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RAIDERS OF THE FOUND ARK 2 Samuel 6:1-11

In 1947 several ships in the area around the Solomon Islands heard an SOS from a ship called the SS Ourang Medan. The message said that all the officers and most everyone else on the ship was dead. Apparently the person sending the message soon joined his shipmates for he sent some garbled text followed by the words, “I die,” then the transmission ended. Two ships responded and eventually were able to find the vessel only to discover that indeed all on board were dead. No one has ever figured out how they died or what happened.

There are lots of mysteries in this world. There was an article in the newspaper yesterday that said the trailing edge of the port wing of a jet airliner that washed up on an island in the Indian Ocean has been identified as coming from the Malaysian Air plane that disappeared a couple of years ago. What happened to that plane is still a mystery that may never be solved. Now some people are claiming that the Ourang Medan mystery never actually happened. But there are other mysteries we know are real. Since 2007 16 severed feet in shoes have washed up on beaches in British Columbia and the state of Washington, and no one knows where they are coming from. Then there are much less grisly conundrums. Why is “abbreviated” such a long word? Who thought it was a good idea to put the letter “s” in the word “lisp”? Why was the Lone Ranger called “Lone” since he always seemed to be accompanied by Tonto? If money doesn’t grow on trees, why do banks have branches? Why do you get a penny for your thoughts then put in your two cents worth?

Today we are going to look at an incident that is puzzling and disturbing. Yet this rather bizarre incident in the life of David actually has a very important message for us. We face personal mysteries that are of considerably more concern to us than the ones I mentioned. Why does life seem almost perverse at times? Why is there so much pain and suffering in this world? Why doesn’t my life go the way I wish it would more often? I cannot answer all those questions. But there are some truths behind the incidents we will look at today that can give us some help in how we think about life. We will see the story in 2 Samuel 6:1-11.

DAVID TRIED TO MOVE THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

I can hardly believe that it has been 35 years since the movie *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* burst on the scene. When I first saw it I thought it was terrific. The star of the

movie was Harrison Ford playing adventurer and archaeologist Indiana Jones. I still have an Indiana Jones hat I bought more than a quarter of a century ago. Indiana's hat, leather jacket and whip are iconic even still today. And *Raiders* is still one of my favorite movies of all time. Indiana was the main character, but the subject was the famous ark of the covenant of the Hebrew religion. In that movie the point was to keep it out of the hands of the Nazis, who wanted to use its reported power for nefarious purposes.

When God instituted the covenant between him and the Jewish people through Moses at Mt. Sinai, he included not just the laws but also some of the rituals and practices that were part of the religion. Playing an important role was the ark of the covenant. Our word "ark" is derived from the Latin word *arca*, which meant "box." The Hebrew word translated "ark" was the generic word for "box." So to demystify it a little, this was really the "box of the covenant." God gave specific instructions about the ark in Exodus 25. It was to be a wood box almost 4 feet long, 2.5 feet wide and 2.5 feet high, overlaid with gold. It was to be covered with a lid made of gold. On each end there was a gold angel with wings extending over the box. It was to have rings on the corners through which were inserted poles that were to be used to transport the ark. Inside were the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar containing some of the manna God used to feed the Israelis in the wilderness, and Aaron's rod.

Each year on the day of atonement the Chief Priest would make a sacrifice for the sins of the people. The blood of the sacrifice would be sprinkled on the cover of the ark. This symbolized that the sacrifice was accepted and the sins were forgiven, for the ark represented the presence of God. It represented his throne, where sins are judged and forgiven. And it symbolized how being present with his people he provided a covenant for the people, including instruction in how to live, as well as how he provided the food necessary to sustain them and the mercy and grace to forgive their sin.

By the way, the ark really was lost. When the Babylonians conquered Israel and leveled the city of Jerusalem in 587 BC the ark disappeared from history. There are literally twenty different theories about what happened to it, among them the one in the Indiana Jones movie that it ended up in Egypt. Another was that it was taken to Ethiopia. There is a theory that it is buried in a secret vault in Jerusalem. However, the most likely is the Babylonians took it and eventually destroyed it, so it no longer exists.

I would think that the ark would always be a national treasure, protected at all cost. Years ago our family visited Washington D.C. During the visit we went to the National Archives. We stood in line so that we could have just a few seconds each to look at the original Declaration of Independence, which is kept safely in a thick glass container. Every American regards that old document with some real awe and reverence. It is closely guarded. It seems to me the ark would be even more so, given what it contained. They did value it, but not enough.

In 1 Samuel 4 the Philistines and the Israelis were at war, as usual. According to 1 Samuel 4:3 after Israel suffered a sound defeat in battle somebody came up with a bright idea. It was another example of the damage the Good Idea Fairy can do. They said, "Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies." Hey, if the ark represents the presence of God and his provision, then let's put God to work. We'll bring the ark with us into combat and God will clobber those Philistines. Does that sound like a good idea to you? Would you have brought the Declaration of Independence along when American troops stormed Omaha Beach? Of course not. We would put it somewhere safe to make sure if disaster happened it wouldn't be at risk.

Disaster happened. The Philistines delivered an even more resounding defeat to Israel in the next battle than they had in the previous one. They killed 30,000 Israelis according to verse 10 and they captured the ark of the covenant! It was a catastrophe. This was the ultimate loss in the "capture the flag" game. The Philistines thought getting the ark was great, at first. However, it wasn't long before bad things started happening to them. They started getting sick and dying, so they decided they wanted no part of the ark. They put it on a cart drawn by a couple of cows and sent it off in the direction of Israel. Some of the Israelis who received it decided to take a look at what was inside. I wondered if they were concerned that it might be booby trapped, so they sent their explosive ordnance disposal people to check it out. Okay, I made that up. They were just curious about the thing so they decided to take a peek. 1 Samuel 6:19 says 70 of them died as a result. They reached the same conclusion the Philistines did. Get this thing out of here! They sent it to the house of a man named Abinadab in Kiriath Jearim, and there it stayed for 20 years. The name Kiriath Jearim roughly translates to "Forest Town," suggesting it was a pretty rural, out of the way kind of place. In other words, they sent it some place they thought was safe where it wouldn't do any harm and left it there for two decades. The ark was kind of out of sight, out of mind in that backwater town.

This is a bit surprising. It would be like us losing track of the Declaration of Independence and having it left in a museum in the town of Chunky, Mississippi, or Bakersfield. They just forgot about it. But now David has become king and has established his palace in Jerusalem. It has become the new capital of Israel. David wanted Jerusalem to be the center of life for his kingdom, and that meant it had to be the center of their spiritual life. David wanted to establish a center of worship of Israel's God in the capital, and crucial to that was bringing the ark, representing the presence of God, to the city. So according to verse 1 he brought 30,000 men with him to accompany the ark from its location now in Baalah, which was another name for Kiriath Jearim, to Jerusalem. That sent a message about how greatly he treasured the ark and how important this was.

DAVID EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF THE ARK

In this chapter David will see the power of the ark at work, both in a bad and a scary way. As is often the case with moving, bad things happened when they tried to move the ark. Verses 3-5 tell us, "They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart, with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord."

At first all was going well, but then disaster struck. Verses 6-7 tell the strange story. "When they came to the threshing floor at Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God." Excuse me? God struck him down and he died simply because he tried to steady the ark when the oxen stumbled?

This is one of those passages we wish we could hide from skeptics. They would jump all over this and gleefully say, "This is the God you want to worship? He's irrational, cruel and violent. He killed a man just for trying to keep a box from falling off a cart. We'd think a human who did something like that is criminally insane. That's your supposed God?"

This is more than a little difficult to understand. Some might suggest there is a natural explanation. Maybe something about the ark was virulently radioactive. You may not know this, but bananas are radioactive. A bunch of 10 bananas gives off as much radiation as a handful of uranium ore. I did a little reading about that and found out the Department of Defense at one time looked into building a banana bomb. They abandoned the project because they didn't find it appealing.

Maybe there was a big bunch of really strong bananas in the ark. Okay, probably not. But 1 Samuel 5:6 says when the Philistines captured the ark the Lord “afflicted them with tumors” and they started dying. Sounds like radiation, doesn’t it? Then in 1 Samuel 6:19 we saw that when the Philistines sent the ark back to Israel the people of Beth Shemosh looked inside and 70 of them died. Now Uzzah touches it and dies. Doesn’t that sort of sound like something that was so radioactive if you got too close it would kill you? Wouldn’t that be easier to swallow than a guy getting zapped by God simply because he reacted instinctively and tried to keep the ark from falling off the wagon?

But there is a problem with this idea. David was upset when Uzzah died, as you can imagine. In verses 9-10 we are told, “David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, ‘How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?’ He was not willing to take the ark of the Lord to be with him in the city of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed Edom, the Gittite.” Gittites, as I’m sure you know, were famous nuclear engineers, used to handling highly radioactive materials. Um, no. Well what did Obed Edom do that caused David to hand him this deadly item? Maybe David didn’t like this guy and figured he’d foist it on him without warning him. However, there is no indication of animosity toward Obed Edom so most likely David just warned Obed Edom to steer clear of the thing and left it with him. A strange thing then happened. Verse 11 says, “The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household.” We don’t know exactly how the Lord blessed them, but however he did it was quite apparent to all that something unusually good was going on with that guy and his family. The good stuff was attributed to the presence of the ark. That definitely was not the result of something radioactive. The point is that the ark somehow exerted a force that could be deadly on one hand, or profoundly beneficial on the other. It was only after things went so well for Obed Edom that David decided it was safe to finally bring the ark to Jerusalem.

We still don’t have a good explanation for the shocking demise of Uzzah. Maybe he just had a heart attack and the writer, being superstitious, thought it had something to do with the mysterious ark. Maybe this whole story is pure ancient superstition. Many think exactly that. But the Bible insists that this is history, not superstition. We either have to write it off as legend or we have to come up with some understanding of what happened here.

The ark was not a magically powerful thing. The premise of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was that the Nazis believed the ark was a mystical source of great power. They thought the power resided in the box itself, to be wielded and at the will of

whoever was in possession of the box. That was not true. The ark represented the presence of God. It is God who has the unlimited power that can either be a threat to humans or bring great blessing. Humans cannot harness that power to their will like the Nazis wanted to do in the movie. The ark merely is a representation of the fact that when we are in God's presence we are in the presence of power that is enormous, beyond our comprehension. It is not the thing that has the power, it is God. That gold plated box on its own was just a fancy box and nothing more.

IMPLICATIONS

Is this some weird, superstitious fairy tale? No, the Bible claims that it actually happened and that it has relevance for us today.

GOD IS POWERFUL

David knew God is powerful. When he faced Goliath he said in 1 Samuel 17:45, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel." David wrote in Psalm 62:11-12, "One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard, 'Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love.'" David is saying, "I know two things for absolute certain. First, power, all power, belongs to God, and second, God's love never fails."

What an interesting way to put that. Power belongs to God. He owns it. Every bit of power that exists anywhere in creation belongs to him. I have a Honda Accord sitting outside. It belongs to me. I decide how and who gets to use it. Power belongs to God. He decides how and who uses power. He controls it. He is the source of it and controls all of it.

How great is God's power? Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." God is so powerful he is able to do all that we can ask. No wait, he is able to do more than we can even imagine. In your wildest dreams of great power, God is stronger and has more power. No wait, not only is he able to do more than you can imagine, he is able to do immeasurably more than you can imagine. So imagine the greatest power you can. The difference between how great God's power is and that power you've imagined is so vast it can't even be measured!

In July we went to the Pensacola Air Show with Michael and Carissa. Most of you have seen the Blue Angels, but this is a cool setting because you watch them sitting on the beach. One of my favorite parts of their show is a point where 4 of the jets have performed a maneuver and are flying off behind the beach, and suddenly

while your attention is on them one of the solo jets pulls a sneak attack. It comes blasting by flying seemingly just feet above the pier in full afterburner. The sound of those powerful engines is visceral. You not only hear it assailing your ear drums, you feel it in your bones. It gives you a little taste of the massive power of those engines. And that overwhelming power is literally nothing compared to the unlimited, irresistible, overwhelming power of Almighty God. The might and incomprehensible vastness of the universe tells us that God's power, the might of the Creator of all, is massive to a degree that our minds can't even begin to understand.

David understood that. But we human beings forget. Israel saw God work powerful miracles in Egypt to get them free, but the first obstacle they hit they forgot all about God's power and were sure they were doomed. Israel's kings learned about the power of God, but time and time again when they were threatened by some invader instead of relying upon the might of God as he commanded them to do, they went looking for some ally to help defend them. The disciples of Jesus saw him do mind exploding miracles, but when they found themselves in a boat in the middle of a lake and a sudden violent squall threatened to send them to the bottom they freaked out. Sure, we've seen Jesus' divine power, but this is a *real live storm and we're about to sink! We're all going to die!*

As David was beginning his reign God gave him visible, unforgettable reminders that God is powerful. He has the power to instantly take away life, but also to bless life. We need to remember this great truth. Our problem is that somewhere inside our heads we have the sense that God is certainly powerful. But somehow we tend to live with a disconnection between that "belief" and the way we live. We don't see God doing miracles, zapping people or bringing them huge blessing in an obvious way, and so we tend to give assent to God's power, but in truth we don't see it as any factor for our lives. We want God to do a miracle, to use his power to solve a problem in a way that will blow us away. When he doesn't we get disappointed and gradually stop believing in God's power.

God has not promised that he will use his power to accomplish miracles that will leave us and everyone around us slack-jawed in amazement. But he has promised that his power will always be at work for our good. God is powerful. His power guarantees that living in his presence is the place where we experience blessing. David saw that happen with Obed Edom, and it confirmed for him that it would happen with him. It will happen with us.

Be careful how you define blessing. We tend to define it as I get everything I want in life. Blessing means having the “good life” of success, health and great abundance financially. Remember that God used physical pictures in the Old Testament to depict for us spiritual truth. Physical abundance was intended to point us to spiritual abundance. Here is how God blesses us today. It is with a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. Living in the presence of God is what brings about that blessing, guaranteed to us by God’s unstoppable power. That is a life we can have while living in his presence even if our circumstances are terrible.

Is physical abundance what we really want? We want those things because we believe they will give us a life filled with happiness, peace, satisfaction and love. What we *really* want is the life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and the rest. You just think you get it by having the “good life.” One of my many dreams that will never be fulfilled is that I would be a successful novelist. How cool would it be to see a book I’ve written on the top 10 best seller list? I’d like God to use his power to make that happen. I do have two books on the Amazon top seller list, though neither has quite cracked the top 10. Currently my best seller is at number 1,801,257. Got a ways to go. There is a writer you may be familiar with named Pat Conroy, who just died earlier this year. He had a number of best sellers, such as *The Prince of Tides* and *The Great Santini*, both of which were made into movies. Mr. Conroy said in his autobiographical book *My Losing Season*, that every time he wrote a book he ended up in a mental hospital. The poor man had no peace whatsoever. He was a tortured soul. His huge literary success did not bring him the life we all want. So which would you rather have, the circumstances or the life that is full of peace, joy and love no matter what the circumstance? That life only comes from living in the presence of Almighty God, trusting him with all that happens. That is the blessing that we want.

GOD IS HOLY

Raiders of the Lost Ark is all about what tends to drive us when it comes to God and his presence. The Nazis in the movie wanted one thing, power. They thought the ark would give it to them. That’s the same thing Israel wanted When they futilely took the ark into battle with them. And there was a temptation for David too. He wanted to unite the tribes of Israel after a protracted civil war. The temptation was to see the ark as a way of bringing everybody together. The goal was unifying the nation, the ark was the tool to make that happen.

The message of the incident with Uzzah, believe it or not, is that yes, God is infinitely powerful, but he is also holy and therefore he has the right to determine

what happens. Our job is to submit and obey and trust that God uses his power in the wisest and most loving possible way. How do you get that from this story? God had given instructions about the ark. It was to be carried by the Kohathites, a clan of Levites, a special priestly group. They were to insert special poles through the rings on the corner and carry it that way. It was not supposed to be transported on a cart. Instead of listening to what God said they should do, they did it the easy way. And Uzzah, for all his good intentions, was not a Levite, meaning he should not have been involved in moving the ark in the first place.

In 1 Chronicles 15:11 before attempting to move the ark again David called the leading priests to him. In verses 12-13 he said, “You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way.”

Numbers 4 gives God’s instructions for how Israel was to move the tabernacle and especially the most sacred items in it, including the ark. Verse 15 says “After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then are the Kohathites to come and do the carrying. **But they must not touch the holy things or they will die.**” The message is quite clear. If you touch the ark, you die.

What is the point of all this? It is saying that God is holy, absolutely pure. He cannot tolerate anything that is not absolute good, for if he did then he would be condoning evil. A problem we have is we don’t think evil is all that bad. Evil is evil, meaning it is full of destruction and misery. Even the tiniest bit of it wreaks enormous harm on God’s creation. If you had a choice between a little bit of Ebola virus or a little bit of aggressive cancer on the one hand, or a tiny bit of evil on the other, take the disease. As awful as it may be, in the end it is less destructive than evil. Unholy humans were to respect God’s holiness and not foul it. The rules said we are to recognize the holiness of God and never approach him with a cavalier attitude. Approach him with reverence and respect as evidenced by respecting his rules. This is such a big deal the consequence for violating those instructions was death. God was telling Israel that they needed to see God as holy, as pure, unadulterated good, a white hot goodness that should be treated with huge respect. Israel ignored all of God’s instructions, Uzzah never should have been in that place to begin with, the ark should never have been on a cart, and he most decidedly

should not have reached out and touched the ark. The approach of David, Israel and Uzzah was a denial of God's holiness.

But how is this fair to poor Uzzah, who was just trying to do some good? He just reacted instinctively. How was it fair for him to die to make God's point? We all believe the punishment should fit the crime, and this doesn't fit. God warned Adam and Eve the day they chose their own way over his they would die. That choice is the choice for evil and it is more horrifying and destructive than we can even imagine. Even the tiniest choice to go our way rather than God's brings devastating evil into play, so God said the penalty is death. Adam and Eve died spiritually the day they made that choice, but the penalty including dying physically too. Eventually they did die physically, and every moment between the day they chose evil and the day they died was nothing but pure grace. God granted them an extension that they did not deserve.

That same is true of every one of us. From the moment we first chose our own way over God's, we have been living on nothing but God's grace to us. We deserved at that moment to die. The truth is that all of us had that moment when we were so young we can't even remember it. Every day we have had since then has been grace. Every day that Uzzah lived until that fateful day at Nakon was nothing but pure grace. When he died it was justice. He received that day what every single one of us deserves every day of our lives.

After this shocking incident everyone, beginning with David, understood that God is holy and not to be approached casually. Everyone could see that a holy God will not be used for our selfish purposes. Not so that Israel can win a battle or so that David can get everybody to follow him. The essence of true religion is not to use God for our purposes, but to worship him and let him use us for his purposes.

Scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote in his commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel, "When people are no longer awed, respectful and fearful of God's holiness, the community is put at risk." In other words, Uzzah's experience shouts to us when we don't have awe of God's holiness it puts us and others in serious danger. So how do we respond to this lesson?

We must refuse to try to use God for our purposes.

God is holy, and he will not be used. Superstition has always been about trying to manipulate whatever spiritual powers there are for our personal benefit. We must reject that. But you might object that we don't do that. Consider the health and wealth gospel. What is at the bottom of it? It is the desire to have a particular

lifestyle of success, abundance and health. And it is all about how we get God to bring that about. That is using God for our personal benefit, not worshipping a holy God.

That's easy to see, but there's a more subtle version of that we are all vulnerable to. What happens when something really difficult or bad happens to us? We tend to say to God, "Why would you let this happen?" We ask him to fix it, and if he doesn't do so according to our timetable we decide perhaps we cannot trust him. What is really going on there? We are insisting that God serve us! We are not treating him as holy.

If we are truly regarding God as holy, we accept that our role is to reflect his character and glorify him. If he chooses to have us do that in the middle of a devastating storm, then that means accepting his will, trusting him, and living for his purpose to the very best of our ability.

We have a picture of our little granddaughter, Ella, that is heartbreaking. She is crying, tears streaming down her face, her expression one of misery and pain. What awful thing could have happened to her that caused such heartbreak? When Anna texted us the picture we asked right away what happened to her. What happened was that she had grabbed a dog treat out of Banjo's mouth, but her Mommy took it away from her and gave it back to Banjo. She was distraught because she was not being allowed to have that which she most wanted in the world, a used dog treat. And she was mad because her own loving mother was being so cruel as to take it from her. Mommy was being so unkind. Life was hardly worth living. In that moment Ella was not treating her mother as holy. She was not believing that her mother would only do what is good for her. We do the same with God. We get focused on the little dog treats we want and if God doesn't let us have them we get mad and treat him as though he is not holy.

We must regard obeying God as a matter of utmost urgency.

What matters most? If I'm Uzzah, the most important thing to me would be saying, "Hold on. I seem to recall that we're not doing this the way God said. I don't know about the rest of you, but I want no part of moving the ark in whatever way seems most expedient or "modern." I know that it seems way easier to put the thing on a cart than some guys holding poles on their shoulders and toting it around. Yes, that's old-fashioned and inconvenient, but that's the right way to do it."

That's what it's going to mean for us as well. Whatever our society says is irrelevant. What matters to me is whatever God says I should do. We can

acknowledge the holiness of God and express our reverence for him most by committing to do what he says in everything. For Ella to treat her mommy as holy would be to tell her that if mommy wanted her to give the dog treat back and not have a dog treat then that was all right with her.

We must live with awe of God.

Why do people tell spooky stories around campfires? Why do we revel in the story of the man with the golden arm? Why do we get fascinated by stories of ghost ships like the Ourang Medan? Why are we easily obsessed with stories of the Bermuda Triangle? Because we like the spooky feeling that comes from such tales. We sense there is some great power out there and we are both a little frightened by it and thrilled by it. In fact we were created to connect to it and live in awe of it. That great power is the holiness of God.

Every moment of life is a gift from him, for we deserve death. We are so far from him, yet he reaches down to us. He is worthy of our total trust, for his thoughts of us are always for our good, he loves us, and he is worthy of not only our obedience but our love and our utmost praise. God's holiness means he is absolute good, and that is something worthy of love, for the only alternative is evil. Loving God means loving what is good. It is loving what is healthy and joyful.

Last December we went to the Safari Park, the place formerly known as the Wild Animal Park. It was cold and so a little disappointing because the animals were mostly sheltering out of sight. But at the lion enclosure we were able to get right up next to a lion. The thing was lying right up against the thick plexiglass that separated him from a veritable feast of potential prey in the form of paying customers. There was a great demand for people to be able to get right up next to the glass, to see this magnificent creature up close. But no one seemed interested in climbing into that enclosure and petting the lion. That beast was enormously attractive to us humans, but also the object of very wary respect. That is a bit like our God. He is much better, for the animal is indifferent to us, while God loves us. But God is far more powerful, far more appealing and far more worthy of respect than any animal. Let's regard him with great reverence. Let's remember that when great men like Isaiah and the apostle John saw a glimpse of God's glory and majesty they feared for their own existence. But remember that God forgave their unholiness and loved them. He does the same for us.

When Isaiah was confronted with the holiness of God he feared for his own existence, saying, "I am a man of unclean lips." He knew he was unholy, evil in the presence of white hot blazing holiness. But in the scene God cauterize do his

unclean lips. In Christ God has cauterize do our uncleanness and according the book of Hebrews now wants us to draw near to him in confidence. As we do so let's live with awe and reverence at his majestic holiness.