
Arise

Part 4 - Arise and Shine

Are you a morning person? How do you cope with the familiar, "rise and shine" wake-up call? Today we take a look at Isaiah 60 - *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.*

Background

Chapters 56-66 of Isaiah describe the new Jerusalem where God's justice and mercy and blessing flow out to all the nations of the world. There are prayers of repentance and a desire for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

It describes both those who live in darkness and reject the King and His kingdom and describes how God's justice will be served on them and they will not enter into the eternal kingdom of God. But it also describes what it will be like for those who inherit this kingdom and in fact discover that they will be a part of a whole new creation. And it's in this renewed world of God's kingdom that again all the nations of the world are invited to come and be a part of God's covenant family and know their creator and redeemer.

We are a part of God's covenant family. It's through Jesus that we have come "to Mount Zion to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). We have become a part of this spiritual kingdom by which God wants to bring restoration to the world.

We find ourselves in the in-between. We are in His kingdom now and have a part to play in being kingdom bringers to the world around us while we wait for His return where He will renew all of creation and His kingdom will be established here on earth in its fulness as it is in heaven. It is here that we will enjoy living in His presence forever.

In the Darkness

Living in the now and not yet of the fully realised establishment of God's kingdom, can sometimes feel hopeless.

It feels that evil is thriving in our current reality – a thick darkness of evil and unbelief in our culture and around the world.

- + Hostile takeovers
- + Wars
- + COVID
- + Sickness
- + Moral Demise
- + Sin

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." John 3:19 (NIV)

Light of the World

Jesus identifies Himself as the light of the world. (John 8:12)

Jesus' first coming is likened to the sunrise, and Jesus Himself is called 'the sunrise from on high'. (Luke 1:78-79)

The coming of Jesus signified the dawn of a new day... just as it will when He returns the second time. (Isaiah 9:2)

There is a need to continue to walk in the light because as we know, darkness only exists because of the absence of light. (1 John 1:5-7)

Arise and Shine

We don't sit back passively waiting for the fullness of God's kingdom to come when Jesus returns and reigns, His kingdom has already broken in and we partner with God to let His light shine brightly in and through us. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

It is when God makes His manifest presence known amongst us, when His glory shines forth, it is then that worldly people living in darkness will be drawn willingly to God who is present among us and in us.

The Church has received the long-awaited promise. Reflecting the Light which is the Glory of the Lord, the Church shines like a lighthouse in the darkness of the world. The result is the streaming of God's people among the nations because the Church reflects the Light of the world. (Isaiah 60:4-5)

The Light shining upon the Church is now reflected and shines into the darkness of the world. Don't lose hope, not all those who are in darkness of the earth and under the dark clouds are doomed to remain in eternal darkness. The prophet writes that nations shall come to your Light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Challenge

When I think about what this means for us through the challenge of today's passage, I believe the Lord is calling us to not be intimidated by the darkness.

Don't lose hope for the ultimate and wonderful day when God's kingdom will be fully established here on earth as it is in heaven, BUT in the waiting will we step into the light. It's God's glory on display that will be a light to the nations.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Isaiah 60:1-22. Discuss what impacts you about the imagery.
2. How do we stay in a hopeful place not only of the ultimate future described but of the light we bring making a difference when the world seems to be covered in such thick darkness?
3. Read 1 John 1:5-7. Discuss how as being in the light we have no place in the dark. What are the biggest areas of conflict for you in your life.
4. Share what the glory of the Lord and the light of His kingdom shining through you would look like on your frontline.
5. Ephesians 5:8-20 brings a serious challenge to how we conduct ourselves as children of light. Break into pairs, share and pray for one another in your areas of need.