

"Your Light HAs Come"

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's good to see you all here. We're glad you have braved the cold to join us this morning. Thank you to Chi-Sing for making sure that our sanctuary is warm. We are thankful for that. Amen.

Glory seeking is something that is common in our culture today. Whether it be the desire to take your photo with a famous celebrity, whether it be a movie star or an athletic star or a politician, we love to have those photos on our walls to bask in the famousness of others.

The things in our pockets are filled with TikToks and Instagrams, phones, and the desire to be an influencer is somehow now a career in our world as people are hungry for followers and to be known.

I would even say that glory seeking is under our obsession in our culture with sports teams. Glory by association. We won. You sat on a couch. You didn't do anything, but we won.

We like to find glory in various places because it's a fundamental human desire. It reflects the fact that we were made in the image of a glorious God and that we were made for a kind of glory. But in the fall, our search for this glory has been twisted and lost. Rather than receiving glory from God, we so often seek to manufacture glory on our own. And as we do this, there are one of two outcomes. We either succeed and in doing so find ourselves consumed with pride that we have actually gotten glory, an insecurity that knowing how easily we might lose it. Or we fail. And then we live lives of despair or of envy of those who seem to have glory in this world.

[2 : 25] Glory seeking is at the heart of humanity. And you know, it's interesting to think about the fact that the church as an institution, as a people, has not been immune to this either. There have been times when the church has been ascendant or dominant in a culture. It has felt glorious in that position, but how often has it allowed pride to rise up? And the glory has not been received from God, but built by our own efforts and by our own performances, creating the same kind of insecurities.

And then there are also times where the church doesn't feel glorious at all. I think of my two years in China and how difficult it was to feel like the church, talking to my brothers and sisters there, how do we make an impact on this culture that just has no understanding and no idea, and the church seems so small and so insignificant, wondering how would we gain the kind of glory that we think we ought to have?

This is not a new feeling for the people of God. When you go back to 700 B.C. and the prophet Isaiah, which is our text for this morning, you'll see that they too felt very insignificant, stuck between the great superpowers of Assyria and Egypt, assailed and manipulated by their local neighbors, Syria and Ephraim.

They wondered, where is the glory of David and Solomon? And interestingly enough too, in the first century, when Jesus came to this world, the church, the people of God at that time also wondered, where is the glory of Israel?

As they lived under the domination of Rome, as Israel was just a small protectorate in a huge empire, ruled by Gentile rulers.

[4 : 44] In the human desire for glory, so often God's people have felt small and insignificant. But God speaks to us.

God tells us to lift up our eyes. As His people, God speaks to us and says, Look to me. Though you feel small and insignificant, there is a greater glory that is yours and will be yours for all of eternity. It will not be a glory of your own making, but it will be a glory that I will bring you into. And this is what our passage about this morning.

We're in Isaiah 60. I forgot to look up the page number. Someone want to give me a page number on that? Isaiah 60. We're going to be looking at the whole chapter. What's that?

6.19. Thank you, Susie. If you're using a pew Bible, 6.19. Isaiah 60. We're going to be looking at this passage together. And just to remember, our Advent preaching series, the theme has been light in the darkness.

[5 : 58] And we've been looking through the ways that the prophet Isaiah long ago predicted the coming of Jesus and how His coming was light in the darkness.

And we saw that imagery in different places. We saw it particularly in Isaiah 9. But this promise was, God sees the world in darkness, and He has not forgotten it, but He is going to act to bring light.

And that light would not be a force, but a person, the person of Jesus. And so, in Isaiah 7.14, remember, we saw, a virgin will conceive and bear a son, and He will be called Emmanuel, God with us.

Or if you remember, in Isaiah 9.6, verse 6, where it says, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

And then last week, Pastor Nick talked about Isaiah 11. There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

[7 : 10] And then further on, it says, in that day, the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples, of him shall the nation shall acquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

So, Isaiah is preparing us for this passage. Now, Isaiah is a big book. The ESV Study Bible has this great story, or great summary that says, the whole book of Isaiah portrays God's plan for Judah as a story that is headed somewhere, namely the coming of a final heir of David who will bring light to the Gentiles.

And Israel was created for this purpose, that from Israel might come this one who would bring glory to the whole world. And friends, this is what we see in Isaiah 60, a promise, a prediction that there is a greater glory for God's people that He invites us into.

So, let's read together and look at it. Isaiah 60, starting in verse 1. Arise, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you, and nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

[8 : 46] Lift up your eyes all around and see. They all gather together. They come to you. Your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you. The wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah. All those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.

All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you. The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you. They shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.

Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? For the coastland shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them.

[10 : 05] For the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because He has made you beautiful. 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. Your gates shall be opened continually day and night. They shall not be shut.

That the people may bring to you the wealth of the nations with their kings led in procession. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish.

Those nations shall be utterly laid waste. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the Cyprus, the plain, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despise you shall bow down at your feet. They shall call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

[11 : 12] Whereas you have been forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations.

You shall nourish the breasts of kings. You shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze, I will bring gold, and instead of iron, I will bring silver.

Instead of wood, bronze. Instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in your land.

Devastation or destruction within your borders. You shall call your walls salvation, and your gates praise. And the sun shall be no more, your light by day.

Nor for the brightness shall the moon give you light. But the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself.

[12 : 22] For the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous, and they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

The least one shall become a clan, the smallest one a mighty nation. I am the Lord. In its time, I will hasten it. This is God's good word to us this morning.

Let's pray together. Oh, Lord, we thank you for your word. And, Lord, with all the richness of imagery, we pray that we might, Lord, by your Spirit, have understanding this morning.

Lord, I pray that you would help me to speak as I ought. I pray for all of us, that we would receive your word. And, Lord, that by it, you would minister to our hearts, that we would submit and obey, and know, Lord, the joy of your glory.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Friends, the big idea for us this morning is that there is a greater glory for us, a greater glory in the kingdom of Jesus.

[13 : 49] And Isaiah predicts this, and he points us to it, and he helps us to see it. I've broken down our passage into three sections. Each one shows a particular aspect of the glory of what Jesus has brought for us.

So, let's look at those together. The first one is a large section, verses 1 through 14. And in it, we see that there is a glory of a promised kingdom greater than the nations.

In the beginning of this chapter, as you see, there is this call. Arise, shine, for your light has come, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

And it's this call. Church, though you feel small and insignificant, look, God has not forgotten you, but He has come with glory.

Remember how small Israel felt at the time of Isaiah's prophecy. Assyria had invaded the northern kingdom.

[14 : 59] Ten tribes of the twelve tribes of Israel had been conquered and scattered, never to be gathered again in the same way. They were not a major player on the sociopolitical world, but a football for nations to pass around but God says, my glory will come upon you.

And when that comes, the nations of the world that seem so great right now, they will respond by coming to you.

They will come in honor and worship to you. Look at some of the ways that Isaiah draws this out, right? In verse 3, the nations shall come to your light.

They will come from their darkness to the people of God because there is light there. Verses 4 and verse 9 will talk about the gathering of people, that there are people spread all over the world, and your sons and daughters will come from afar to be gathered in to the people of Israel.

In verses 5 through 7, it's a striking picture, if you look at it, that the wealth of nations will be brought and laid at the feet of the people of God and His King and their kingdom, right?

[16 : 24] It's this, when we look around, we just think there's so much power and so much wealth and so much military might, and we think, what is the people of God? But one of the promises is that we are caught up into something that's so much greater.

The nations will come and bow their knee one day to Jesus, and not only will they no longer be enemies, but they will serve you. You look at verses 10 and 11, it's saying, these nations will come and they will be building your gates.

They will be contributing to the glory of the kingdom that is to come. The best of the world's riches will come and serve God and His people, the cedars of Lebanon.

That's what that means. This symbol is there. This is the richest thing out there, and it's being brought to serve the kingdom of God. There's also a callback to the temple of Solomon that was built with cedars of Lebanon, and then this is saying, it's going to come back.

It's going to be renewed. It's going to be restored, and even greater than that, God gives this tapestry of imagery to say that the glory of the kingdom that Jesus brings is that it will come ultimately in triumph, and it will be the center of all human existence and all of life on this earth, and the riches and the wealth of the world will be given to it to serve.

[18:05] And Jesus comes to bring this fulfillment, and we'll keep talking about what that looks like as we go on through this, but do you remember Matthew 2?

What happens in the beginning of Matthew 2? Matthew 2, there are wise men from the east who look up and see a light that has come into the darkness of the sky, and they think, and they see it as important.

And so these wise men, kings, rulers, whoever they, from lands far away, come, and they bring their richest gifts to lay at the feet of a baby, or maybe a toddler at that point.

We can talk about the timeline another day. But they come and lay down their wealth before this child because a light led them to this.

Don't miss the fact that Matthew's read Isaiah, and he knows where this is going. So there's this little clue, even with the, we three kings of Orient are, those ones are brought in to this partial fulfillment.

[19:17] And then as we see throughout the rest of the New Testament, as Jesus comes and he lives his life and his death and his resurrection, and as the church begins, right, in Acts 2, the church begins not just with the Jewish people, but with other people.

There are other languages that the gospel is preached to, and people from other lands respond and begin to come. And what had been a national plan in the Old Testament that God would lift up Israel as one nation to be a light to all people so that all people could know God now becomes the church, this transnational, international being that no nation can claim as its own.

But this church then becomes this reaching the ends of the earth so that God is drawing people from everywhere through the preaching of the gospel.

And we know this is true because when you look at the vision in Revelation, when we see Jesus in his throne room in all of his glory, John writes this, after this I look and behold a multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

Friends, in light of all the glories that we might see in this world, God says there is a greater glory among the nations, a glory that reaches and draws all nations better than any nationalism, a glory that reveals a triumph greater than any political or social victory, a triumph that brings riches and wealth beyond our imagination, a glory in the fulfillment of what God is doing now in building a global church of people from every tribe and tongue and nation.

[21:30] And though you might feel small now, though you might feel like the culture is this big hairy beast and we can't stand among it and it feels like the darkness may be encroaching over us, God says, no, that's not the end of the story.

There is a different end of the story and it's already begun. Jesus has already come as light in the darkness and right now He's doing this work and one day we will see the fullness and the fulfillment of it and its glory will be so great.

Be encouraged, be strengthened, press on, arise, shine for your glory has come. Your glory will be a greater glory among the nations than you can even imagine.

That's the first point. Then in verses 15 through 18, there's another kind of glory that's pictured here. This is the glory of a Redeemer in His renewed kingdom.

Look with me in verses 16 and following. You see this, you see it in verse 15, right? Sorry, I meant verse 15.

[22:46] That's where I wanted to go. Let's go to verse 15. It says, this is the great reversal that the Redeemer brings. You who were forsaken and hated with no one passing through, that means that you were off the beaten track.

In fact, you were just a nobody in the wilderness. I will make you majestic forever, a joy to the age. So, God comes as a Redeemer to take people from insignificance to something much greater.

And the images are forsaken and hated to majesty and joy, right? Verse 17, it's an upgrade to a greater treasure. If you look at the Hebrew parallelism, what He's really saying is wood will be turned to bronze, will be turned to gold, and stones will be turned to iron, will be turned to silver. What is common, what seems mundane and very simple and not very glorious, will be transformed into something that has all wealth and glory.

It's transformed into something precious. And this is what God is doing. And when the nations that threatened them, that were their overseers and taskmasters that brought oppression and suffering and evil, they will be turned into peace and righteousness.

[24 : 14] And the walls and gates are no longer for protection, but they are places of welcome and praise. The glory of God, our Redeemer, has this theme of this great transformation from nothing to something, from things that are not good to things that are glorious.

of course, this is what Jesus comes to do. He comes into darkness to bring light.

He comes to those who are angry and rebellious and He brings peace. He comes to those who are wandering and wondering and lost and brings truth.

He comes to those who are unloving, unlovable, I'm sorry, unlovely and feel unlovable. And He loves them.

This is what we see when Jesus interacts with people throughout the Gospels. This is what we see as the calling of the church to care for the poor and the widows, for the outsiders, for the needy, for those who are on the margins of society as a special care, as a part of our loving the whole world.

[25 : 43] But of course, the greatest thing of all that Jesus does in this role of a great reversal redeemer is that He deals with our sin because all of us in our sin have a great need for a redeemer.

and Jesus comes as the light of the world to do this great exchange for us. He takes our sin upon Himself as He goes to the cross.

He imparts to us through faith in Him a righteousness that is not our own that allows us to stand before a holy God and know acceptance and embrace and love.

His death for us as He went to the cross brings life to all who are in Him. He was despised and rejected so that we could be loved and embraced.

He went into the darkness of death so that we could know Him to be the light of life. friends, I do want to say this morning there is one hint in this grand picture of glory in this chapter there is one hint of warning in it.

[27 : 08] Verse 12 look with me at it for the nation and the kingdom that will not serve you shall perish and the nation shall be utterly laid to waste.

friends, our rejection and our rebellion against God will exclude us from this glory that this chapter portrays.

It tells us that not all will receive not all will come not all will bow down before Him but God will not share His glory and for those who say no thanks God I want to do this on my own I'll take my own glory over yours He will say you can have the glory that you choose but you will find it to be empty you will find it to be vacuous you will find it to be unstable and ultimately you will find yourself excluded cut off from this glorious kingdom and so there is in this great reversal and invitation and a call come to Jesus come and find in Him the forgiveness of sin and eternal life come and believe in Him so that this greater glory that He holds out this is what

He wants to do for you to bring you from darkness to light to bring you from insignificance to glory this is the good news of the gospel Apostle Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians 4 6 says for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ and this is His invitation for us to remember that so the second glory if the first glory is the glory of the kingdom among the nations the second one is the glory of this redemption that brings a great reversal that turns things to unimaginable glory and invites us to know that that's what we get to be a part of that's what He has invited us into the final verses in this chapter seem to almost fly off the pages of reality don't they there is a final picture of glory here a glory of the presence of God that is almost unbelievable right verse 19 in this day when the glory of God comes and light shines upon you it says the sun shall be no more your light by day nor for brightness shall the moon give you light but the Lord will be your everlasting light and the Lord will be your glory now I want you to stop for a minute and think about what the sun what role the sun plays in our world and in our universe it is the source of life for all of creation that's why God started let there be light and he put light into the world because it is the source of life without it what do we

not have we have no heat rumor has it that space is really really cold and when you don't have a sun to warm yourself you will die right we have no photosynthesis this is kind of exciting to think about your plants will all die if there is no sun if there is no sun it also destroys human life you know in

[31 : 21] Antarctica right people who go and live in the research stations they have what four months a year of no sun because the sun is tilted the world is tilted away so they had so they've had to they've realized that a lack of sunlight is really damaging to people it causes depression it causes weight gain it causes lack of appetite in fact there's even a study that showed that children who grew up with a lack of sunlight tended to develop myopia their eyesight was actually affected by lack of normal exposure to so we were meant to live with the sun and without it we are in big trouble so in Antarctica they take extreme measures to try to recreate what the sun does whether it be by sun lamps or keeping the stations warm or they even recreate the schedule of a day and night with sleep and rest and food and time together as human beings that are normally regulated by the rising and setting of the sun they replace these things artificially because they realize how important it is and isn't it amazing that our creation points to our creator our redeemer and our

God because the Lord will be our everlasting light and he will be our glory there will be no more death there will be no more mourning because the life that comes from the light of God will rule over there won't be day or night anymore there will be only day because we will be in the presence of God God and friends what did Jesus say about himself when he came he said I am the light of the world whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life this is the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise because when

Jesus came what we celebrate at Christmas is the coming of this light into the world to be the light of life and he then calls his church and we saw this in the sermon on the mountain as we preached through it in the fall he then calls his church and he says you are the light of the world why Jesus is the light of the world he then calls his people to be a reflection of that light we're not the same kind of light that he is but we're meant to reflect his light to the world so that others might know and there is in this age this growing spreading of the light and I know that some of you have experienced this we're in the darkness of despair and loss of wondering where am I going Jesus has stepped into your life and been light that has brought life to you and we get caught up in this now and Isaiah says and that's just a foretaste this is just the beginning because one day it will the world will be remade one day all will be made new and there will be no more sun or moon listen now to the words in the book of revelation as John portrays this picture of the future new heavens and new earth he says and I saw no temple in the city for the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the Lamb by its light will the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day and there will be no night there they will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations friends this is where we're headed an unbelievable kingdom where God himself dwells in our midst in a tangible physical way Jesus is the foretaste of that in his incarnation but one day we will see him fully and truly as he is friends this is the glory that God has for his people it is not a glory that we have ever earned it is not a glory that we can achieve it is not a glory that we can manufacture but it is a glory that God bestows upon us that God calls us to receive and to reflect in ways that reflect him in every way and how are we to respond to this invitation to the light who is the glory of God well let me close by reading from the prologue in the gospel of

[37 : 09] John says the true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him he came to his own and his own people did not receive him but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of the blood nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man but of God and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth let's pray together Lord we thank you this morning for your word Lord encourage our hearts humble us before the awesome vision of your glory

Lord refine our hearts show us where we may be seeking lesser glories rather than knowing the greater glory that you hold forth for us and invite us into you thank you Lord we pray in Jesus name amen