only joke you're getting today!

I've come to realise that those who come to Chapel do so with very different ideas of God. Some have a clear and strong faith in God the Holy Trinity, the One who has created us, redeemed us, and who is with us now. Some have a more, if you like, platonic belief that our hopes and fears here and now must point to something beyond. For others it's more about what you might call "transcendence", the search for deeper feelings, for a fuller life, often opened up by music and by poetry. Trinity Sunday calls us to go deeper and wider.

Isaiah's vision may tell us three things. The first is about Worship. Worship is not some outdated religious activity but a fundamental part of our humanity. Peter Shaffer wrote in his play "Equus": "I cannot think of anything worse one can do to anybody than take away their worship". But there's always a choice about who or what we worship. There are as many idols around today as they were in the time of Isaiah. Self-interest and the disregard of others remain attractive alternatives. Isolation and social distancing may be important now, but they're no way to run the world! For the prophet there is only one true object of worship, the living God, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord".

Secondly, the prophet is aware straight away that he doesn't deserve to be there. "Woe is me! I am lost". It doesn't do us any harm to be reminded of our unworthiness, of our failure to live up to what we would like to be, let alone the gap between where we are and where God is. But Isaiah is freed from that, not by what he manages to do for himself, but by being cleansed by God. "Your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out". Some people think that being told you're a sinner is demeaning and belittling. In fact it's quite liberating to know you're not expected to live up to impossible standards, but rather to know God's forgiving love.

And then, thirdly, there is the challenge: “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” There is a job to do, to go back and recall the people to God’s way, to change the world for good. And given what he’s experienced, Isaiah has the courage to say, “Here am I, send me”

At the end of Matthew’s Gospel the same happens. The disciples worship the Risen Lord, and they receive the commission to go out and be Christ’s representatives in the world. But they also receive something more, the promise: “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”.

*Owing to the closure of the Chapel due to the CoronaVirus, this sermon was delivered as part of an Audio Service made available on the Inn’s website*