

Keith Russell, the former president of the seminary I work at, said once to a group of my students: "Having been a preacher for more than 40 years, I have preached many sermons, but looking back, what I really had was just one sermon."

One sermon?

What do you mean by that?

What he meant was that whatever sermons he preached over the years, his theology was the same; the understanding of the Gospel was the same; the expressions might have been different; the stories he used might have been varied; but the core message of all those different sermons was always the same.

For some reason, when I was going through this week's texts, I was thinking of my sermon: my one sermon.

I think my sermon always has two points.

One of them is the experience of the overwhelming love of God.

Even if we did not read, according to this week's church calendar (Trinity Sunday), there is one more text from the Old Testament, which is Isaiah 6.

Of course, Isaiah 6 is about how the prophet Isaiah was called to ministry.

Being a prophet was not easy, especially in his day;

it was way more than being a preacher today;

if they said something that was not considered true, they were killed;

so it was not something everyone could do; scholars say that Isaiah was a cousin of king Uzziah; he really did not have to do this; but he had to.

What happened? According to Isaiah 6, Isaiah was in the Temple one day and all of a sudden he found himself surrounded by this holy presence of God.

"Woe is me, I am lost!"

"I am undone;

I am ruined;

I am finished;

my life is over because I know who I am—

I am such a sinner!"

As a member of Royal priest family, Isaiah knew what the church had been; he had grown up in it; so he thought he knew who God was.

But the God he experienced at that particular moment was different; the God he saw was totally new to him.

He had to give himself up when he was in front of this OVERWHELMING SENSE OF AWE AND WONDER.

Moses had known God; he had learned about the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Sure, he had been well-educated by his mother.

But Moses did not really meet God UNTIL THE MOMENT when he heard GOD'S TREMBLING VOICE from the burning bush at Mount Horeb.

God works in a mysterious way.

God does what He wills. God calls your name and my name as a way of showing his love.

It is **THE NUMBNESS** that blocks us from hearing the trembling voice;

It is **THE LAYERS OF WORLDLY THOUGHTS AND MINDS** we have in our hearts that keep us from sensing and experiencing the love of God.

We need to have this numbness broken through; we need to have these layers of coverings peeled off.

How? We cannot. God does; the Spirit of Life does; what we need is let the Spirit into our hearts. Invite the Spirit of God to lead our lives.

We need to reestablish the relationship with God; we need the overwhelming love of God; all of us deserve this gift.

Here is the second point of my sermon:

Once we are filled with the Spirit of Life. We need to do something; we share our love with others. We need to share what we have with others.

Isaiah said, "Here I am, Lord. Send Me." He gave himself to the Lord.

We had an orientation meeting for the Africa trip. Rev. Frank Chae said, "Get ready! When you pray in Africa with your hands laying on people's heads, many sick people will be healed. Get ready!"

We all went, "What?" Some of us laughed!

But he said, he had never thought it would happen either! But it did happen! He said God was using them in a totally different way once they got there.

So, I will tell you what happened when we come back but pray for us.

You could underestimate us, but not God!

We will pray hard and see how God will work among us and through us!

We can never take God for granted: God is living God; and He does what He wills.

We may know who we are.

But we can never predict what God can do for his people.

We can never take God for granted.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE GOD!

The God we believe is always bigger than we think.

The God we trust is always beyond our measures.

But one thing is clear: **HE LOVES US AND HE LISTENS** to our prayers.

My point is this: as people of God, we need to encounter this God always in a fresh way.

Make space; set aside some time; spent time with God. There is no other way to break through our spiritual numbness.

Read scriptures; have time to yourself. Do what the scripture tells you to do and see what happens in your life!

God is alive; and the experience of his presence is not only real but overwhelming. It was like that thousands of years ago; it is like that now.

God **NEVER CHANGES**; we are the ones who change!

We need to speak up; we need to tell others about what we have; we need to share the blessings we have from God!

Tell the world that this is what is happening in our lives: "Listen, God is alive!" I am telling you, "You can be happy as I am!"

St. Paul says in today's Romans' text: "You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear."

Let the spirit of God lead your life; let the spirit of life dominate you!

John said, God did not send us his Son TO CONDEMN US, BUT TO SAVE US.

We need to be saved.

We need to be uplifted.

We need to win.

We need to be happy.

We need to be alive.

We need to be refreshed.

We need to be brought near to the power of God.

We need to be changed.

We can't afford to stay where we are!

It is the Spirit of God that breaks through our numbness to feel and hear the presence of God.

It is the Spirit of life that saves us.

Once we are saved we need to go out into the world and tell them about the love we have.

O God, save us, help us, strengthen us! Amen.