

# *Arise, shine, for your light has come!*

*Isaiah 60:1*

The words of God's prophets are often brought to us with a mixture of "tough love" and compassion. One chapter may contain fiery words of warning and judgment while the next speaks words of loving-kindness, comfort, and deliverance. Yet just as a parent disciplines the child he or she loves, so God is faithful to guide his children, through a variety of means, toward His end—our ultimate maturity in faith and supreme joy in Christ.

It is at the point of encouragement and promised salvation that we read this verse in Isaiah. After much condemnation of their sin, God does not simply leave His people to steep in their iniquity. His promise is at hand! Almost seven hundred years prior to Christ's coming, Isaiah wrote these words prophesying the hope of Christ's advent, "*Arise, shine, for your light has come!*"

The first thing we notice is that we are commanded to shine. As believers, we are directed by our Lord and Saviour to arise and reflect his light and glory! In doing so, we humbly realize that *we* are not the source of light—he is. In addition, the command is not one that we are to follow with a sense of drudgery or compulsion. The disciple of Christ embraces his calling with joy because *his* shining is in response to the fact that *his* light has come! "...your light has come!"

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6). God has graced us with His light! He has removed our hearts of stone and given us hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). His light shines into the darkness of our broken human condition and exposes our sin, crushes its dominating, accursed rule by the power of Christ, sets us truly free to experience the fullness of life (John 10:10), and fills us with the knowledge of the glory of God that comes by the power of His Spirit at work within us! What a blessing!

Yet we are not mere "light savorers" but "light bearers" as well. Our purpose is to seek, delight in, *and share* the glories of Christ. It seems, at first, like a strange thing that God has chosen to show himself in the world through frail, fragile and regular human beings saved by His grace. Yet this mystery is revealed in the light of His Word.

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.* (1 Peter 2:9-12)

As we enter 2008 may we together joyfully arise and shine, for our light has come! Let's "walk the talk" that points others to glorify God as they carefully watch and scrutinize our behavior as Christians.

As your pastor, also know that I am passionate to "...always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)

Happy New Year with love. Live for His glory!

PASTOR SCOTT