

## THE OVERVIEW

**MAIN IDEA:** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

**TEACHING TEXT:** Isaiah 6:5-8 NLT

**WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW?** God is looking for people with the humility to admit their own brokenness and the faith to follow wherever He leads. This is what God found in the Prophet Isaiah and it's what was lacking in the people of Israel during his time as a prophet. They foolishly believed they didn't need God. And, as a result, their arrogance produced entitlement which drove them to reject God and take advantage of others. But God was not okay with it. And He's not okay with it now. So, just like He did with Isaiah, God is inviting us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand and have the faith to follow wherever He leads.

**WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO FEEL?** Humbled by the reality of their sinfulness in light of God's holiness. Confident that God can and will work through their brokenness to do more than we could ever do on our own.

**WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO?** Be honest about their sinfulness. Choose to walk forward in faith.

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## THE OUTLINE

**TENSION:** Have you ever just like desperately begged God to tell you what His calling for your life is? Like Lord, please just show me the job you want me to have, the person you want me to marry, and the neighborhood you want me to live in and we will be locked. Like I will know what to do and I'll do it and I won't have to feel anxiety about my future anymore.

I get that, I do. I was the kid in college who changed my major, I think 6 times, because I just couldn't make up my mind and I didn't want to pick the wrong thing and I didn't feel like God was really giving me anything to work with ... at least not anything I wanted to hear.

See, God had spoken some pretty clear things over my life. I did have wise and godly people reminding me of certain gifts God had given me or dreams He'd placed on my heart when I was younger ... but, I'd been through some stuff at this point. Good and bad. I'd gotten to travel and do missions work all around the world. After this experience I literally changed universities because the school I originally planned to attend was too small, too secluded, and not well known enough for me ... In my arrogance, I convinced myself I'd be miserable there, even though I originally thought that's where God wanted me. I'd also, at this point, made decisions in relationships that were harmful and sinful. In the shame of continuing to wrestle with those choices throughout college, I thought I was surely disqualified from those hopes and dreams God had brought to life inside of me before. I was arrogant and I was insecure ... so I closed my ears when God and people told me what I didn't want to hear.

Because pride does that to us ... it blinds us to reality. And we miss opportunities to live out our calling.

**TRUTH:** That's actually where we are in the biblical story. God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, is honestly a mess. The people of Israel foolishly believed they didn't need God. And, as a result, their arrogance produced entitlement which drove them to reject God and take advantage of others. Their kings are increasingly doing what's wrong and leading the people to do the same, and God's prophets are repeatedly calling them to repent, to get it right. To return to Him and their calling to be His holy people, a Kingdom of priests who represent Him to the rest of the world. To do this they needed to have the humility to admit their own brokenness and the faith to follow God wherever He leads. God found in Isaiah what was woefully lacking in His people—that kind of humility and faith. Going to be in Isaiah 6 tonight look at the moment when Isaiah was called. While you get there ... context:

Isaiah was a super important prophet. His ministry lasted for decades and he saw the rise and fall of multiple kings. The book of Isaiah has sometimes been called the fifth gospel because he pointed forward to Jesus' coming more than any other prophet—more than 700 years before Jesus, he predicted the virgin birth, that Jesus would be a suffering servant, and that He'd be a light to the gentiles. These prophecies brought hope to Israel in a time of crazy instability and eventually, exile. We can learn a lot from his calling about how to walk in ours. As we read, I want you to pay attention to the responses you see ... Isaiah's response to God ... and God's response to Isaiah.

*<sup>1</sup> It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. <sup>2</sup> Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" <sup>4</sup> Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.*

So, the first part of Isaiah's calling experience ... really didn't have anything to do with Isaiah. God shows Him a vision of this heavenly throne room. This might seem counterintuitive, but pay attention to this, before God shows **Isaiah anything about His assignment, God invites Isaiah into His presence. He reminds Isaiah of His holiness.** How beautiful is that? Before God asks him to do anything for Him, He reveals Himself to Isaiah. This is so significant because ... **What we believe about God shapes what we believe about everything else.** And what we believe determines how we will behave. A right view of you and what you are supposed to do, actually starts with a right view of God.

If you want to know what God has called you to do, start by getting in God's presence and asking Him to help you see Him for who He really is. This doesn't mean that you have to wait to be transported to a heavenly throne room in some grand vision. Because of Jesus, Hebrews tells us that we can come boldly before the throne of grace. So, come. **Get in God's presence by reading His Word and asking Him to speak to you, through 5 minutes of making space in your day for Him to speak, through a prayer in the morning before you walk into school ... God, what do you want me to know today? Through worshiping at church every week.** Because, often,

before God tells us the assignment, He invites us into His presence. To be with Him and see Him for who He is.

<sup>5</sup> *Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies."*

In light of God's holiness, Isaiah recognizes His own sinfulness. His brokenness is exposed, but Isaiah's response is not to run and hide in insecurity and shame. It's also not to start arrogantly rattling off a list of excuses or accomplishments. His response is genuine confession. It's to tell the truth, the reality of the situation.

When we see God for who He really is, we are then able to see ourselves as we really are. And we always get to choose our response to what we see. **Will will let pride drive us to dismiss and deny what we see? Or will we, in humility, tell the truth about what's wrong inside of us?**

The temptation to dismiss and deny is real! But, it's also really unhelpful, because excusing ourselves from responsibility may feel better in the moment, but it stunts our growth and gets us stuck in a victim mentality in the long run. **That's one of the subtle, sneaky ways pride takes us out ... convinces us to excuse, dismiss, and deny ... to compare my thing to their thing ... compared to them, it's really not that bad, so I don't need to do anything about this. And I spend so much time looking down on them that when I finally look up, I'm so far from God and who He created me to be.** But, that's not what Isaiah does. In humility, he tells the truth about what's wrong in him ...

<sup>6</sup> *Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.* <sup>7</sup> *He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."* <sup>8</sup> *Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."* Isaiah 6:1-8 NLT

God's response to Isaiah's admission of brokenness isn't to cast Him aside, turn His back, or beat Him down ... it's to move closer. To cleanse him. And to send him.

**Some of you need to hear this ... I know I did. This is the heart of God on display. The way He responded to Isaiah's brokenness and sinfulness is how He responds to ours. He doesn't wait for us to clean ourselves up ... He came to us in the person of Jesus, removed our guilt, forgave our sins, and made us clean. If you're not dead, you're not done. God has more for you. More to redeem. He's inviting you to be part of His good plans for the world. On the other side of our humble confession is God's redemption.**

This scene illustrates a key theme in Scripture and the main point of this message: **God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**

**APPLICATION:** What will you do with this? What can we do when we are struggling with anxiety about our future and calling? Zoom ahead into the New Testament to look at a passage that has literally transformed my life. See something God showed me when I desperately needed a breakthrough...never noticed this before because I always heard these two verses quoted separately.

See, I grew up with a momma who knew her Bible and had a verse for just about everything. Being a stuck up little punk and talking about how I was so much better at any given thing ... humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Freaking out about a test or presentation or something coming up? Cast all your cares/anxieties on Him because He cares for you ... It wasn't until a few years ago that I saw this ...

*<sup>5</sup> And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because **God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.** <sup>6</sup> And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand <sup>7</sup> by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you.*

There's not a separation...literally not even a sentence break! It's a continuous thought...how do we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? We do it by casting our anxieties on Him because He cares for us. I MEAN COME ON PEOPLE! THIS IS SO GOOD!

As I continued processing this, I recognized the truth of it. Because the things that I am most anxious about are also the things I am most arrogant about. Let me explain. I noticed that the moments I'd get spun up or start spiraling into panic were when what I believed to be the right or best outcome in that situation was threatened. A relationship not going the way I think it should or think I need it to be okay? Panic. A next step that I thought was a clear yes gets taken off the table? Spiraling thoughts about my past, present, and future. Someone not responding to a project or piece of communication how I anticipated they would? Stomach dropping in horror. Why? Because I really believe that my outcome is the best outcome. And that's so incredibly arrogant. And that arrogance was producing so much anxiety in me.

Your attachment to your outcomes might be withholding forgiveness from someone because you're right and they're wrong and you want them to be totally clear on that. It might be how you phrase things to make yourself look better and someone else look worse or changing your story ever so slightly depending on who you're talking to because your outcome ... is that they like you. And your attachment to that is producing so much anxiety in you.

But. When I tell you that I have found FREEDOM in making the intentional decision to practice humility in those moments...I'm not making it up. It's brought literal restoration in my BODY. I desperately want this to be true for you too.

So how will you practice humility? In just a minute we are going to go to our small groups and talk through two questions. **What pride do you need to remove? And what anxiety do you need to release?**

At the end of the day, whether you think you're awesome and expect things to go your way cause that's what you deserve ... or you think you're awful and that no one could ever care about you or what you do cause of thing about you or that thing about you ..... It's still all about you. So, it's pride. And pride blinds us to reality. And we miss opportunities to live out our calling. So we are going to **get honest in our small groups ... not let pride drive us to dismiss and deny what we see. But, in humility, tell the truth about what's wrong inside of us.**

But, right before we get there...we need to get uber practical. Because humility is often thought of as way more conceptual than practical...and I think that's a miss. When I was working through this, my leader asked me a simple question that's been super helpful for me. **What do humble people do? When you think of the people in your life who exemplify the humility of Jesus...what do they do? They probably serve without being asked. They probably see needs and meet them. They probably listen really well. They probably respond to people with compassion, curiosity, and clarity. Go and do likewise. And do it again. Then do it again. And again.**

Forming a humble response to the arrogance-revealing, anxiety-inducing events in our lives, those moments when we are wrestling with our calling ... literally requires new pathways to form in our brains. So it takes work. Practice...maybe even some suffering. For me right now, this looks like the moment I am starting to feel like someone is somehow less than me or anxiety rises up in my body...I find a way to submit to, encourage, or serve the people/person involved in the situation. Because that's what humble people do...and that is who I am becoming, even when it involves suffering. And in that process...

**CONCLUSION:** <sup>10</sup> ... the God of **all grace**, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, **will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.** <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**Pray.**