

**Isaiah 60:1-10 (NKJV)**

**1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.**

**2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.**

**3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

**4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side.**

**5 Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.**

**6 The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.**

**7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory.**

**8 "Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud, And like doves to their roosts?**

**9 Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them, To the name of the LORD your God, And to the Holy One of Israel, Because He has glorified you.**

**10 "The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you.**

This morning we see the wonderful “before and after” pictures when God is at work. We think of the **weight loss** pictures or the **health regimen** pictures that show people who look like me in the beginning and people who look like Hercules at the end. Well here is the “before and after” of the people of God.

**Isaiah 59:14-15 (NKJV)**

**14 Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.**

**15 So truth fails, And he *who* departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased Him That *there was* no justice.**

This is our beginning state. He is describing the state of the city, or of God's chosen people, but truly it is the **beginning state** of all humanity. Justice, righteousness, truth, and equity are distant bystanders of our lives. These things that are the building blocks of **community** and **personal peace** are held at bay.

And here truth fails. We have spoken a lot about truth in Isaiah. And it is only because Isaiah is speaking for God and truth is central. When anything becomes more important to us than **the truth that God reveals to us**, we are sure to find all manner of evil. When we believe **what we tell ourselves** above **that which is true**, we are doing what James says. We are walking away from the mirror of God's word and completely forgetting what we really look like.

I don't know what you experience in **your** life. But I know what it is like in **mine**. It is like a chess game is going on all the time. First I have something that deeply troubles me. Let's just use murder since it is not something I have really done. OK. I murder someone. The truth is I deserve damnation. I can never undo that wrong. That is the truth. The **black pawn** moves. And it drives me to despair. I want relief. I find out there is forgiveness in Christ. The **white pawn** takes the black pawn. I find forgiveness. The next day I find that I want to kill again. The truth is, it does not appear that I have been truly saved. Another **black pawn** moves. I remain in that state. Things steam roll. Now **lots of white pawns** are down. But I read in scripture that a struggle is normal in the Christian life and there are lots of encouraging scriptures. My **white queen** takes out some of the better pieces. Then I think, my salvation is secure. I cannot lose it. Therefore **it does not matter what I do**. The **black pieces** start taking down the **white ones**. Then I learn the importance of faith and that faith must work or it is not faith at all. It matters intensely what I do. The **white pieces** gain more ground. Those of us who have been believers for a long time have discovered a lot of truths about our lives that are devastating. But right on the tails of those destructive truths are truths that set us free. And right after **that truth** is an implication of the **previous truth** that seems very bad. And we go to scripture and find relief from **that partial truth** as well. That is what happens in sanctification. That is what is going on when we love Christ and love truth. It truly is a battle. When this is true, truth has not fallen in the street. This is what the Christian who loves truth looks like. But when the **white pieces** are left standing still on the chess board and only **the black ones** get to move, that is truth trampled in the street. When **the partial truth that debilitates** is allowed **all the power**, that is the thing that robs people of justice, righteousness and equity.

God was not going to allow His people to remain in that state then and He will only suffer so long with it now.

### **2 Thessalonians 2:10 (NKJV)**

**10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

Do you see what you receive to be saved? The love of the truth. Believers are by definition **lovers of truth**. It has to have an effect. Truth cannot remain dormant forever in a believer's life. We must **obey** the truth. We must **believe** the truth. And the **truth will set us free**. That is the process whereby we get freedom in our day to day lives. We cannot allow truth to be trampled in the street of our minds.

Then verse 21 of Chapter 59 gives us the **pivot point** of change. This is what God does to those who have no heart for truth that He described earlier.

### **Isaiah 59:21 (NKJV)**

**21 "As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."**

Do you see this remedy? God makes a covenant. God binds himself to us in a way that He becomes our God and we become His people. God puts **His truth** in His people. **His Spirit** and **His Words** are put into their lives in a way that makes a change. Faith causes these people to be doers and not hearers only. He does a work that enflames faith. And to what end? That is where we get to in verse 1 of our text this week.

That was the before God moved in our lives. Next is the **"after"**

### **Isaiah 60:1-22 (NKJV)**

**1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.**

The imagery here is of the city shining from the light that is shining upon it. But the context won't allow us to believe this is to be limited to the city of Jerusalem. What is being described is a worldwide beauty and a world wide outreach. So what is this talking about? It really couldn't be anything other than the glory of Christ.

We were **dead** in our trespasses and sin as in our **"truth trampled in the streets"** passage. Then God covenanted with us to make us His people. Now He pours out His saving glory. One can't help thinking of Luke.

### **Luke 2:8-14 (NKJV)**

**8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields,**

keeping watch over their flock by night.

**<sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.**

**<sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.**

**<sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

**<sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."**

**<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:**

**<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"**

Here is the answer to the lack of justice and righteousness and truth and equity. Here is the solution to our deadness to truth and justice. Here is the restorer of proper relationship. Here the Glory of God has risen upon us. Here is the glory of Christ incarnate.

And what was the plan?

**<sup>2</sup> For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.**

**<sup>3</sup> The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

God's plan begins here with darkness. It begins with a lack of truth, a lack of light. If you get discouraged at the darkness around you, you don't need to be. God will use this darkness as a background for His great light.

**John 3:19-21 (NKJV)**

**<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

**<sup>20</sup> For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

**<sup>21</sup> But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."**

There is no doubt that our world is in darkness. We see it everywhere. But that is not the end. God is not ready to throw up His hands. In fact, He has a very different plan. He is going to **turn on the light**. But it is interesting how this is worded. Again it is like the sun rising on the city. That is the imagery. The light of God is going to be shown on the people of God to a dramatic effect. The glory that is seen in our lives will draw outsiders to the kingdom in.

Notice something important here. It is what comes from outside of ourselves that draws people to Christ. It is the glory that He shines that draws people. It is **His fingerprints**, not **our achievements** that draw people to Christ. It is referred to as our light and our rising, but it is **reflected** light. It does not originate in us. It is **reflected** by us.

People are not going to be saved by what they see about **us** that is good. People will be saved by what they see **about God** that is good displayed openly in our lives. It is the **light reflected** that attracts.

Isn't that a relief? We don't have to pretend. We don't have to paste on a smile and act like everything is great. We simply need to respond to God's covenanted love toward us and receive His Son. Then we walk in His light and people will see a change in us that cannot be explained by something **about us**. That is the light that attracts. And naturally, when we explain it, we talk about King and Savior Jesus. How could we do anything else? And while that light will not draw everyone, it will draw the people that God is working on. Based on this we might conclude that the best evangelism strategy is to live a life that most reflects the changes that truth and the Holy Spirit make in a person's life. That is walking in the light. We should be able to present the Gospel clearly. We have all had some practice at that. But even Paul talking to Timothy never allowed the focus in ministry to rest solely on the doctrine. As important as doctrine is, Paul told Timothy to **take heed to both his life and the doctrine**. For in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Good evangelism is not all "living well". Nor is it all "good doctrine". It is not an either/or situation. Good evangelism is the combination that God desires of "good doctrine lived well". Do you want to have the maximum evangelistic effect? That is what we must do.

**4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side.**

**5 Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.**

Now here we sit at Ferndale. And what does this have to do with us? We aren't seeing this. I can talk to nearly every one of you and you each have a story of people you have shared Christ's glory with. You have told others about how to be right with God. And we might be tempted to look at verses 4 and 5 and think, "we must be excluded". Or "we must be doing something wrong". But we should not be discouraged. What we are seeing here is the

big picture. This is what is happening in the church of Christ. It is quite likely if we were doing exactly **what we do today** in a different area of the world, we would see people gathering around, coming to Christ at our church. We simply don't know about those kinds of things.

We don't know what people are coming to Christ as a result of the thousands of Bibles we have provided in Syria? We don't know what movements of God have started from our humble dollars. We don't know what the people who have been raised in our church and who have moved on are accomplishing. We don't know what effect the sermons online are having. We don't know what happens with all the people we talk to at the fair. We don't know what the results are of vacation bible school, or any of the things we do for outsiders. We don't know. But we do know that Christ is drawing people from all people groups to Himself **by and for** His own glory. And He always does it using **His glory** reflected through human beings in one form or another.

We will one day see all this. We will see the big picture one day. And these things in Isaiah will be true of His people, no matter how small our part was. **you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,**

Can you imagine what it will be like when we meet a believer in Syria in eternity and he hunts us down individually to thank us for the money we put in our old wooden offering plate in Oakland MD. And to hear him or her say, I am here because of you. Or to have any of the people we have ministered to come to us and say, thank you. God used you to save me. What could we say but- praise Jesus. How could we help but be radiant. How could our hearts not swell with joy? That is all part of storing up treasures in heaven. We need to get that. When the plate goes around for offerings to missions, or when opportunities come up for evangelistic outreaches, these are not **painful demands**. They are **amazing opportunities** to see God's glory expanded. I don't always see them that way, but I am very glad to be humbled by the people who do.

And suppose we do all these efforts and worst case, no one comes to Christ. We are still on that winning team. We will still share that joy as people flock through that final gate singing praise to our Lord.

One day, if we are in Christ, for sure, our hearts will swell with joy for the glory being returned to our Savior for all that He has done for people from everywhere on the globe.

**<sup>6</sup> The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring**

gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

**7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory.**

**8 "Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud, And like doves to their roosts?**

**9 Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them, To the name of the LORD your God, And to the Holy One of Israel, Because He has glorified you.**

**10 "The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you.**

Look at the picture here.

We look at our world and we see such a contrast to this. God is robbed of glory at every turn. This world operates on rules that are completely contrary to what God says. We see the financial world, the entertainment world, the education world, the political world, and everywhere we see evil flaunted and God mocked. It is so easy to lose perspective. It is so easy to think that this is how it will always be. But it will **not always be this way**. A day is coming when all will be made right. The world we live in now will be shown for how upside down it really was.

And there will be people from all different cultures flocking into eternity.

We are told of this in Revelation

**Revelation 21:22-27 (NKJV)**

**22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.**

**23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.**

**24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.**

**25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).**

**26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.**

**27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.**

This is real friends. This will happen, just like Isaiah tells us. I love brother Ortland's commentary on this.

He says this:

**The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into the holy city—human literature and music and dress and all aspects of culture, but purified and consecrated to Christ, flowing into the church, enriching everyone and beautifying the place of God's presence. Can you picture it? Here comes a string quartet from Vienna playing Mozart, here comes a steel drum band from the Caribbean, here comes a pipe band from Scotland in their kilts, here comes a teenage garage band from 1960s California, and all the rest. No one is excluded—except those who are too good for Christ and his church.**

*Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word - Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.*

I don't know if this is how it will be. But it would not surprise me in the least. We will have the very best of planet earth without the sin.

And before we finish I want to go back to the last part of verse 10.

**For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you.**

God's intentions for His people are good. God's wrath is meant to destroy.

God's wrath is not poured out upon those He is saving. But his **discipline** is.

We need to base our belief in this truth. **Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)**

**6 But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

If you are going through a tough time of God's discipline, you need to keep this in mind. He is a rewarder. His action to His people is never to destroy them. It may be to get through our thick skulls that we need to listen. He may be trying to humble us. He may be saying, your way does not work. Don't kick against the goads. Don't be so stubborn. He may be saying "Change might look bad to you, but it is not nearly as bad as what my discipline can be."

**Hebrews 12:5-11 (NKJV)**

**5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;***

**6 *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."***

**7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?**

**8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.**

**9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?**



**10 For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness.**

**11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

If you are being disciplined, remember this “but” from God. **But in My favor I have had mercy on you.** That is the end game in what you are facing if you are His child.

God’s intentions for His people are always good. Always. Right now. Good. No matter what we are facing right now, God did not allow it without reason. He is working toward something good in your life.