

Glimpses of Glory God's Light

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Preacher: Nick Freestone

[0 : 00] So you get up. You got up early. It's 5 a.m. and you drive down to the ocean. The sky is clear.

You walk to the water's edge and you look east and you wait. The sky starts to brighten up. You start to doubt why you got up in the first place.

With the cool sand under your feet, a wave begins to break and then light dawns over that wave and hits you full in the face.

It's a beautiful experience. With your eyes closed, you take a breath. Light warming your skin, illuminating your face.

You're the best you've ever looked in this light, you imagine. And then you exhale like you've just taken a drag of some hope-giving life-fuelling drink.

[1 : 04] Sunrise is amazing. But in truth, the earth has just rotated around again. Technically, nothing special has happened.

And yet, for humans, when the sunrise kisses our face, something special happens. It's like the sun whispers its creator's promise in our ear.

Something wonderful is coming. There's a glorious new day coming. There's hope. Some day, this new day is going to come.

And what we've just read from Isaiah 60 in this whole chapter is the sunrise. And that whisper of hope, but with a megaphone.

It's the joy of experiencing a sunrise times a billion. When light will dawn on an unending day and all will be set right in the world.

[2 : 07] And more than we can ever imagine, Israel needed hope for a new day. Israel, the hearers of this message, they were in a relentless loop of only darkness, night or day.

Sun was up. They were in the dark. Isaiah describes it in chapter 59 like this. Justice is far from us. Righteousness doesn't reach us.

We look for light, but all is darkness. For brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind, we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes.

Israel were broken. They were enslaved. They were oppressed. And desperate for light to dawn. And few of us in the room or online or in this age in Sydney could ever comprehend being forcibly removed from our country.

Or have any sense of that trauma or loss. For many of us, especially those elsewhere in the world. But I think many of us here too could strongly identify with longing for a new day to dawn.

[3 : 24] A new day for others that we see. People we see on the news. People we see struggling in our community. Those that we love going through an awful season.

Or maybe we're in that season ourselves. We long for a place in the world. A place in the world. A place in the world. We long for a place in the world.

A nearness to something greater. A purpose in life. Or maybe even to God himself. Or an end to conflict and destruction and injustice.

We don't have to look around our world for long to know that there is a darkness in the world and over all people that we all wish would retreat once and for all.

And what this is, is a symptom of spiritual darkness that is over all things under the earth. Even the liveliest, happiest human without God is in spiritual darkness.

[4 : 34] Ephesians 2, 1 and 2 describes it like this. It describes life following in the ways of the world as a spiritual death. Dead in transgressions and sins.

Dancing in the sun. Drowning in darkness. Dead while you live. All people desperately long, whether they know it or not, for a spiritual dawn.

Israel looked for God to rebuild their national pride, their city and end their pain. And we might hope for a world with no injustice, no greed and peace under this sun.

We would all love God if he is there to move our world in the direction or in the desire that we have for the world. Move our world from this day to a better day.

Where the satisfaction of every human soul will be done. And it is way beyond the expectations of Israel, us, and maybe even reality, that we get Isaiah chapter 60.

[5 : 50] So, we are going to begin by looking for six things that God will do on this day. On this new day.

And it's not clickbait, but the last two will surprise you. Certainly surprised Israel.

So, look at me. Open your Bibles, chapter 60. We are going to fly through some wonderful things here. We are going to start in verse 2. First, God sees thick darkness that covers the earth.

Everything I've just talked about, God sees it. It's good news. God sees Israel's plight. God sees your struggle. He sees all people in spiritual darkness.

And he promises to melt away the darkness of the world. And he asks you in verse 1 to open your eyes and behold. Not for some whisper in an earthly sunrise.

[6 : 52] But to behold the glory of a merciful God. And then he says to Israel in verse 10. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion.

Israel was bearing the cost of their rebellion and sin in exile. And our world is deeply scarred by the dark mark of all people's sin.

God's anger towards us is right. But at his heart is compassion. Is mercy.

All people turn from God. But he mercifully turns his favor towards them. He promises to beautify this people.

I'm going to actually jump into the next chapter, verse 3. Because it's a little summary of a number of verses in chapter 60. Where he says, Beautiful city for a beautiful people.

[8 : 19] That's right. He's going to rebuild Israel's ruins. Israel's city lies empty in verse 15 as it says. But God will fill it and restore its pride.

And as Gary read, even give it new walls. The harsh rulers as well will be replaced with peace and well-being.

Their pathetic wealth will literally turn to gold. In verse 17. And riches from all over the world are going to pour through their gates.

In verse 11. And those gates, once echoed with the horrifying noise of war, and now going to ring with the symphony of praise and welcome.

In verse 18. Don't mishear as well. Like the unspoken things in chapter 60. The unspoken moments of grace of our merciful God.

[9 : 27] Israel have done nothing to deserve this wondrous picture of a new city. To be made beautiful. For their mourning and pain and even the sound of their past to be once ended.

Now here's the bit that Israel would not expect. And maybe the twist that you wouldn't expect. More than half of this chapter is dedicated to describing a kaleidoscope of nations.

who will come to this new made city. Like a fleet of ships. So vast that it's like a storm front coming over the horizon.

Where Israel panics. Imagine them watching the ocean. And this massive storm front is coming. But it's not a storm. They're the sails of ships. It's not a storm.

It's like flocks of birds blocking out the sun. There's so many of them. There's so many of them.

They are the nations coming not to wage war and destroy the place.

[10 : 34] But to surrender and find acceptance in this new city with Israel. We don't stand in this room without that promise. We are from all over the world in this church.

And what's beautiful as well is they bring their cultural diversity. Their culturally unique giftedness. Still retained somehow in this astonishing coming together of peoples. Only conformed by their desire to worship God.

And to share in citizenship in this city. They are the sons and daughters that are in verse 4 that Gary read out. The sons and daughters of Israel are going to be gathered from the nations.

Carried into the city. They too are the shoot that I have planted as God says. They too are the work of my hands.

[11 : 34] For the display of my splendor. Here together all people will discover their longings met. And as it said in verse 5. Everyone together will look at one another.

And they will be radiant. Their heart will throb and swell with joy. Not just because of the blessings and beauty that they share in the city. But because of this second and even greater shock. This vow that they get in Isaiah 60. And it is this. God is there. The Lord himself will be the light of this city.

As it says in verse 2. The Lord rises upon you. His glory appears over you. No more will the rising of the sun nor the moon be man's hope for a better day.

But God will literally be their light forever. Your sun and moon will never set again. Your sun will never set again.

[12:35] Your moon will wane no more. The Lord will be your everlasting light. And your days of sorrow will end. Day after day in darkness will be over.

Sorrow will end with God with us. Just pause now. Just consider how wonderful this promise in this chapter is.

Darkness is gone. All peoples united. None of this imagined. Sorry John Lennon. This is bigger. Because our creator is here. Or will be. On that day. It's beyond imagining. This is not a promise that you can imagine God enacting right now in this world.

And yet that's somehow going to happen. And you might dare to ask. Okay. So when will this happen God? Just like a click bait.

[13:44] Link. Does kind of already sound a little bit too good to be true doesn't it? Well let's see. What God does for us.

Around this wonderful promise picture of Isaiah 60. Is he wraps a little frame around it. There are verses just before.

And just after. That tell us when this day is going to dawn. When this promise is going to begin. So let's. In your Bible. Just have a look back. One verse before.

Isaiah 59. 21. God covenants with Israel. He promises them. That he will send.

The Messiah King. The one whose nature we've been discovering. Across the last term. Of this whole series. The one who will have God's words on his tongue.

[14:41] And God's spirit upon him. The coming of that person. The coming of that person is the moment. That this promised picture. Will begin to shine. In our world.

When the Messiah. The servant king. Comes. And then on the other side of the frame. We have. The Messiah speaking. Identifying himself.

He will commit. To achieving. To achieving. What Isaiah 61. One and two says. As the suffering servant.

As the king of kings. Jesus. So when someone. Puts their hand up. And reads from. Isaiah 61. That's. Him. He's the one.

That's the moment. That's the dawn. He is the light of the world. God. And the question is. Has someone done that yet? Is that day here?

[15:39] Because Israel got back. After exile. To a city. And had to rebuild it. Themselves. And with God empowering them. They did so. But they never rose back. To that glory.

That they even once had. They were still oppressed. By powers. Around them. They never attained. Even. Even.

Even. In part. To this glorious picture. That's described. In chapter 60. Of Isaiah. So right now.

We're going to do something. A little bit different. Don't know if it's going to work.

We're going to try it anyway. Because as Isaiah 60 ends. We're going to take up. The symphony. That is scripture. And if you heard.

The first sermon. In this series. Isaiah is. A bit like. A symphony. Where every little melody.

Everything that you hear. Over and over. It comes back in. And you think. Oh.

[16:34] I remember when God promised. I remember when. That judgment. Was promised. And now it's come. A symphony's melody. Comes in.

And disappears. And then. Crescendos. And then comes back down. And as we go through. The whole of Isaiah. We get to hold on. To some of those things. So right now.

We're going to look at. The book of Luke. We're going to listen. To the symphony. And we're going to listen. To the moment. When God kept his promise. At the end of Isaiah 60.

That in its time. I will do it swiftly. He said. The moment. When the sunrise came. Sunrise. That we long for.

Because the sun rose. On the land. On a day like every other. And like a broken record. With a piano melody. That never changes.

[17:28] And drones on and on. The nation of Israel. Waited for a new day. It was a Saturday. A Sabbath. And across the country. Promises of God. Were being read. And remembered.

People dreamed. Of seeing their nation. Restored. To the glories. Of long ago. What the prophecies would say. Would come. And in one small town. Where nothing great ever happened.

It was time for people. To hear the scriptures together. Recently. The carpenter's son. Had made a bit of a name. For himself. Around the region. As a preacher.

And word got around. That he'd come home. For the weekend. And so. The place was nearly full. But no one really expected. Much from him. Because he was just Joe's kid. A guy from Nazareth. Like the rest of them. And nothing special. And he was handed the scroll of Isaiah. And he unrolled it to his chosen place. Which we now know as Isaiah 61.

[18:24] Chapter 1. And he read. The spirit of the Lord is on me. Because he's anointed me. To proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom. For the prisoners.

Recovery of sight to the blind. To set the oppressed free. And proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. Then that man. Named Jesus. Sat down. And said.

Today. Scripture is fulfilled. In your hearing. Do you see what just happened? Do you see what just happened?

Light. Has dawned. Jesus announced the favour of God. Had come. Had come. In his own town. But also to his own nation.

Where they were desperate to find their Messiah. To all people who. Look at the sunrise of every day. And know it's not enough. And he said to all people. To you. I am the light of the world.

[19:24] I am here. I am here. But immediately. His countrymen rejected him. Those in that room. Marched him up the hill. To throw him off a cliff. But he walked through their midst.

And on. To Jerusalem. Where one day he would die. At the hands of the people. That he came to save. Outside the walls of the city. That he promised to rebuild. And in dying. Take on all the darkness.

That blinded their eyes. To his light. And to shine to the nations. Beyond these borders. And deal with darkness. In one depth. So that all people could arise. And see the light of life.

But we stand here. On another day. With the same droning piano loop. Going over and over.

Day after day. Time goes on. And we're gathered around scripture. In the same room. And online. On a weekend.

[20:22] To consider what Jesus has accomplished for us. And waiting for his coming again. When that day will finally come. Come. The dawn has come.

The light of the world. Is here. Jesus' disciple John. Saw a vision. Which. He shared with us. And we call it. Revelation chapter 21. It's beautifully similar. To Isaiah 60. But it adds this beautiful little detail. I want you to hold on to it.

Have a look at Revelation 21 with me. A city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. For the glory of God gives it light. And the lamb.

Is its light. And the nations will walk by it. On no day will its gates be ever shut. For there will be no night there. Jesus the lamb of God.

[21:23] Will be the ever present lamplight of that city. Because. Because. The lamb was slaughtered. For this city's population.

He endured cosmic spiritual darkness. As Tim Keller calls it. To literally be our eternal light. On that day. That's the sunrise.

That God bids you arise. And shine. Taking your next step. In the light of Jesus. So. Open Isaiah 60 again.

Look at verse 4. Verse 1 says. Arise. Shine. Verse 4 says. Lift up your eyes.

And look about you. At your life. And at the world you see today. Do you see. The thick darkness. Around people.

[22:21] That Isaiah sees. Do you see this. Isaiah 59.9 says. So justice is far from us. And righteousness does not reach us. But we look for light.

But all is darkness. Brightness. But we walk in deep shadows. Take a moment. Sometime today. And seriously consider. The plight of the world.

Without God's intervention. And as you pause. To consider the words. Of Isaiah. Also consider these.

Of Jesus Christ. Rachel read them before. John 8. Verse 12. I am. The light of the world. Jesus says.

Whoever follows me. Will never walk in darkness. But will have the light. Of life. Jesus is God's mercy.

[23 : 17] And favor. To all people. With skin on. He's the dawn of the new day. That every heart.

Desires. He's the light of life. He's your hope. Beyond the sunset of death. For eternal. Glorious day. So if you have not yet. Step into his light.

And follow Jesus. Come speak to us about him. Maybe come to Alpha. God shines his light.

On all people. Through the words. Of a book. Scripture. Is for us. Like. The beach. The beach.

Where God's light. Dawns. Each day. Or night. Or whenever we open it. As Psalm 119. Says. In verse 130. The unfolding of your word.

[24 : 12] Gives light. And 115. Your word is a lamp. To my feet. A light. On my path. These words. In a book. Are where we find.

The light. And the Holy Spirit. Work through. Us. Comes through. The word. In us. Through us. And it's our.

The Holy Spirit. Is our passport. If you will. As citizens. Of this new city. And as the light. Of God's words. Illuminate us. Like.

The sunrise. Hitting our face. We. We become. What the nations. Are drawn to. Isaiah 60. Verse 3. Says. Nations.

Will come to. Your light. Kings. To the brightness. Of your dawn. Jesus. Says it this way.

[25 : 09] You are the light. Of the world. A town. Built on a hill. That cannot be hidden. Let your light. Shine. Before others.

In Matthew 5. That might be shocking. To you. Because we've just heard. Who the light. Of the world. Is. That in following him. We become. The light.

Of the world. What is that. Going to look like. Well. Verse 1. Says. Arise. Verse 4. Says. Look. Verse 1. Also says.

Shine. Light is given for us. To be a light. To people. In darkness. Words.

Shine forth. From God's book. For us. To share. With them. With the people. Around us. In conversations. Friend to friend. With workmates.

[26 : 05] With loved ones. And in the light of Jesus. We become. Part. Of his kingdom. Work. Go back to the. First bit of the frame. Because.

We're actually. In it. With Jesus. Isaiah. 59. 21. Verse. Right before our passage. Today. God says. Of the Messiah. My spirit.

Who is on you. Will not depart from you. Nor my words. That I have put. In your mouth. Will always be on your lips. And on the lips. Of your children. And on the lips.

Of their descendants. From this time. Forth. And forevermore. The sons and daughters. Brought into the city. From all nations. Will have.

Words from a book. On their lips. So they can shine. To the world. So if you follow Jesus. God promises. That his holy spirit.

[27 : 01] Will make his words. Shine through you. In what you say. But also. Attractively. Through.

What you do. Because if we share. In the Messiah's spirit. Then we are to share. In his. Words. And actions. Jesus did not.

Jesus. All Jesus did. In proclaiming the good news. And attending to the needs. Of the weak. And the poor. We joyfully emulate.

Like children dancing. In the shadow. Of a parent. God will answer. Cries of need. Through you. In my community group.

This week. One of. One of. One of our. Members. Paul. Who's right in front of me. Here. Said. Oh. I don't want us to miss. Isaiah 58. Well we're not.

[28 : 03] Don't worry Paul. Isaiah 58. 10. If you do away. With the yoke of oppression. The pointing finger. And malicious talk.

If you spend yourselves. On behalf of the hungry. And satisfy the needs. Of the oppressed. Then your light. Will rise in the darkness. And your light. Will become like.

The noon. Noon day. Shining. As God's people. Looks like. Serving others. In the footsteps.

Of Jesus. We are his light. To our world. To all people. St. Paul's Chatswood.
There are people. In our city. In spiritual. Black. In thick. Cosmic. Darkness.
[28 : 59] Even as they walk. Affluently. And self-assured. Into the light. Of each new day. In our
city. So many in darkness. So many in darkness.
Whether it be. Clouds of abuse. Or the endless night. Of mental illness. Or enduring. All kinds. Of
hardships. Jesus has come. For.
This church. For you. To be. A new day. For them. He is the light. Of their world. Too. But like.
Isaiah says. They're blind. And they can't see. As Jesus has risen on you. So now you are his
sunrise.
For all people. So arise. Look around you. And shine. Okay.