

Theme: What is God's character like? God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

## I. Intro - A Quiz on the Character of God!

- A. If you had to describe God's character in three words, what would they be?
- B. A group of pastors - some of the answers were unbalanced!
- C. Catechism question 7 - see theme statement
- D. Why do we say this? What does it mean?
- E. Today's text - Isaiah 6:1-8

## II. God's Character: Holy

- A. God is perfectly holy  
In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. Isaiah 6:1-4

- 1. An awesome vision of God given to Isaiah
- 2. The first impression is God is utterly, perfectly holy
- 3. This is why Isaiah cries out regarding his sin  
"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." Isaiah 6:5

- a. Isaiah sees God and is overcome by his own sin
  - b. The prophet's lips, with which he speaks God's Word, are sinful and unable to bear God's holiness!
4. John has a similar vision  
Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." Revelation 4:8
- a. The same call in worship: Holy, Holy, Holy!
  - b. They NEVER stop saying this - an eternal call
5. The assertion that God is holy is the most often repeated description of God's character in Scripture. Whatever else we may say about the character of God, we must never lose sight of the fact that God is fundamentally holy.
6. "God is primarily the God of holiness; this is the fundamental fact about God." - J. Rodman Williams
- B. What it means to say that God is holy
- 1. To say that God is holy means that He is righteous, just, good, pure, and judging and wrathful against sin.
  - 2. God is holy because He is totally distinct from and superior to everything else
    - a. This is the root idea of the word 'holy'
    - b. This is why the seraphim and the living creatures are worshipping God
    - c. God is holy in that is distinct from, and superior to, everything in all creation.

3. God is holy because He is utterly morally pure, without any sin or lack of character.
  - a. This is how the root idea of the word 'holy' applies to character and morality.
  - b. This is why Isaiah (and others!) immediately see their sin when they see God!

C. This is a description of God that is hated in our modern world, which refuses to think that God is holy and therefore will judge all sin, but any description of God that does not include His holiness is utterly defective.

### III. God's Character: Love

#### A. God is perfect love

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Isaiah 6:6–7

1. The holy God loves Isaiah and atones for His sin!
2. God's holiness exposes Isaiah's sin and he fears his destruction, but God is love and Isaiah is saved!
3. God Himself is perfect, complete love - and this is why He sent Jesus to atone for our sin

Dear friends, let us love one another, for **love comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. **God is love**. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 1Jo 4:7–10, 16

- a. God is love (v8, 16); love comes from God (v7)
- b. The Trinity has always been love and expressed love - Father, Son, and Spirit in a bond of love.
- c. God acted in love to send Jesus to save us (v9)
- d. True love - Christ's atoning work! (v10)

4. "God is centrally the God of love." - J. Rodman Williams

#### B. What it means to say that God is love

1. To say that God is love means that He is merciful, gracious, kind, forgiving, and compassionate.
2. This is not something God became when He created, but rather God has been expressing and receiving love as the Trinity from all eternity.
3. Love is why God sustains and keeps sinful humans, even when they deny and reject Him. This is known as common grace.  
But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because **he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked**. Luke 6:35
4. This love is why God graciously atones for the sin of His people and restores them to Himself. This is known as saving grace.  
This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

- C. Our culture embraces the idea that God is love - but they often mean something very different than the biblical definition. Love is not something created or defined by humans - it is Who God is, and is defined by His very Being and actions.
- D. However, some religious people have all but lost the central truth that God is love, preferring a God of wrath to a merciful God. This is the spirit of Pharisaism, and it is ultimately idolatry as well.

#### IV. God's Character: Integrity

##### A. God is perfect integrity

And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6:3

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." Revelation 4:8

- 1. Thousands of years apart - but God has not changed!
  - 2. Because He is perfect, God can not change, for any change would be degradation, not growth.
- ##### B. What it means to say that God is perfect integrity
- 1. It means that God is true, faithful, keeps His covenant promises, unchanging, reliable, and true to Himself.
  - 2. Integrity means that God does not change at all in His character, plans, or purposes.

I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Malachi 3:6

- 3. Integrity means that God will do exactly as He has promised and warned in His word.

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23:19

- C. Our culture rejects the idea that God does not change and expects Him to keep up with our ever-changing morality, but God does not change, and therefore neither does good and evil.

- D. Integrity means that God will not change either His holiness or His love to redeem man and that in all of His relations He is first and foremost faithful to His own nature and glory.

if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. 2 Timothy 2:13

#### V. Applying the Word

##### A. Do I have an accurate view of God?

- 1. What we think about God will determine our view of the universe, ourselves, and our place in the world.
- 2. There is a great temptation to distort the character of God by so stressing one aspect of His character and reducing or denying other aspects that we lose contact with God as He actually exists.
- 3. "Man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols." - John Calvin
- 4. Where do I see idolatry in my view of God's character? Where is it out of line with the truth?

- a. Do I reduce or remove God's holiness, thinking He will not judge sin or ever demand that I forsake my sin?
- b. Do I reduce or remove God's love, primarily viewing Him as a harsh God only looking to judge and punish me?
- c. Do I reduce or remove God's integrity, thinking He has changed, or that He will not do as He has promised and warned?

#### B. Developing an accurate view of God's character

- 1. Diagnosis - which attribute of God's character is reduced in my understanding of God?
- 2. Study, meditate and pray upon that attribute of God's character
  - a. Study that area in catechism question 7
  - b. Study texts and teachings about that area - see the website for both texts and topics; look for studies/ books on these areas
  - c. Specifically pay attention to that aspect of God's character as you read Scripture
  - d. Pay attention to that aspect of God's character as we sing songs together
  - e. Pray, asking God to reveal that aspect of His character to you, and specifically focusing on it in your prayers for yourself and others

#### C. Concluding prayer

## What Is God's Character Like?

Isaiah 6:1-8  
 September 29, 2019  
 Prayer

Jude 1:24-25

Teaching keywords: Catechism; God's character; holiness; love; integrity, honesty, faithfulness, and truth

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy —<sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:24–25

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> "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." <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:1–8