

How to Get New Lips – October 26, 2014
By Wayne J. Schneider – Soli Deo Gloria

How to Get New Lips Isaiah 6:1-8

Isaiah's story and his vision is so gripping because of its honesty. Being present with God and God's splendor we can guess how insufficient and unholy we would feel. Even though the phraseology is uncommon we relate to the cry of Isaiah: "*I am a man of unclean lips....*" (V. 5)

In the presence of God's holiness, light and grace, it is not difficult to picture each of our inappropriate, unkind, insulting, and unsuitable word we have ever said.

The phrase "unclean lips" is haunting and covers the waterfront of behaviors. Jesus confronted the religious leaders with the idea that its not what enters a person that makes them unclean, but what comes out than can dishonor. Lies, gossip, unkind comments and insults are all offensive.

The making of promises we do not intend keeping, speaking only the words that people want to hear, and shifting responsibility are other ways we often speak with "unclean lips." In large and small ways we sometimes are as Isaiah says.

The Bible's answer may appear to be radical---burning away guilt, mud, and shame along with some vital skin---yet it might be of value looking at this metaphorically, without actually putting our lips on the Bar-B, how can we become people of "clean lips," Redeemed, guilt-free?

Put plainly, we cannot do anything APART FROM receive the free and love-filled grace of God than makes everything new.

Pastor Tom Peterson of our Centralia church tells of the homeless woman who came to worship one Sunday. She snuck into the rear of the sanctuary, having no other options she decided to give God a chance. She sat through the worship service not really understanding what was happening, until the end when she started to panic as Pastor Peterson began speaking about something called Holy Communion.

As she listened, she decided that she was not worthy or welcome to the bread or the juice. She liked what she heard but she knew she was an unclean person. She was startled when a woman and a man approached her. She began to shake and move side to side.

The man asked, *“Are you OK?”*

The woman answered: *“I don’t deserve to be here.”* The couple smiled and said, *“That’s OK, no one needs to be a member here. Everyone is welcome at Holy Communion.”*

“I’m not a good person” the homeless woman replied.

“Holy Communion IS for you! Nobody deserves it. It is a gift from God.”

The woman took Communion with tears running down her cheeks saying *“Thank you, thank you.”* That’s what it is to be someone with “unclean lips.” We are not evil we are just broken. We need love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

None of us deserve the Grace of God but God never holds it back from anyone. This grace-gift cleans us up, transforms us, and creates us to be the people God has always wanted us to be.

Pastor Peterson’s story continues. The next Sunday the homeless woman returned with five of her friends. She located the woman who had served her Holy Communion and asked, *“When are we having Communion?”*

The woman answered, *“Communion is only served on the first Sunday of the month.”*

Shocked, the woman replied, *“But I need it! I haven’t felt this good in years and my friends need this too!”*

Through Jesus we have been graced with sufficient amounts of love, acceptance, and forgiveness that we are able to share them with each person we meet.

We share none of this if we stand in judgment of others. None of us are deserving but everyone has been regarded worthy by God. Go from this place with new, clean lips. Alleluia. Amen.