

God's Heart for the Humble
Isaiah 66:1-2

I love my dad. I am so proud of him. Not only is he the man of God in my life, but also he works hard at Edison. His job was actually really scary. On the news we all see why being a fireman in the flames is such a scary job, and I can see why being a policeman holding a gun is scary, but there is rarely a lineman on the news working on power lines. High voltage sounds dangerous but not many of us handle it on a daily basis through windy and rainy storms, 50 feet up a wooden pole, through late nights, and extremely hot days like my dad used to. Our family is pretty thankful to God that he has been spared from the perilous dangers of working at Edison.

I've always wanted to be just like my dad, and as an intern here at Valley, I have begun to realize that we have a lot in common with our jobs. My primary objective and task in ministering to others is rightly handling the Word of God. Can anyone think of handling anything with more voltage in it? The very thing that tells us God's will, words, and ways. The Words that reveal to us what will cast one sinner into hell and what will catch another sinner from God's wrath. This is a dangerous job, but within it we find the heart of God and the true source of joy.

Isaiah 66:2 has impacted me so much spiritually. My prayer for this morning is that we realize that God finds greater pleasure in the humble, broken, and trembling heart than in any religious, external practices. It is just fun because my dad has demonstrated these qualities for me to see what a godly man who pleases God should be like.

1. God in His Heavenly Highness (Isaiah 66:1-2a)

Isaiah begins chapter 66 by putting things in proper perspective. The first thing that the nation of Israel was concerned about, after their exile, was building a temple for God so that they might receive His favor. However, they grossly misunderstood what actually pleases God. Their lives were characterized by unfaithfulness and living in sinful pleasures. And they planned on using a new temple in Jerusalem to get God on their side.

Think about that logic. If God were impressed by the size and design of the building that His people made for Him, then it would be the richest nation that would win, right? Whoever could make a more appropriate and architectural dwelling place for God would receive Him. Would He take pleasure in dwelling there because of all the nice molding and arches and pipes and beams and gold and sacrifices and the large altar? No! What is in there that God may be impressed by?

Psalm 50:7-12 says, “Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. (8) Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. (9) I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. (10) For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. (11) I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. (12) If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.”

God doesn't take any bull, or need any goat, beast, cattle, or bird from His people. He owns it all, and much more that we aren't aware of yet. That is exactly what verse 1 and 2a are saying: we have nothing to give Him in order to gain His favor. He is already the creator, owner, and sustainer of all life. He sits infinitely high, exalted above all others on His heavenly throne.

So, what does God want from us if He doesn't need us?

2. God in the Humble Heart (Isaiah 66:2b)

“But this is the one to whom I will look:”

“I will look” means to regard, consider, or approve of, or in this case, to take pleasure in.

I would say that the majority of my high school experience was just that—longing to be looked to. People only knew me as Kyle, “the soccer guy,” or for the last two years of high school I might have been known as the guy with the '67 Mustang with a V8 289 engine. But upon reading **Psalm 147:10**, I was shown my shallowness.

“His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man.”

Obviously, God didn't take pleasure in my Mustang's horsepower, or my soccer legs, but His eye is fixed on something entirely different.

The disposition or character that God looks to, and takes pleasure in, is broken into two phrases with three parts. For each part I will attempt to briefly define it and then defend why it is such an admirable trait in God's eyes.

a. **“he who is humble” (Isaiah 66:2)**

Humility has books written on just that topic, but in these verses we simply see that God finds His pleasure in the humble heart.

Def. (humility)- the minimization of self and the maximization of God (cf. **John 3:30**). It is the true Christian's trademark (it is a lifestyle). This lifestyle was flawlessly demonstrated in the person of Christ (**Phil. 2:3-8** and **Mark 10:45**). We are called on three different accounts to humble ourselves and God will lift us up in due time (**Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:5-6; James 4:10**).

All the men in my life whom I consider to be humble are men who serve. Each one serves in different ways, but they are servants. What ways are you humbly serving Valley Bible Church, or your family, or your friends, or your co-workers, or strangers? Or do you expect others to treat you well all the time? Do you fight for the right to be treated with respect and honor? That is not yours to fight for.

So, why is it that God will look to the one who is humble?

Given that Jesus Christ was the perfect portrait of humility, we see why God the Father says from heaven in **Mark 1:11**, **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”** Only One satisfies God's thirst for righteousness and that is His own Son. There is no greater pleasure in God's heart than the pleasure He has for His Son. There is an amazing Father-Son relationship there.

That's why it is so important to “abide in Christ” and “keep His commands” like we've been hearing from Dale through the book of John. Jesus says, **“he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and**

manifest myself to him (John 14:21).” Christ will manifest His humility in us if we love Him. This is why God will look to the one who is humble, because His greatest pleasure is in the perfect humility of His Son, which is manifested in us.

b. “and contrite in spirit” (Isaiah 66:2)

Def. (contrition)-literally lamed or disabled. Here it is used in a spiritual sense meaning “one who is aware of the damage wrought by sin, of the personal inability to stand upright before God (Moyter).”

I had a roommate that would constantly remind me of how great heaven will be because his sin would be completely gone. He hated his sin so much he wanted it to be permanently divorced from him. That is a man of contrition. He recognized his inability to stand upright before God.

So, why is it that God will look to the one who is contrite in spirit?

Isaiah 57:15 says, “**For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’**”

For us to read that God, who inhabits eternity and whose name is Holy, will choose to dwell in the holy place with the contrite and lowly spirited, it shows the comfort He offers to the contrite in spirit. So, God will look to the contrite in spirit, the one who is aware of his sin and repentant of it, and to this one He will revive.

If God, who hates evil, were choosing a roommate, His roommate better understand that sin is unacceptable and that He will revive him if he repents of his sin.

c. “trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:2)

Def. (tremble)- literally means to be terrified; it is a fear, awe, and reverence at the Word of God.

Similar to what I mentioned about my dad's work on the electrical lines. He approaches his job with the utmost care. He has an understanding that he has to go about his work realizing that the high voltage lines can electrocute him and send him spiraling backwards to the ground. As a kid, our dad taught us that fearing God was much like his job. One careless touch or complacent attitude, and BZZZT!!

Let me make a distinction, there are two kinds of trembling: one, those who are terrified, hate, and flee from God; and the other which affects the heart, are those who obey and fear God in reverence.

“Fear fastens the eye” is a quote by Jeremiah Burroughs in his book, *Gospel Fear*. When we fear the world we are watching them to see if they will notice us for how we are dressed or how we act or who we are with, but when our eye is fastened to God we are always meditating on His Word and never taking our heart off of the concern: “I wonder what God thinks about this or that I am doing?”

So, why is it that God will look to the one who trembles at His Word?

This answer is most clearly seen in **Philippians 2:12-13**, “**work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**”

It is so fitting that God is only pleased with Himself and nothing lower. The clear reason why God will look to the one who trembles at His Word, is because it is His gift of salvation begun in us, His will that we work it out fearfully focused on Him, and He is the one actually doing the work in us. Is there any room for us to take any credit, and therefore distract from His greatness and glory? No!

So, as we tremble at His Word and faithfully do His work, it is all “**for His good pleasure.**”

Exhortation and Self-Evaluation:

I know this was written to Israel, and the promises to them do not apply to us, but the unchangeable heart of God is revealed to us here. Three major

aspects of exhortation are extracted from the heart of God in the text this morning:

1. Religious exercises alone do not please God.

You may be feeling pretty comfortable that you have attended church for a while. Well, let God's Word show you that if your heart is detached, then He will detach you from Himself.

God doesn't need anything from us, so humble yourself before His mighty hand.

2. A humble and contrite spirit God desires.

Are you serving with your whole life like Christ, to the point of laying your life down for your brothers?

Are you regularly broken over your sin and repenting of it? Walk in daily repentance.

3. We ought to tremble at the Word of God.

Are you fastening your eye on the fear of man or God? Truly fearing is truly following.

God's opinion of you should matter most.

The Word of God makes it clear that God's Heart is for the humble.