

Sermon: 2019/02/10 (5th Sunday after Epiphany, Year C), *Isaiah* 6:1-13_BTR

[Invite children to the front.]

When the president of the United States wants to pass a message - wants to *negotiate* - with the leader of another big, important country *that's very far away* - like Great Britain or France or China or something, what does he do?

[Wait for response.]

Right!

(He might pick up the telephone and give them a "ring." Or...) he gets on "Airforce One" - an aeroplane - and goes there in person, doesn't he? So that they can speak face-to-face and look each another "in the eye." It is, after all, one thing to just *hear* a voice, and another to see a speaker's face, their expression. It helps us build trust between us - a relationship.

But a long time ago, before there were planes, the president or a king would need to take a boat, and sea-crossings were dangerous: big waves, strong winds, sharks...

And so often they wouldn't go themselves - it was too risky - and instead they sent an "ambassador" - a messenger.

And to be that person was terribly exciting.

You were a *representative* of your leader, and this was a "big deal." - you spoke his words.

If you were chosen, that made you feel proud!

Well, one day Isaiah, who was a priest, was serving in the Temple.

And suddenly he saw an angel - called, "a seraph," with *six(!)* wings - who asked him to be God's (special) messenger to the people of Judah.

And Isaiah said "*Woah!* Not me.

You can't pick me."

He didn't, you see - and quite rightly - think he was good enough to be God's "ambassador:"

"How can I speak for God," he said, "with the same mouth that I use to say bad words and tell lies?"

And the angel, to make Isaiah feel better, flew down to the (bronze) 'altar' where animal carcasses were burned, and took a burning hot coal from the fire using a

pair of tongs.

[Take a pair of tongs and grab a lump of coal.]

And he went to Isaiah and 'touched' the man's lips with it!

[Simuate w/ child.]

And do you know what happened?

[Wait for response.]

Nothing!

Isaiah wasn't burned.

It was a miracle.

And it proved that he really was chosen by God; and the experience gave him the courage to speak the difficult words that God wanted His people to hear.

Let's pray: Father God, ..., in Jesus' name, amen.

[Ask children to leave.]