

## Getting Desperate

This is the second message in a sermon series entitled “Desperate.” We are studying Scriptures that give us healthy, God-honoring ways to respond when we find ourselves in situations that tempt us to despair, lose hope, and give up. On May 29th we studied the example of Nehemiah (in Nehemiah 1) and saw that we always have the option of crying out to God with fervent, persistent prayer. In coming weeks we’ll talk about other options (depending on the circumstances): we can lament, we can repent, we can humble ourselves, we can take bold action.

This morning we are going to back up a step and ask some questions like, “What type of person actually responds in these healthy, God-honoring ways?” And “How can we become that type of person?” Isaiah 1 illustrates that ***experiencing God makes us desperate in healthy, God-honoring ways.***

**Opening Question:** Generally speaking, in what context do you tend to experience God most deeply and why? (Examples: times alone in prayer and Bible study, in corporate worship, when “out in creation,” etc.)

### Read Isaiah 6

1. What observations can you make about Isaiah’s encounter with God in verses 1 through 4?
2. What is the significance of the seraphim calling out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts”?
3. Why did Isaiah respond as he did in verse 5? Why might he have confessed that he is “a man of unclean lips”?

4. Read again verses 6 and 7. Why would “a burning coal . . . taken from the altar” provide cleansing for Isaiah’s sin? Why did the seraphim touch Isaiah’s mouth with this coal?

Steve said: “Isaiah’s cleansing foreshadows the cleansing we can receive in Jesus Christ. Just as God provided a sacrifice on an altar for Isaiah, God has provided a sacrifice (His one and only Son) on an altar (a Roman cross).”

5. Discuss the dynamics of experiencing God’s holiness, confessing our own sinfulness, and experiencing a fresh cleansing:

Why do we see our own sinfulness when we experience God’s holiness?

Does an awareness of your own sinfulness normally make you “desperate” for God’s cleansing? Why or why not?

Steve claimed that seeing our sinfulness “isn’t an exercise in self-condemnation” but a prelude to cleansing and wholeness. Do you agree? Has this been your experience?

How does confidence in Jesus’ sacrifice inform the way we view our sin?

6. What are some ways that you can put yourself in a position to experience God directly this week?

Reminder: Each week we are providing passages that supplement Sunday’s message. This week consider these passages that either describe or advocate experiencing God directly:

Exodus 3:1-6

Psalm 95

Luke 19:1-10

1 John 1:5-9

2 Corinthians 12:1-10