

Funeral – Funeral – 2 The year of the funeral

Funeral Bumper Vid

Welcome back to Redemption Church in Plano TX! My name is Chris Fluitt. Greetings to all our new podcast subscribers listening to us on Spotify.

Dearly beloved we are here today to lay some things to rest... We are in our sermon series called Funeral.

Funeral

Last week we talked about the first funeral. Many of you texted in with your memories of the first funeral you attended. Thank you for sharing your memories.

Death is an important part of life

Have you ever measured time with a funeral? This past week we were visiting Sarah's father Barney. Sarah asked "how long have you had your dog?" Barney answered "we got this dog the year your grandmother died."

Have you ever marked time with the memory of a funeral? Perhaps you have seen someone else remember the years that go by this way.

Death is an important part of life. A funeral is a major happening. It is almost like death makes time stand still for a moment and that it leaves behind a recallable time stamp.

Our nation has dates that have to do with death; we won't ever forget.

The Challenger shuttle explosion in January 1986 is a day many elementary students, like myself, will never forget.

The day November 22, 1963, when JFK was shot in Dallas TX.

December 7, 1941 is day that continues to live in **infamy**. It is the day when Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor.

September 11th, 2001, the day the unthinkable happened, terrorists hijacked 4 planes and sent them on collision courses with people on the ground.

Death is an important part of life. Death helps us to number our days (Psalm 90:12) and remember that our life is a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. (James 4:14) Death gives us an honest perspective of what is important and what is not, and these moments of clarity are unforgettable.

Death has a way of defining our days. Funerals have a way of marking our timeline. I would imagine that you, who are listening to me today, have your timelines marked with funerals. There are 365 days in a year, but your memory of an entire year can be encapsulated in a single day.

In your Bible there are some funerals that mark time. As we think about the timeline of scriptures, it helps to understand that what we are reading is: before or after Abraham; before or after Moses; before or after King David; before or after the exile to Babylon; before or after the crucifixion of Jesus; before or after the first martyr Stephen...

There is one particular funeral which meant a great deal to many people, and it continues to serve as a marker of time. Let's look at the Word of God together turning to Isaiah 6:1.

Isaiah 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died...

Today we are going to talk about the year King Uzziah died.

In the Year King Uzziah Died

Historians say that King Uzziah died in 740 BC. The prophet Isaiah did not start his chapter by saying "in the year 740 B.C..." While technically true, the number of the year was not the message Isaiah was trying to communicate.

So who is this Uzziah? He is one of the greatest kings in the history of Israel, and the subject "Kings of Israel" may not be a strong-suit of yours, so I would like to help you with that today. To the original readers of this scripture, they had knowledge of king Uzziah and actually felt an emotional connection to his name being mentioned.

If we were to graph the success of the kings of Israel we would start with King Saul. Let's say that Saul grades a success rate of about 4 out of 10.

After Saul came David and he experienced great success. Let's grade David a 7 or 8. And then, David's son Solomon built on his father's successes and took Israel to its greatest heights, so let's grade Solomon a near perfect 10.

And then after Solomon everything falls apart. After Solomon, the nation of Israel actually divides in two kingdoms with 2 different kings. ...And the kings after Solomon do not grade well. The nation of Israel struggles for centuries under kings who grade around 2 to 4 on our success scale.

Now, imagine 250 years after Solomon, a king ascends to the throne who experienced success that reminded everyone of the prior glory of Israel's reign under David & Solomon. This King would be Uzziah.

If they had a Mt Rushmore of the Kings of Israel, Uzziah's face would be included alongside David & Solomon. King Uzziah was intelligent & innovative. He was led by God and defeated the enemies of Israel and built fortified towers that featured advanced weaponry that could shoot arrows and stones at the enemy. He was such a powerful king that the enemies of Israel paid him tribute; scripture says King Uzziah's fame spread all over the world.

King Uzziah was bringing Israel back to a place of prominence. He was grading high and some thought he could be another David, but then Uzziah, dies in a tragic & shameful way.

Uzziah, in pride, defied God's commandment. He entered the temple of God and approached the altar of incense to offer the incense to God, himself. In 2 Chronicles 26, 8 priests including Azariah the High Priest begged him not to disobey God's command.

God's Word was clear that you must be a priest to stand in the holy place and offer incense to the Lord. Uzziah thought that since he was king he could do anything He chose to do. Uzziah did not realize that there is only One who is worthy to stand at the altar of incense and as our King and our High Priest, offering intercession to God. Jesus is the only King & High Priest who has the right to

stand in the most Holy Place and make intercession for us! (Hebrews 9)

The beloved king, Uzziah, disobeyed the priests and the Word of God. As He stood with the censer in his hand to burn incense, leprosy broke out on Uzziah's forehead.

2 Chronicles 26:19 (NIV) Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead.

2 Chronicles 26:20 (NIV) When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the Lord had afflicted him.

2 Chronicles 26:21 (NIV) King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house—leprous, and banned from the temple of the Lord.

Imagine the mind of an ancient Jew hearing the phrase “In the year King Uzziah died...” The name evoked sadness and regret. It brought to memory a time where triumph gave way to tragedy. The fame of Uzziah was spread abroad, but now the shame of the leper was spread abroad. He was banned from the palace & temple and died in shame and regret. The hopeful nation of Israel which was experiencing resurgence, once again returned to struggle and ruin.

Isaiah 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died...

Not in the year 740 BC... in the year that King Uzziah died. It was the year of the funeral. This year was marked by the funeral of a once great king.

The year of the Funeral

If there was ever a year in recent memory that was like the year that king Uzziah died, I think it may be the year 2020. This year is filled with a lot of funerals.

This year on a global & national level we have experienced...:

The threat of a 3rd World War...

A pandemic outbreak that has killed many and struck hearts with the fear of many more.

An economic shutdown... schools closed, businesses closed, churches closed.

Racial unrest that leaves us feeling like we may never solve this problem.

Streets filled with violence and cries to defend the police, or defund the police.

2020 has felt like one long funeral.

And then there is all the heartache, pain, & disappointment that you may have felt this year on a personal level.

Some of you have been in the hospital ICU worried that you may have the virus.

Some of you have been fighting cancer.

Some of you have been the become the person with the brave face, but deep down you aren't so sure things will be ok.

Some of you have lost people. You have had actual funerals, but you weren't able to attend the funeral in person; you struggled to connect over zoom.

Some of you have been alone.

Some of you for the first time ever have needed assistance from your church, government, and local food banks.

Years from now you may refer to 2020 as the year of covid19... the George Floyd murder... the year you lost a loved one... the year you lost your job...

Can anything good come out of a situation like this... a time like this?

Thank goodness we can look to the Word of God!

Isaiah 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

What we really need in the year of the funeral is to be able to declare these 4 words.

I SAW THE LORD

In a year of the worst calamity, God is still at His best.

I don't know who or what you have been forced to bury

this year, but God can still be found.

The answer to your problem is not making Covid go away, or getting the job... The answer is to see the LORD.

Seeing the Lord changes everything. The rest of Isaiah 6 is not about the heartache of the loss of king Uzziah... It is not about the uncertainty of the future and the worry of tomorrow... it is not about the shame & judgment that can come from disobedience...

The rest of Isaiah 6 is about seeing the Lord and receiving His Word!

I have heard enough about the funeral, I want to see the Lord and receive His Word.

The rest of Israel may have continued to live in the funeral, but there was a prophet of God who had seen the Lord and heard His Word.

Having an encounter with God can change your year. I believe that the year changed for Isaiah when He saw the Lord. I believe his perspective and how he defined the year changed for good.

It is time to change this year from the year that something died; to the year you saw God and were certain that He had a purpose for you.

In the worst year of your life, God can still be seen. Right now God can be seen. Who wants to see God!

Isaiah 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

It was the year of the funeral, but Isaiah saw the Lord and the Lord was still alive! Uzziah had a funeral; God is still very much alive!

I am done hearing hopelessness... I am done hearing that nothing can be done... I am done hearing that this is the new normal... I have had enough of this "funeral," I want to hear about the **Lord of Life**.

Isaiah wants you to know the Lord is high & exalted.

High & Exalted

The body of the king may be lowered into the ground, but my God is still high & exalted. If you haven't seen God this year, it may be simply because you are looking down. LOOK UP to where He is!

God is above. He is up high! And God is exalted, or perhaps a better word choice might be "advancing." In other words God is not going down... God is winning!

Uzziah was no longer advancing, but when Isaiah saw the Lord he couldn't help but notice God was advancing.

Seated on a Throne

Isaiah saw the very throne room of God. What a beautiful sight it must have been... but Isaiah spends no time describing the throne room, because His full attention is on the one in the throne.

The death of the king of Israel had not dethroned God. Covid19, injustice, poverty, or other funerals on earth have not dethroned the Lord either! He is still seated on His Throne!

I saw the Lord! High & Exalted! Seated on a throne!

And the train of His robe filled the temple

We are not used to seeing kings in robes with long flowing trains. In these modern times we are more used to seeing a bride's gown with a long train that follows behind her beautiful wedding dress.

Ancient kings wore robes with trains and the longer your train the more glorious a king you were. There was also an ancient tradition that when one king would defeat another king in battle, the winning king would cut off the train of the defeated king. Then, the victorious king would have the newly acquired cutting attached to the train of his own robe... Kings who were winning & advancing in battle would have long growing trains.

Isaiah says the He saw the Lord and that his train filled the temple. There wasn't room for anything else in the temple. Just the presence of the king and the train of his robe filling every space in the great temple.

What temple? There are several iterations of the temple. You have the smaller, portable tabernacle, you have the grand temple of Solomon, and you have the less grand temple built after the exile...but it is none of these temples Isaiah is seeing. Isaiah is not seeing an earthly temple. No, Isaiah is describing God upon His Throne in His Heavenly temple.

John measures the heavenly temple of God in Revelation 21:16 and it is 1,500 cubic miles high, wide, and deep. It is larger than any building mankind can ever imagine. I saw the Lord and the train of his robe filled this temple. His long train represents His Overcoming victories.

God, the King of Heaven & Earth has never lost a battle. All of your enemies - God is defeating them... all the kings of this world - God will cut off their trains, and His train will be everlasting

In the year of funerals... in the year that king Uzziah died I saw a Lord who never has lost a battle.

You may feel defeated right now, but don't mistake your feelings for the Truth. Your God is victorious! His victories are only piling up... His fame is only growing... His glory is only becoming more glorious! His train FILLS His Heavenly Temple.

Isaiah 6:1 (NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Have the Funeral

We need to have a funeral for Uzziah. He represents a failed king & priest.

When the ancient Hebrew thought of Uzziah they thought of a king who fell and not one who sat upon the throne. They thought of the one who dishonored the Temple of God and brought shame. We need to have a funeral for this failed king & priest.

Sometimes you need to just have the funeral. Your failures should be buried by now, but why do you keep living in your failures day after day? Your shame should be buried by now.

You failed as the king of your life. Your attempt as priest has only brought you shame. Have the funeral... and then have a magnificent coronation.

Have the Funeral and then have the Coronation

Isaiah is burying a fallen king, but the prophet looks up and sees a King who is still on the throne.

Isaiah is burying a shameful would be priest, who brought into question the temple of God, but the prophet looks up to see the true temple of God and He sees it filled with endless glory & victory.

Have the funeral and then crown the true king! Have the funeral and then anoint the true priest.

Go ahead and have your funeral today. Don't you understand that you need a death & a burial, before you can ever have a resurrection?

In a moment I want us all... everyone in the room and everyone experiencing this online... I want us all to repent. I want us to have a funeral. I want us to lay to rest our failed kingship and to crown Jesus LORD of our life. I want us to lay to rest our failed priesthood where we tried to be good enough, and I want us to anoint Jesus High Priest of our life.

Before we do this I have one more thing to share, and it is a little "bad news - good news."

musician

First the bad news...

The nation may not recover

Israel went straight down. In less than 200 years the Hebrews would be exiled to Babylon and Solomon's temple destroyed. To this day no one sits on the throne of Israel.

Listen to me Americans. Our nation may not recover. I am not trying to scare you. I am trying to prepare you.

Some things do not recover in this life. We preach & believe in resurrection power, but right here is an example

of the people of God going through hardship, struggle, and even judgment.

When you come to the altar today, do not come asking God to resurrect the Uzziah's in your life.

Now for the good news...

Isaiah saw the Lord

While His nation's direction was going toward destruction, Isaiah looked up and received a revelation. Isaiah received a calling and a message to preach.

I have zero messages for America today. I have a message for you.

This country and this world may walk right towards destruction, but you don't have to! You can go the other direction. You can look up and see the Lord today. When you see Him, it changes everything. This can become the year you see the Lord!

Very quickly let's look at how Isaiah responded to seeing the Lord...

Isaiah 6:5 (NIV) "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."

Isaiah 6:6 (NIV) Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

Isaiah 6:7 (NIV) With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Isaiah 6:8 (NIV) 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!"

Who wants to see the Lord today? Who wants to hear His voice today?