
Holy, Holy, Holy, for children!

A sermon by the Very Reverend Sam Candler
Atlanta, Georgia
Epiphany 5, Year C
The Sunday Service honoring our Eucharist Instruction class

What is your favorite song? Do you have a favorite song?

I am not sure I have a favorite, but the very first song I ever learned was "Happy Birthday." Do you know "Happy Birthday?"

Who knows how it goes?

How many of you go to a party and sing Happy Birthday? Can you imagine going to a birthday party, and having the cake come out, but then NOT singing "Happy Birthday!" What if you just said the words "Happy Birthday?" It wouldn't work, would it? Those words are supposed to be sung!

It's that way in Church. In a few minutes, we will sing the most important song of our service. It is "Holy, Holy, Holy," because this is the song that people of God have sung for hundreds of years.

This song started with a man named Isaiah. Today, I want to tell you the story of Isaiah. Isaiah was a holy man. Wait. Do you know what holy means? What does "holy" mean? Lean over to your father or mother, or friend, and tell them what holy means.

Isaiah was holy already, but one day he became holy in a special way. One day Isaiah had a dream where he saw God. Can you imagine seeing God?

What does God look like? Nobody knows exactly, but we know God is great. We know God is magnificent. We know God is beautiful. We know God is love.

When Isaiah had his dream, he looked up and saw the Lord sitting on a great throne, and his vestments were long and flowing. Angels were flying all around.

And the angels were singing. Guess what they were singing? They were not singing Happy Birthday. They were singing "Holy, holy, holy."

And Isaiah was so overwhelmed by the beauty and the truth of this sight, that he realized how small he was. And he realized the truth about himself. He realized how many wrong things he had done.

And he realized how he had said so many things he should not have said.

Have you ever said something you should not have said? Isaiah realized that he had said some things he should not have

said.

And when he saw the Lord, he cried out, "Woe is me!" or "Lord have mercy."

Then do you know happened? One of the angels flew over to Isaiah and touched his lips. Now this was a special touch. It went something like this:

(Put finger to mouth.) Do you know what that means?

It means Sh, Sh, Sh. Right! Our parents say that all the time. They are usually right. We are not supposed to be talking when they do that. But in church it also means something else.

In church, it means "Something bigger than you is here." Be quiet. Something bigger than you is here. In fact, there is Someone here that is bigger than you, and even bigger than your parents, and even bigger than the angels. Who is that someone? That someone is God.

In church, when we put our finger to our lips, it means "Be quiet; Someone bigger than us is here."

Well, this same thing happened to Isaiah the Prophet long ago. He saw the Lord. He remembered all the wrong things he had said. An angel came and touched his lips.

And when the angel touched his lips, do you know what happened? He could sing. He could join the same song that the angels were singing! He could sing "Holy, Holy, Holy."

The same thing happens to us when we take communion. When we take communion, when we take the bread and the wine, one of God's messengers touches our lips. The bread and the wine touch our lips. Sometimes it tastes like fire! But it always makes us feel good; it makes us able to sing. It's like going to a birthday party. It's a celebration!

When Isaiah had his lips touched, then the Lord asked a giant question. Who is going to tell other people about the greatness of God? Who is going to tell other people about how God loves them? Who shall I send?

And Isaiah was so happy and thrilled, he raised his hand, and he said "Here I am. Here I am. Here I am. Send me! Let me tell other people how great God is. Let me tell other people about the love of God."

And so Isaiah was sent.

Every one of us needs to be like Isaiah today. You are going to be like Isaiah. You are going to have the bread of heaven touch your lips. You are going to have the cup of salvation touch your lips. And it's going to make you holy.

Do you want to be a messenger for God? God needs you to be a messenger. God needs you to be like Isaiah. After you take communion today, you will hear someone say "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." And what will you say?

"Thanks be to God."

So be quiet a little longer. Shhhhh. Then sing "Holy Holy Holy. Then let God touch your lips. Then Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

AMEN.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*