

THE HOLY STUMPS

Isaiah 6:1-13

Key verse 6:13

„And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.“

We thank the Lord for giving us a beneficial master class on leadership this weekend. Through factual studies on the Gospels, Acts and Ephesians, we were able to be edified and equipped with the Word of God. The contributions on philosophy and church history also taught us clearly that the philosophies of this world are always changing and do not last. But the Word of our God endures forever. As we conclude our master class, we want to look at the Word of God from Isaiah chapter 6 during this service. God called Isaiah to be His servant and cleansed his unclean lips and appointed him as a messenger of God to His people. God gave Isaiah his vision of the remnant and the holy stumps. May God bless us in this hour to accept God's calling grace and our identity as holy stumps, and like Isaiah, minister to our generation with the Word of God that abides forever.

1. The Lord sat on His throne (1-7)

Let's look at verse 1: " 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." King Uzziah reigned in Judah from 787 to 735 BC. Initially, Uzziah was humble and God-fearing because he listened to his shepherd. Israel prospered economically, militarily and politically. But Uzziah became haughty and wanted to offer the sacrifice in the temple himself, which was reserved for the priests. As a result, he was punished by God with leprosy. As long as Uzziah lived, peace and prosper-

ity reigned in Judah. But his death now seemed to herald doom.

Isaiah, in chapters 1 through 5, paints a picture of how internally corrupt the people were. Isaiah 1:4 says, "Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord ; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him." They enjoyed a high standard of living, but they had forsaken God in their hearts. Selfish, irresponsible men (5:22), proud women fixated on their appearance (3:16), and leaders focused only on personal gain (3:14). God's heart was broken. God had carefully cared for them like a vineyard keeper, but instead of good fruit, they produced bad fruit.

Isaiah could have despaired over the condition of his people in such an ungodly time. But he went to the temple of God. He longed for God's presence. In the temple, he had an apparition that changed his life. Let's read verse 1 again, "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." Isaiah saw the glory of God. Isaiah saw God in the form of a man sitting on a high and lofty throne. The hem of his robe filled the temple. Isaiah recognized: God is the almighty and sovereign ruler. God is above all, and all things He holds in His hand. He is the King of kings over the whole world.

Let's look at verse 2: "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." Isaiah describes the environment that displayed the glory of God. Yet even the seraphim had to cover their beautiful faces before the holy God. Let's look at verse 3: "And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." God is holy. Holiness is the most important attribute of God. Fallen people long in their deepest hearts for the holiness of God. The seraphim proclaimed that all the lands are full of God's glory.

Until now, Isaiah had thought that the whole world was crazy. When we read the latest news, we think that the world is out of joint. Corona pandemic without end. Strife between nations. Wars, crises, terror, natural disasters. But God opened Isaiah's spiritual eyes in the temple. So he realized that the whole world is full of the glory of God. When we look at the world from God's point of view, this is really true. During our master class this weekend, we were allowed to dive into the spiritual world of God's word through the factual studies and lectures. Instead of being strengthened and encouraged by bad news on the smartphone, we were strengthened and encouraged by the good news of the Word of God. In the spiritual world, we also see the gracious work of God in young people. God is working through His Word and He is blessing our prayers for 10,000 one-on-one Bible study teams to raise up an Abraham, a Sarah and 12 disciples of Jesus at each campus.

As we read the book of Isaiah, there was chaos and ungodliness in many countries at that time. Because of their unrighteousness, the people deserved God's wrath and God's judgment. But what were the seraphim shouting in the holy temple of God? "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Germany is also full of the glory of God. We deserved God's wrath because of the sin from two world wars. But there were the people who prayed, and so God gave us the peaceful reunification to use us as a royal priesthood

for the world mission. Germany is also full of God's glory because Korean missionaries came to Germany and prayed for the young people of this country with a shepherd's heart and invited them to study the Bible. Germany is full of God's glory because a house church has selflessly devoted itself to making disciples through Bible study and life fellowship for 40 years, so that both local people and next-generation missionaries could grow up to be the shepherds, Bible teachers and spiritual leaders.

For the past year, we have been experiencing how a small invisible virus has continued to spread, causing a worldwide pandemic. So many people fell ill, many died. No place in the world can be safe from this virus. Yet we may know that God has everything under control. All countries are full of His glory even today. He uses even a pandemic to reveal His glory in all lands. We need not be in fear. Just as Isaiah once admonished King Ahaz (7:9b), "If you do not believe, you will not abide," we too may put our trust in God and move on to accomplish His saving work in this generation. God will do His work and bring about spiritual revival in Europe through one-on-one Bible study. God will even establish three bases for the Muslim mission through us. All the lands are full of His glory!

What was the immediate result of Isaiah's encounter with the holy and almighty God when the thresholds shook and the house became full of smoke? Isaiah was deeply terrified and filled with holy fear of God. Let's look at verse 5: "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." In the light of God's holiness, Isaiah realized what a terrible sinner he was. He was frightened because of the uncleanness of his lips, over which had often come grumbling, doubting, even unbelieving words. When Isaiah came to God with a repentant heart, God sent one of the seraphim to him. Consider verses 6 and 7: "Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7With it he

touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." A person's lips are very sensitive. Touching them with a red-hot coal must have been very painful, perhaps even leaving a permanent burn. It was a painful penance. But through it, his sin was atoned for and his guilt removed from him. God cleansed his lips to no longer speak unbelieving words, but to speak believing words of God so that he could bring God's message to his people.

We were able to experience God's mighty work among our five baptized last year. At first, some said they were not ready to be baptized. One even thought to leave the church as soon as possible after graduating from high school. But through intensive Bible study and detailed writing of their testimonies, the living Word of God worked powerfully in their hearts. They were allowed to come to Jesus with their concerns, repent, and experience that God cleansed their unclean lips and allowed them to testify to their new life in Christ through baptism. Now they testify the benefits of God in their lives with their lips, participate in the worship team and orchestra, set up the prayer altar in their schools, prepared heart-moving lectures on the inductive Bible study method, grow into the proficient Bible teachers through Global Leadership Empowerment Forum and Bible study question writing (QMW) workshop. God will use them precisely for their respective schools and in His time for Germany, Europe and as far as Cartagena, Cambodia and North Korea.

2. God sent Isaiah (8-10)

Let's look at verse 8: "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!" After Isaiah had received forgiveness of sins by the grace of God, and his unclean lips had been burned by the hot coals of repentance, he heard the call of God, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" This call reflects God's broken heart for His people. God's heart was broken because of the unbelief and rebel-

lion of His people. Because of their sins, they had to experience God's judgment. But out of His broken shepherd heart, God was looking for a person whom He would send to them and who would bring God's message to them.

How did Isaiah respond to God's calling? Isaiah did not hesitate, but immediately answered, "Here am I, send me!" Isaiah was ready to accept God's task and let God send him. He could accept God's calling because he had met God personally and experienced His forgiving grace. He could do it because he understood God's heart for His sinful people. He was willing to obey God's calling no matter when and no matter where God wanted to send him. God sent Isaiah from a broken shepherd's heart to His people to preach the message of judgment to them. He was to exhort them again and again to turn back to God and put their trust not in worldly or military power, but in the Lord. He was to proclaim God's judgment on sinners and at the same time God's grace for the future work of salvation and the restoration of Jerusalem. His message went so far as to encompass the time of the return from Babylonian captivity, the coming of Jesus the Messiah, and the future Kingdom of God's peace. Thus, God wanted to use him as His messenger in the history of God's salvation.

Let us look at verses 9 and 10: "He said, "Go and tell this people: "'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." God made no false promises to Isaiah about living with the calling. He would not achieve great success or receive human recognition. Rather, God sent Isaiah to a people who would not hear and would not see and would not understand. They were people who had deliberately hardened their hearts because they would not convert and recover.

Although Isaiah preached to them for about 40 years, they would continue to close their hearts to the Word of God. His life with the calling would be hard. Some kings, like Hezekiah, sought his help. But others persecuted him. It is said that King Manasseh had Isaiah cut into two pieces after he took refuge in a hollow tree trunk. Despite all the sufferings and persecutions, Isaiah fulfilled God's calling to the end. He held fast to his calling, no matter what the cost.

3. The holy stumps (11-13)

It was not easy for Isaiah to preach to such hardened people. Let's look at verses 11 and 12: "Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken." Isaiah was ready to fulfill God's task, but he wanted to have some timetable, indeed to see some concrete fruit. God's response, however, was first the message of judgment. God's judgment would come upon His hardened people, so that the people would be led far away, referring to the Babylonian captivity. God's judgment would even be repeated until only a small remnant of the people would remain, less than 10%. But then God testified to His hope that this small remnant would be like the stump of a tree that strikes out once again.

Let's look at verse 13: "And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land." When a tree is cut down, only a root stump remains in the earth. It looks like it is the end. But this is not true. For the stump can sprout again - as with an oak or lime tree - and produce new shoots and fruit. God is using the stumps to once again spiritually awaken our country and this continent and restore it as a shepherding nation and a missionary-sending continent for world mission.

At present we are experiencing that in Germany and Europe many Christians, even many churches, are being attacked and brought down by the false teachings of the spirit of the age. Young people have heard various ideologies and doctrines planted in their hearts consciously or unconsciously from their school days, such as the doctrine of evolution, the doctrine of gender, humanism and relativism. Even Christian communities have already compromised on such teachings. Some say that God could also have created the world through evolution. Others claim that Jesus was not conceived through Mary's virgin birth. Finally, Bible-believing pastors are defamed and deposed for teaching the biblical view of man, that God instituted marriage between a man and a woman. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived and seduced by the lies and half-truths of the devil. In the last century, Germany had to bitterly experience how a cruel dictator seduced the people by even pretending to be a Christian who would read the Bible after all. But how deceptive this pretense was, so that in the end millions of Jews were cruelly murdered and countless people had to give their lives in a devastating world war. In an interview of the testified Pastor Uwe Holmer, how he as a youth first fell for the activities of the Hitler Youth, but then more and more saw through the demonic references of this system and finally with the help of his believing mother was saved from the further seduction of the Nazi system. Thus, Pastor Holmer experienced God's help and became a "holy stump" by influentially serving the work of God even under the communist GDR regime, despite numerous disadvantages for himself and his family. Despite adverse conditions, he also helped his ten children spiritually. His three sons followed the example of his faith and also became pastors. When, after the political changes, the former chairman of the Council of State, Erich Honecker, could no longer find accommodation, Holmer, in practicing Christian charity, granted him and his wife asylum, despite numerous hostilities, and took them both into his own home.

We are greatly encouraged that there are such holy stumps in Germany as Pastor Uwe Holmer, Pastor Dr. Theo Lehmann, Pastor Olaf Latzel and Pastor Dr. Peter Chang. By God's grace, there are also such heroes of faith among our shepherds and among the Next Generation who have remained like holy stumps, standing up for God and for the truth of God's Word without compromise and serving as Bible teachers to the young people. Sh. Peter Ryu, M. Pauline Chang, Sh. Warmherz Elsholz, Sh. Christoph Tornau, M. Dr. Petrus Chang served us during the Master Course on Leadership with profound and edifying factual studies from the Gospels, Acts and Ephesians. M. Maria Chang, Sh. Peter Schweitzer and Sh. Christoph gave their whole hearts to edify us through their lectures on philosophy and church history. Through them I was able to learn how philosophy has always adapted to the spirit of the times and changed its opinions and views, while the Word of God remains unchanging and Jesus is THE way and THE truth and THE life for all eternity.

The philosophies of the world come and go. The powerful of this world also come and go. But the word of God abides forever. The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." What a privilege to be God's remnant and God's holy stumps for this generation! We have God's living word that does not change according to the spirit of the age, but abides forever! Isaiah preached to his people, saying (Isaiah 40:9-10), "You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!' See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him." With these words Isaiah spoke to the remnant of Israel, who at the time of the second coming of the Messiah will cry out the name of the Lord Jesus. Let us give thanks to God who calls us to proclaim the Word of God as holy

stumps of our generation. We may be God's messengers of joy, testifying to the people, "God is the LORD!" You holy stumps of the Gideon, Josiah, and Ezekiel teams, you shepherds and missionaries: lift your voice with power. Lift them up and do not be afraid! In Isaiah 45:23,24 the LORD God says: "By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. 24 They will say of me, 'In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.' " All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame."

Let us give thanks to God who has called us for this last time to be His holy stumps and remnant who proclaim the Word of God as God's Word that abides forever. The spiritual walls in Germany and Europe have been broken by humanism and relativism. The world laughs at Europe, which has even deleted the name of God from its constitution and blasphemed the Most High, even declaring Him dead and superfluous. Humanly speaking, we find no hope for this continent. But let us give thanks to God, who reveals his hope to us through his word today. Let us read together verse 13: "And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

For this year, God has given us His word from Nehemiah 2:17 and Isaiah 6:13. Nehemiah was God's holy stump who mobilized his people to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem and, together with the priest Ezra, returned the Word of God to his people. Thus, God's people could return to the Bible, obey God's Word again, and be restored as royal priesthood. May God use us as holy stumps who with the hope of God serve the young people through one-on-one Bible study teams, through life fellowship and through making disciples with the Word of God, so that Germany and Europe are spiritually awakened and used as a shepherd nation and as a missionary sending continent for the world mission.

Today we have come to know that God is the sovereign and almighty ruler. All the lands are full of His glory. God once called Isaiah. God is calling you and me today. All who purify their unclean lips through the blood of Jesus in repentance, God uses as his remnant and as holy stumps for the building of his kingdom. Let us thank God for all the lecturers who served us with the Word of God during this Master Course; moreover, for God's servant, missionaries and shepherds. God use us as holy stumps through whose obedience the Word of God comes to the young people in all 1,700 universities. Let us be holy stumps through which God spiritually reawakens Germany and Europe and uses it as a shepherd nation and as a missionary-sending continent for world mission.

Let us read the leading verse 13: "And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."