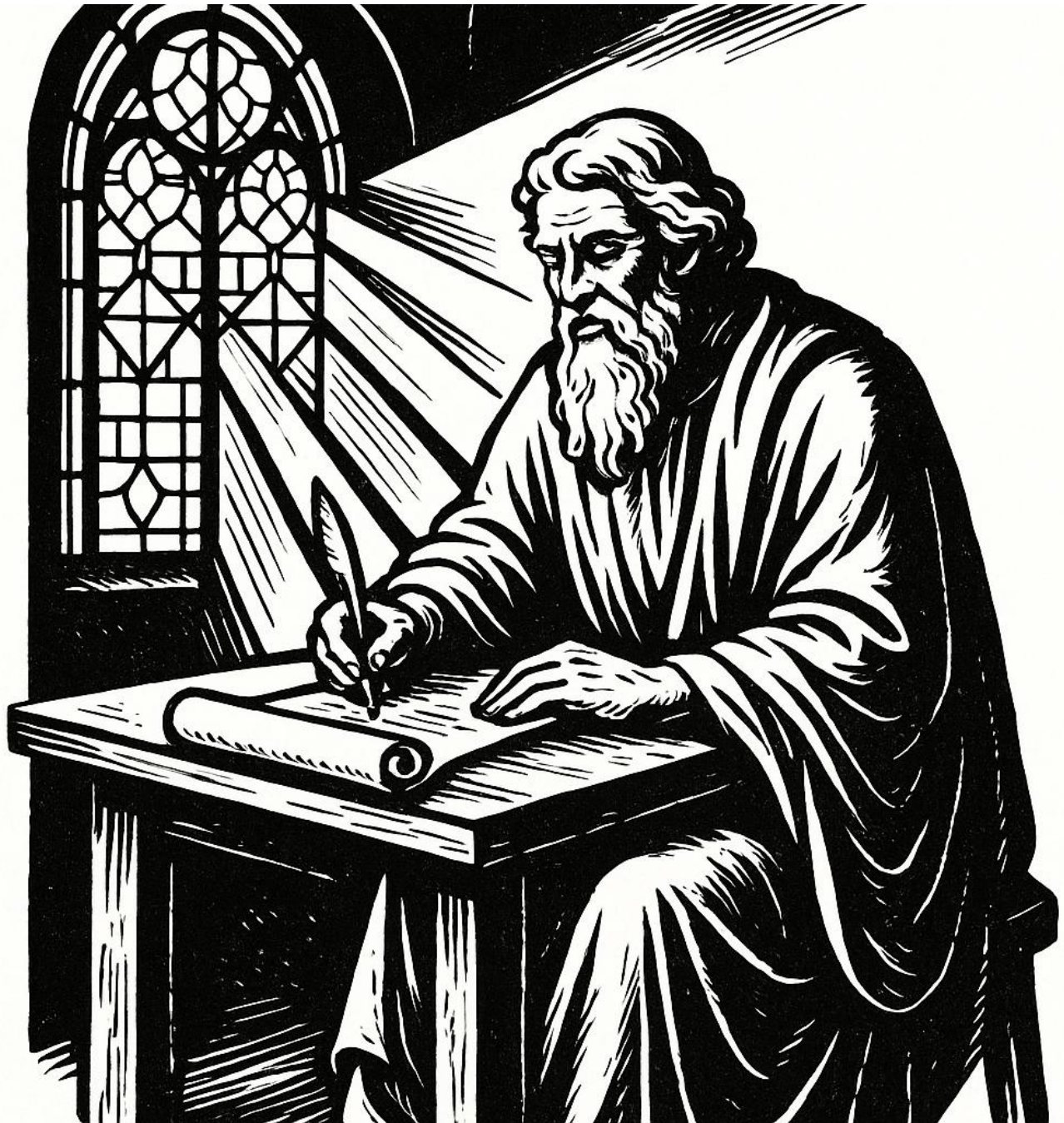


THE FIFTH EVANGELIST:

Ten Gospel Windows in Isaiah

Lesson 2 – Transforming Grace



Calvary Lutheran Church
Dallas, TX
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THE FIFTH EVANGELIST:

Ten Gospel Windows in Isaiah

“Isaiah... foretold so many things about Christ and the Church that one would think he was composing a history of what had already happened rather than predicting events to come.” — Augustine

Isaiah is unlike any other Old Testament prophet. He preaches judgment with fearless clarity, yet in almost the same breath unveils Gospel promises so vivid that the early Church called him **“The Fifth Evangelist.”** Long before Matthew or Mark ever wrote their accounts of Christ, Isaiah was already painting Him before our eyes: the Child born of a virgin, the Light shining in deep darkness, the Branch rising from Jesse’s stump, the Servant who would suffer for sin, the Anointed One proclaiming good news, and the God who will create a new heavens and a new earth.

The New Testament writers treat Isaiah not as background noise but as a central voice. They quote him at Jesus’ birth, ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and mission to the nations. In some ways, the Gospels feel like Isaiah in narrative form. When you study Isaiah, you are listening to the Gospel decades—centuries—before Bethlehem.

But Isaiah never proclaims the Gospel in a vacuum. Each of his Gospel promises emerges from the debris of judgment. First comes the mirror: God exposes false worship, pride, self-reliance, idolatry, and injustice. Only then comes the window: God’s astonishing grace, spoken into the very places where human efforts collapse.

This class will honor that rhythm. Each week we will encounter:

- **The Mirror — the Law’s honest diagnosis**
- **The Window — a Gospel gem, unique in its beauty**
- **The Fulfillment — how Christ completes Isaiah’s vision**
- **The Life — how this grace speaks into our world today**

We will explore **ten major Gospel windows**—ten “facets” of Isaiah’s proclamation of Christ. These ten themes form the backbone of our ten-week journey:

1. Cleansing Grace — Isaiah 1
2. Transforming Grace — Isaiah 6
3. God-With-Us Grace — Isaiah 7 & 9
4. Re-Creating Grace — Isaiah 11
5. Victorious Grace — Isaiah 25
6. Restorative Grace — Isaiah 35
7. Tender Grace — Isaiah 40
8. Missionary Grace — Isaiah 42 & 49
9. Substitutionary Grace — Isaiah 52–53
10. Transformational/New-Creation Grace — Isaiah 61 & 65

The goal is not simply to understand Isaiah’s book. It is to let Isaiah preach to us—to see how each Gospel promise in Isaiah points us to Christ and strengthens our faith today. To learn the rhythm of Law and Gospel in prophetic literature. And to deepen our own devotional life through the ancient and beautiful practice of the **Collect**—a prayer form that gathers God’s promises into a single, structured petition.

Welcome to **The Fifth Evangelist**.
Let Isaiah show you Christ.

LESSON TWO — TRANSFORMING GRACE

Isaiah 5 & 6

“Your guilt is taken away; your sin atoned for.”

OPENING DEVOTION & ORIENTATION

2. MIRROR — The Law Section

Isaiah 5 – The Vineyard Song & The Six Woes

Read the passage aloud (one reader or multiple voices).

Group Prompt:

Isaiah pictures Judah as God’s carefully planted vineyard.
What did God expect from His people—and what actually grew?
Write 1–2 words or phrases:

Expected: _____

Found: _____

Observation:

- What did God provide for His vineyard? (vv. 1–2)?

- What did God look for, and what did He find instead? (vv. 2, 7)?

- How many “woes” does Isaiah speak, and what kinds of sins do they address? (vv. 8–23)?

- What specific judgments does God announce because of these woes? (vv. 9-10, 13–17, 24–30)?

Comprehension:

A. Patterns of Sin

- Isaiah’s six woes cluster (in a chiasm) into three patterns of sin.

Write one example from the text under each category:

- Injustice (using power to take): _____
- Indulgence (using freedom to drift): _____
- Inversion (using words to redefine good and evil): _____

Which of these three patterns seems to be the “root” that feeds the others in Isaiah 5? Why?

B. Judah’s World and Our World

- Which pattern of sin do you see most clearly in our culture? Circle one:

Injustice – Indulgence – Inversion

Then write a brief sentence explaining your choice:

- Isaiah’s warning was not only about individual sins but about a culture drifting from God. Where do you see parallels between Judah’s spiritual worldview and the modern world’s worldview?

C. Personal Reflection (silent – not for group sharing!)

- Which pattern of sin do you most struggle with—taking, drifting, or redefining? (You don’t need to write details. A simple checkmark is enough.)

➤ Injustice:

➤ Indulgence:

➤ Inversion:

- What does Isaiah 5 reveal about the human heart apart from God’s cleansing?

D. God’s Judgment – Sober and Serious

- List 2–3 images of God’s judgment in Isaiah 5 that strike you.

- How do these images show that God takes sin seriously—not because He delights in judgment, but because sin destroys what He planted?

- Isaiah warns Judah that ignoring God’s Word leads to darkness, hunger, exile, and decay. Where do you see the *spiritual* equivalents of these consequences in the world today?

- How does the severity of judgment in Isaiah 5 prepare us to appreciate the grace of Isaiah 6?

Summary:
 Isaiah 5 sings a lament over God’s vineyard. Though God planted His people with care, they produced only bitter fruit—violence, greed, arrogance, moral distortion, and injustice. The six woes expose every layer of Judah’s life: their homes, leadership, culture, and hearts. God’s judgment is not sudden; it is the sober consequence of a people pulling away from Him. This is the mirror. Isaiah reveals the depth of the problem—**not to drive us to despair, but to prepare us for the cleansing grace of chapter 6.**

3. WINDOW — The Gospel Section

Isaiah 6:1–8 — “Your guilt is taken away; your sin atoned for.”

Read the Gospel portion twice:

- **First reading:** Simply picture what Isaiah saw.
- **Second reading:** Listen for what *God* does.

Group Exercise: “Before the Coal / After the Coal”

Instructions: Read Isaiah 6:1–8 again as a group.

In each column, **list 3–4 details from the text** that describe Isaiah’s condition **before** the coal touches his lips and **after** the coal touches his lips. Do **not** interpret yet—just list what Isaiah *says* or *experiences*.

Before the Coal (vv. 1–5)	After the Coal (vv. 6–8)
_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

Follow-Up Questions (Still in Groups)

1. What changes most dramatically between the two columns?

2. How does God move Isaiah from fear to readiness?

3. What does this cleansing teach us about how God deals with sinners?

Observation:

- What fills the temple in Isaiah’s vision (v. 1)?

- What do the seraphim proclaim about God (v. 3) and what action does the seraph take (vv. 6–7)?

- What does Isaiah confess about himself (v. 5)?

- What change do you see in Isaiah between vv. 5 and 8?

Comprehension:

A. Understanding the Gospel Scene

- What does Isaiah’s reaction (“Woe to me...”) reveal about what God’s holiness does to human self-confidence?

- Why is it significant that the coal comes from the *altar*—not from Isaiah himself?

- How does the seraph touching Isaiah’s lips show both judgment and mercy at the same time?

- The angel announces, “Your guilt is taken away; your sin atoned for.” Why is this more than comfort—why is it a complete reversal of Isaiah 5?

- Isaiah’s cleansing comes before his calling. Why must grace come before service?

- In what ways does Isaiah’s “Here am I. Send me.” reflect a transformed heart rather than a pressured obligation?

B. Grace at Work in Us

- Isaiah confessed honestly and immediately before the Lord. Where do you see the need for that same honesty in your own walk of faith? (You do not need to write details.)

- God’s grace restored Isaiah’s confidence and purpose. Where in your life do you most need that same restoration?

- Isaiah’s calling flowed from cleansing. What might “Here am I—send me” look like in one ordinary area of your life this week?

Summary:

Isaiah enters the temple overwhelmed, guilty, and undone — unable to stand before God’s holiness. Yet God does not destroy him. God cleanses him. The coal from the altar brings atonement where Isaiah had only despair. And the man who once cried “Woe to me!” now says, “Here am I; send me.” **This is Transforming Grace — the holy God cleansing sinners and calling them into His service.**

Moments with the Text:

1. Holy, holy, holy:
2. Woe to me!:
3. Unclean lips:
4. A coal from the altar:
5. Your guilt is take away... your sin atoned for:
6. Here am I; send me:

4. FULFILLMENT — Christ Connection

Where Isaiah’s Vision Meets Its Yes in Christ

Read NT passages:

- **John 12:41** — Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory.
- **Mark 1:40–42** — Jesus touches and cleanses the unclean.
- **1 Peter 2:9–10** — A people called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Discussion:

- How does the New Testament reveal that Isaiah saw Christ? (John 12:41)

- The seraph touches Isaiah’s lips with fire. In the Gospels, who does Jesus touch—the result?

- How does Jesus cleanse sinners fully and personally, not symbolically?

- Isaiah’s cleansing came from the altar. What functions as the “altar” for our cleansing?

- **“Your guilt is taken away; your sin atoned for.”** Where do Christians hear this in the New Testament—spoken directly to them?

- Isaiah is cleansed, then sent. How does the Gospel motivate our calling and courage to serve?

Confessional Anchors:

- * *“For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.”* **SC**
- * *“...through the Word and Sacraments... the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God...”* **AC V**
- * *“Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation...”*
LC

5. APPLICATION & PRAYER — Life & Devotion

Real Lives Before a Holy God Who Cleanses and Calls

Group Activity: “Before the Coal / After the Coal”

Assign each group one scenario. Each group should identify:

- **Before the Coal (Mirror):**
Where is the “Woe is me” moment? What is broken, unclean, or fearful in this situation?
- **After the Coal (Window):**
What might God be doing to cleanse, restore, and send in this situation?
Choose one of the following:

Scenario A — The Exhausted Servant

A long-time church volunteer feels empty, unnoticed, and guilty for resenting the work she used to love.

Before the Coal: _____

After the Coal: _____

Scenario B — The Guilty Parent

A father sees a pattern of anger in himself. He fears he has harmed his children emotionally and spiritually.

Before the Coal: _____

After the Coal: _____

Scenario C — The Complacent Congregation

A church is active and busy, but avoids speaking honestly about repentance or spiritual drift.

Before the Coal: _____

After the Coal: _____

Scenario D — The Hesitant Believer

A Christian senses a calling to serve but feels unworthy because of past failures.

Before the Coal: _____

After the Coal: _____

Whole-Class Reflection Questions

1. Which of the above scenarios touches closest to home and why?

2. Isaiah’s cleansing comes before his calling. Why must grace always come before service?

3. Why is it significant that the coal comes from the *altar*—not from Isaiah?

6. MUSIC THAT ECHOES ISAIAH'S VISION

“Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” — Isaiah 6:7

These pieces echo the movement of Isaiah 6: **holiness** → **confession** → **cleansing** → **sending**.
Use them as a devotional guide this week—listen for the awe, the mercy, and the commission.

♪ **Bach: “Sanctus” (from the Mass in B Minor, BWV 232)**

The sound of heaven’s holiness

Bach sets “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth” with soaring, layered voices.

It embodies Isaiah’s moment before the throne—a holiness that overwhelms and yet draws near.

“Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus (Holy, holy, holy)
Dominus Deus Sabaoth. (Lord God of Hosts.)
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria eius.” (Heaven and earth are full of His glory.)

♪ **Luther: “Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old”**

The Reformation’s sung paraphrase of Isaiah 6

Luther retells Isaiah’s vision as a liturgical hymn.

For centuries this piece accompanied the Sanctus in Lutheran worship.

“Isaiah, mighty seer in days of old,
The Lord of all in spirit did behold...
The seraphim with sixfold wings appeared,
On high they sang with voices loud and clear.”

♪ **Getty / Townend: “O Church, Arise”**

Grace that sends

Isaiah’s “Here am I. Send me.” is echoed in a modern call to serve, grounded not in guilt but in grace.

“Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
But to rage against the captor...
So Spirit, come—put strength in every stride.”

♪ **Keith Green: “Make My Life a Prayer to You”**

The heart of one who has been cleansed

Green’s lyrics embody the prophet’s transformed response—the desire to serve freely and purely after forgiveness.

“Make my life a prayer to You,
I want to do what You want me to...
I want to thank You now for being patient with me.”

Reflection Prompt

As you listen or read this week, reflect on one question:

Where is God moving me from confession... to cleansing... to calling?

Consider writing down:

- one moment this week where God exposed something in you (Isaiah 5),
- one moment where His grace lifted that weight (Isaiah 6:7),
- one place where He is nudging you to say, “Here am I. Send me.”

CLOSING PRAYER (Collect Style)

Collect for Cleansing Grace:

Last week you learned the structure of a traditional collect:

1. **Address** — to whom we pray
2. **Basis / Relative Clause** — who God is or what He has promised
3. **Petition** — what we ask
4. **Purpose / Result** — why we ask it
5. **Conclusion** — through Christ our Lord, etc.

This week you will **complete** a collect based on Isaiah 6.

Write Your Own “Address” to God

(Examples: “Holy God,” “Lord of glory,” “God of mercy,” etc.)

Address: _____

Collect for Transforming Grace

(with the Address left for you to fill in)

_____,
who revealed Your holiness to Isaiah and cleansed him by Your gracious touch,
cleanse our lips and hearts by Your Word and Spirit
so that we may serve You gladly and speak Your truth with humility,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Which Address Fits Best for Isaiah 6 — and Why?

Choose one and write 1–2 sentences explaining why it fits this moment in Isaiah:

- **Holy God**
- **Lord of Hosts**
- **God of Mercy**
- **God who cleanses**
- **Lord of the altar**

My choice: _____

Why: _____

WRAP-UP

Key Points:

- **Isaiah 5 holds up the mirror:** a carefully planted vineyard producing only bitter fruit—an honest diagnosis of Judah’s injustice, indulgence, and moral inversion.
- **God’s judgment is real:** the consequences Isaiah announces (desolation, exile, darkness) show that sin erodes what God planted.
- **Isaiah 6 opens a window to grace:** the Holy God confronts Isaiah—not to destroy him, but to cleanse him.
- **Cleansing precedes calling:** “Your guilt is taken away; your sin atoned for” comes before “Here am I; send me.”
- **God still works this rhythm today:** His holiness humbles us, His forgiveness restores us, and His grace equips us for service.

WORK AT HOME

Preparing for Week 3: God-With-Us Grace (Isaiah 7–9)

Reading:

Isaiah 7–9, especially:

- Isaiah 7:1–17 (Immanuel sign)
- Isaiah 8:11–22 (holy fear vs. fear of the world)
- Isaiah 9:1–7 (the Child, the Son, the Light)

Reflection Questions:

1. In Isaiah 6, God cleansed Isaiah before sending him. Where do you see this same pattern in your own Christian life—grace first, then calling?

2. Isaiah’s cleansing came from the altar, not from his own effort. Where do you see God providing cleansing for you in Word and Sacrament this week?

3. Isaiah heard the Lord ask, “Whom shall I send?” Where in your home, work, school, or congregation might God be opening a place for you to say, “Here am I—send me”?

4. As you read Isaiah 7–9, watch for the contrast between fear and trust. Where does God invite His people to rest in His presence rather than in human solutions?

COLLECT PRACTICE (WEEK 2)

Maybe you are ready to write your own from start to finish. Remember the classic **Collect** structure:

Address – Attribute – Petition – Purpose – Conclusion

Homework:

Write your own Collect for “Transforming Grace,” changing the petition and purpose to reflect your week.

