

Holy Cross, Daggett and St. Mark, Wallace Lutheran Churches, Michigan

January 5, 2014

Isaiah 60:1-6

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

“Rise and shine!” Lisa’s mom called as she burst into Lisa’s room. Lisa mumbled something and pulled herself deeper under the covers. Her mom was not impressed. “It is 10:30. How can you still be sleeping? It is a beautiful day outside.” Lisa didn’t move. Her mom refused to give up. “Still not getting up? I know what will wake you up.” Lisa’s mom threw open the curtains in Lisa’s room to let the brilliant sunshine flood in and pulled the covers off of her daughter. Lisa promptly woke up.

Has this scene ever played out in your life? I would imagine if you have ever been the parent of a teenager it has played out in your life. I’m sure if you have ever been a teenager your mom or dad had to do something similar to you once upon a time. Not a teen yet? I’m sure mom or dad has had to wake you up to do something at least once in your life when you didn’t want to get out of your nice, warm and cozy bed.

A similar scene takes place in our lesson for today. Isaiah is calling us to rise from our spiritual slumber. He is telling us to get up and shine in the world like the Christians we are. Why would he want us to shine like the Christians we are? He says, **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.”** Isaiah tells us he wants us to rise and shine because our light Jesus has come into this world and the glory of the Lord shines upon us.

What is the slumber he calls us to get up from? **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.”** Isaiah reminds us we were once in the darkness of sin. This darkness was comfortable for us. Just like Lisa didn’t want to get out of her nice, warm and cozy bed we didn’t want to get out of our bed of sin.

Our worlds were filled with the darkness of sin and we loved every minute of it. However, the Holy Spirit had other ideas. He did it in a little different manner than Lisa’s mom who threw open the curtains of Lisa’s room and ripped off the covers of Lisa’s bed. What was the manner he used? He shone with the light of the gospel into our hearts. **“See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.”**

When did he pour this light into our hearts? The Holy Spirit poured the light of God’s love into many of our hearts before we could even realize what had happened at our baptisms. He used our baptisms to create faith in our hearts and take us from spiritual darkness into spiritual light. The Holy Spirit worked in a different manner for others of us. Maybe he used the words of a spouse, relative, friend or coworker to flood our hearts with the light of God’s love and sealed this light in our hearts by baptism.

What did this transfer from darkness into light allow us to do? **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.”** This transfer from spiritual darkness into spiritual light allows us to shine as God’s lights in this dark world which desperately needs us to let our lights shine in it.

We live in a sin darkened world. Isaiah’s words remind us, **“See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples.”** He tells us the people of this world are covered by the darkness of sin.

We live in a world without direction or hope. The thoughts and minds of people here on earth are corrupted by sin. Everyone whose heart has not been flooded by the light of the Holy Spirit is sleeping in spiritual darkness. There are no exceptions. There are no good people apart from God's light.

We need to be reminded of this truth, that there are no good people apart from the light of Christ, constantly. Why? Why do we constantly need to be reminded there are no good people apart from Christ? This reminder curbs our sinful nature from getting too comfortable by thinking we don't need to let our lights shine in this world, but it also gives our new self an urgency and desire to let our lights shine in this world because the world desperately needs us to shine in it.

What is the reason our sinful nature needs to be curbed? Our sinful nature can get too comfortable here on earth. This comfortable feeling we experience causes our lights grow dim. Worse yet, it can even lead us back into spiritual darkness. How could being comfortable here on earth lead our lights to grow dim or lead us into spiritual darkness? Being comfortable with the world will lead us to forget the truth Isaiah tells us today, **"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples."**

Being comfortable with the world leads us to forget people apart from Christ's light are in darkness. What do I mean? I can give you an example. I have a coworker from one of my old summer jobs who became a good friend of mine. I worked with him for the better part of six summers. We had similar interests. We could talk about anything and everything. We enjoyed spending time together outside of work by playing tennis or cards together.

Yet, despite the qualities and shared experiences which made us good friends, I needed to remind myself this man lived in the darkness of sin because Christ wasn't part of his life. My friend needed to see God's light shining through me. If I had been too comfortable with the world I wouldn't have ever shared the light of Christ with Will. I would have told myself that God will love and forgive him because he is such a good friend. Or God wouldn't send this nice man to hell.

Do you have someone like Will in your life? Someone who you get along with great? Someone you can talk about anything with? Someone you can talk about everything with? Someone you need to remind yourself is living in darkness of unbelief rather than the light of Christ? We all do. We all have people who we are comfortable with and who trust us who are covered in darkness rather than walking in the light of Christ. What should we do for them?

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you." We will want to reflect the light of Christ to them. We must do this because we know they need our light. They desperately need the light of Christ to rescue them from hell and guess what? We have the privilege and joy to shine the light in their lives.

What will happen when we shine our light in other's lives? **"Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be**

radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.”

“Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.” God promises when we let the light of the gospel shine through our lives that it will attract others to the light. The light of his gospel will attract people from all nations. It will attract people from all walks of life. It will attract people of all different ages. The one constant thing is the light of the gospel will attract people.

What will our success rate look like when we let the gospel light shine in our lives? Will we have instant success and convert the masses? We could, but we might not. We might not even bring one new person into our church. Does this mean we are failures? No. If we shine the light of the gospel into the lives of others and they reject it doesn't mean we are a failure. I was never successful in getting Will to join my home church. However, I did what God wanted me to do since I let my light shine in his life.

Do you get anxious and nervous about letting your light shine? Do you worry and wonder if you will have the right words to say to the person you love who is walking in the darkness of sin? How can you overcome these feelings? My simple advice is get into the light of the gospel more. The better we know the gospel will make it easier to let our lights shine to those we love. We study the light of this gospel Tuesdays at Bible Study here at church. Think about making it part of your routine.

Take a Meditations home, if you haven't done so already, and read it. It is short and will take five minutes to read a day. It will help you learn about the light. Pray for courage and opportunities to shine the light of the gospel in the lives of others. God will bless these efforts. He promises, **“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm.”**

“Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy. And all will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.” He promises the more we use the light of the gospel that the more people will come to its light. I encourage all of us today to rise and let our lights shine. Amen.