

# Stretching Toward Sunday

Thoughts, readings and reflections based on this week's lectionary readings

May 31, 2015

Pentecost 1, Trinity Sunday, Year B

## The readings this week:

◦ Isaiah 6:1-8 ◦ Psalm 29

◦ Romans 8:12-17 ◦ John 3:1-17

[Click here to read this week's Scriptures](#)

## Under the Folds of a Hem

The vision of Isaiah has always captivated me. It informs my vision of God's Heavenly Kingdom perhaps more than anything else.

It's grand. Regal. Sweeping.

The hem of his robe fills the temple. There's movement of strange and mysterious six-winged creatures. Smoke hangs in the air, and probably the sweet smell of incense too.

And yet, with all the power and wonder that is conjured up in this vision, the voice of the Lord calls out...wondering where He can get some help.

I find it disorienting that the Lord here doesn't just send. He doesn't just give commands. He asks for help. "Who will go for me?"

I read this, and the tone that I hear is that of a plea. As if God expects no one to answer. As if He knows already that the only sound in response that He's likely to hear, is the sound of his own echo.

Now, perhaps you hear a different tone. Maybe there was an army of sentinels ready to spring at the opportunity. "I'm your man, Lord!" "Put me in, Coach!"

But, if that were the case, I can't imagine how the voice of Isaiah would ring through the crowd. How small must he have been standing there in the temple? Was he under one of the folds of God's robes? Hiding behind a column? Standing outside on the portico? And, how does he summon the courage within him to speak up?

Such a scene would, in my estimation, be so intimidating so as to cause most anyone to clam up. Who even makes a peep in the presence of such power and under the weight of such awe?

But, little Isaiah found it within himself to speak up. "Here I am! Down here! I'm just a little thing... powerless to do much of anything, Sir. But, I'll go. For you, I'll do anything."

Could we ever summon such courage? Such chutzpah?

Could you?

In this reading, the vision of Isaiah isn't just regal; it's inspiring. Isaiah isn't dumbstruck. He's compelled. He's inwardly moved to do something for God.

We spend a lot of time in churches on what happens on Sundays. We want it to be awesome. And dynamic. And "real." We want the music to come together. Perhaps we want to capture the grandeur of God. Or, perhaps we want to be hip.

But, whatever we do, and however we do it, what we absolutely can't afford to do is drown out the voice of God calling His People into action. Nor can we drown out the one who is inspired to answer the call, no matter how faint their voice.

Because, when we take away the lights, and silk fabrics, and organ pipes, and drums, and projection screens, and silver chalices...really it's the hem of His robe which fills our spaces. And when we take a moment of silence, it's God's voice which asks us to go for Him.

So let's hear that voice, and let us go.

Put me in Coach.

Rick Morley, [a garden path](#)



# Reflecting on the Word



## 1st Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

When have you been confronted with the reality of God's surpassingly great holiness? How did you respond? Uzziah's long and prosperous reign came to an end under a cloud (see 2Ch 26:16-21). What do you think was Isaiah's purpose in verse 1 in describing God as occupying the throne? Describe in your own words, as vividly as possible, what Isaiah saw. What is the significance of Isaiah's cry in verse 5, especially his reference to his own and his people's lips? What wonderful answer did Isaiah get to his cry of pain? What does this chapter tell you about what it means to be called by God and the kind of response God requires? What is God calling you to? [Quiet Time Bible Study, InterVarsity Press](#)

## Psalm Reading: Psalm 29

The psalmist addresses a specific audience in verse 1—"mighty ones." Why do you think he speaks to them? What characteristics of God do these verses bring to mind? What does verse 9 tell us about the proper response to hearing the voice of God? Most of Psalm 29 describes the actions of God as a mighty and powerful rainstorm, inspiring not only awe, but even fear. However, the psalm ends describing the actions of God in quite a different fashion. How does this complete the picture of God that David has painted? How does observing the power of God in both nature and in his own actions help us understand the nature and role of worship in our lives? Sometimes God uses a storm to draw our attention to him and cause us to fall before him in awe, but he also "blesses his people with peace." How can this passage help you to better understand the ways of God and his workings in your life? [Quiet Time Bible Study, InterVarsity Press](#)



"The Blessed Trinity", by Lance McNeel

*Dogmatic Sarcophagus, 350 A.D., Vatican Museum, Rome.*

The earliest known depiction of the Trinity



### *Blessing for Trinity Sunday*

In this new season  
may you know  
the presence of the God  
who dwells within your days,  
the mystery of the Christ  
who drenches you in love,  
the blessing of the Spirit  
who bears you into life anew.

Jan Richardson

## 3rd Reading: Romans 8:12-17

This chapter is one of celebration. What has the Holy Spirit recently done in you that gives you reason to rejoice? There are many professing Christians whose lives seem very different from Paul's description of life in the Spirit. How do you think Paul would account for this fact? In verse 12 Paul concludes that we have an obligation. Describe in your own words the negative and positive aspects of that obligation. How do we experience the reality and privileges of being God's children? What evidence do you see of your life being controlled by the Spirit? Practically speaking, how can we put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit? [Quiet Time Bible Study/InterVarsity Press](#)

## 4th Reading: John 3:1-7

Do you remember your spiritual birthday? Reflect on what that time meant for you. What is your impression of Nicodemus? Why do you suppose Nicodemus responds to Jesus' explanation of new birth with such amazement? How does the story of Moses lifting up the snake in the desert (see Num 21:4-9) illustrate our need and Christ's offer? John made it clear that Jesus was superior to him. What is one way you can demonstrate Christ's superiority in your life? Who do you know that needs to know the truth about God? How can you help that person see God? [Quiet Time Bible Study InterVarsity](#)

## Praying Toward Sunday

Love of Jesus, Fill us.

Holy Spirit, Guide us.

Will of the Father be done.

Amen.



Richard Wagner,  
[Christian Prayer For Dummies Cheat Sheet](#)