

Isaiah 16

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Preacher: Hamish Taylor

[0 : 00] In Isaiah 40, Isaiah 60 rather, we read a section that most of us probably know fairly well. And if we need a text or a sentence to hinge our thoughts on this, probably the first part of that chapter.

Arise and shine, for thy light is come. An evangelical challenge in Old Testament times. But we'll come to that eventually through how we think about it, how we discuss it. But that phrase, arise, shine, for thy light is come. It's really the word of God through Isaiah. As we all know. The message of God through Isaiah. But the word was from God through Isaiah.

[1 : 11] But who was it intended for? Who was the word intended for? Arise and shine, for thy light is come. And surely, when we think of it, the word was to his own.

To God's own people. To his own people. Today, in our New Testament times, we would say that here was God addressing and urging and encouraging his church.

In fact, here is God doing exactly that. And then, when we think of it, the word is the word of God. We pause and we think.

What is the church? What is the church? And we all know that the church is the people of God. The house of God not made with hands.

And since we know that, we sometimes also assume that we know the church.

[2 : 23] And yes, it is true that we know it in part. In part. We even have a communicant's role. But even we know that, a communicant's role in the congregation, that that is not the church.

That is merely a list of those who have declared their love for the Lord in public within this parish and congregation. And even we know that, in addition to that list, in this very island alone, there are those who love the Lord just as much, that whose names do not yet appear on a congregational role.

There are also those who have not yet any idea that one day they will be building blocks and pillars in the house of God.

There are those in here today who would say that, who knew, or rather who didn't know, that one day they would be building blocks and pillars in the house of God.

And yet, every single one of them were known to Him. And looking forward, everyone in these roles in the future are already known to Him.

[3 : 55] There are those who are yet unborn, and who will carry His banner throughout the world. And He already knows them all. So, no one can believe that God cannot work, that God will not work through them.

Because to think that would be to disbelieve God, and to discredit both His will and His power. This speaks to all mankind. Arise, shine, for thy light has come. Speaks to all mankind. Christian, believer, disbeliever, church, and individual. I used the word, evangelical word there earlier.

And when we think of that word, evangelical, evangelist, and evangelist goes out to speak to disbelievers, to those who have not yet come to believe.

[5 : 08] He doesn't come to speak to those who are already converted, as we say. He is a tool, a continuing tool of the Holy Spirit, to seek and to save that which is lost.

As I said, it speaks to all of mankind. Christian, believer, disbeliever, church, and individual. It is to all of those, to His church in the past, to His church present, and in the future.

To the church unqualified. Without limit, to the church unlimited. And to the church universal.

Throughout the world, in all its shapes and forms, worshipping under the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to all of them that He says, even today, and perhaps even particularly today.

Arise and shine, for your light is come. So, here indeed was God, in this time, encouraging and urging the church of them to faith in a time when it needed encouraging and when it needed urging. [6 : 33] 700 years about before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here was, and here is, because His word is unchanging.

That word is as true, today, as if it was written today. Here was and here is the Lord preparing His church and urging His people individually.

If you like, here was the Lord preparing His people. If you like, here was the word through Isaiah. But here also was the word to Isaiah.

Because Isaiah was a big part of the church of then. His word through a messenger, yes, but also His word to the messenger.

Because is it not true that if the messenger, in this context, does, if the word does not affect the messenger, then the messenger cannot deliver that word in His truth as He ought.

[7 : 50] So here was the word through Isaiah, but here was also the word to Isaiah. The word through the church, but also the word to the church.

Because the word of God doesn't come in a sealed envelope to deliver by a postman who was completely unaffected by whatever is inside the envelope.

And who has no real need, there was no need at all to know the contents. We are not here simply to deliver the message.

We are to personify the message as well. We so easily forget that the messenger, that the preacher, is always as needful of the message, at least as needful of the message as any to those to whom he is passing it.

And the word is to the preacher as well. To the preacher, to the church, to the people. Arise and shine, for the people light is come. Because everybody needs encouragement, everybody needs urging, and everybody needs to know that God is speaking through them and also to them.

[9 : 13] So, here then we see the message as God's word of urging. And God's word of urging, but not in a bland or a soppy message.

God is persuading and asking Isaiah to see things as they are. And see, so early in the message, in verse 2, in fact, from behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people.

Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people. Now, we are in Scalpe in 2019, almost 2020, and could this not have been God speaking to the church of today?

And to the world of today? When we think of that again, as I could not this, and we take it to heart and we say, is not this God speaking to the church today?

And in asking us to look and to see things for ourselves, he is asking us not to ignore them. Yes, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness shall cover the people.

[10 : 46] He says, see things as they are, and in them and through them, rather than be discouraged and be led into disbelief or doubt.

You will also see God's glory as it really is. Because when we read the end of that verse, he talks about gross darkness, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people. Yes, it will. Perhaps it has. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

In spite of the fact that the world may disown the church, and so much of the world is disowning the church, God will not disown that.

But he will use that to be his light in a dark and a darkened world. And through his church, he will reclaim those who are truly his own.

[12 : 02] He will reclaim those who are truly his own. And those whom he will reclaim are not necessarily those whom we may automatically regard as his people.

Remember here, God was speaking to Jews in Jewish terms. They thought of themselves as being the chosen, the faithful.

But here we see God making clear to them that their thoughts were not his. And that he had others who were not of this flock, to paraphrase words of the New Testament.

Because in verse 3 we read, And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes around, about, and see.

Lift up thine eyes around, about, and see. They gather themselves together, and they come to thee. Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nushed at thy side.

[13 : 21] God again urging the church to look in faith, to look with faith, beyond the darkness of the world, and beyond the darkness of the part of the world in which we live.

And beyond the confines of our own mind, because we can only see what is really in front of us. We cannot see tomorrow. Beyond the confines of our own minds, to the day when his own, from all nations, from all nations, and kinders, will respond to his calling, and to his grace.

And then from encouraging, from urging rather, he goes on to encouraging. But again, not encouragement from words alone, because he says, then shall thou see.

Not words alone. He asks us to see the truth, to see the proof. To see the proof.

He offers the reward of faith. He offers the reward of believing what the eye cannot see. Remember the definition of faith.

[14 : 52] Evidence of the things not seen. Then shall them see, and having seen, they shall flow together. Having seen, they shall flow together.

Having seen the truth, the proof, of God's work, they shall flow together. The church, God's people, will flow together, and there will be a unity, such as contrived union, never imagined.

I remember, when I was in the other denomination, and, general assemblies, several times, tried to, go for union, with, other denominations.

But, other denominations, who did things, in slightly different ways. and, the word, ecumenism, came in.

But, there's words like, unity, and union. But, often, a thought would come, to me, that, that, that, union, human union, did not, was not the same, not the same as unity, because, human contrived, was, was at work.

[16 : 37] But, and a free union, and unity, could come together, only, through the guidance, of the Holy Spirit. God's people, will throw together, and there will be, a unity, such as, a, a, contrived union, as never imagined.

And, thy heart, shall fear, and be enlarged. And, in other words, your heart, will be humbled, at what you will see. Your heart, will be humbled, at what you will see.

Because, the abundance, of the sea, and that's the quotation, from there, the abundance, of the sea, and that is, those who live, in lands, beyond your knowing, shall be converted, unto thee.

And the forces, of the Gentiles, the unbelievers, would have been called, at the time, the forces, of the Gentiles, shall come, unto thee. And then, as further encouragement, he, he continues, at verse, verse, verse, nine or thereabouts.

They shall come, as doves, coming to their dovecote. That is, they will come, as those who have been, on a long journey, and are, returning, to their rightful home.

[18 : 03] Responding to, and drawn by, the homing, and the attracting, and the irresistible power, of the Holy Spirit. And they will come, with all that their souls, can carry.

There are lists, in the, in the, in the chapter. They, they will come, with all that their souls, can carry. Unto the name, of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One, of Israel.

Because, he, hath glorified thee. They will come, to, they will come, to, to, will come, to God's church.

They will come, to be part, of God's church. Because, he hath glorified it. The urging, and the encouragement, of the Lord, given, not merely in words, but given, in facts, and in proofs, visible, through the eye, of faith.

Arise, shine, for thy light, is come, and the glory, of the Lord, is risen, upon thee. And I emphasize, the is, there.

[19 : 22] Thy light is come, and the glory, of the Lord, is risen, upon thee. Because, here, God is speaking, in a timeless way. In a timeless way.

Because, with him, and in him, there is no time. And we could, raise quotations, from, from throughout, spiritual, that, God is, timeless.

The future, and the present, with him, are one. And the past, is as if it were, the foundation, on which, together, the present, and the future, stand.

The will, and the mind, and the purpose, of God, are in the concept, of the present. Because, it is foreordained.

And, because it is, foreordained by God, it is, unailing. And, it is, so, unailing, that, we can always, read it, as, being, real.

[20 : 30] As being, in the present. If it is, foreordained by God, it is, unfailing. It is. It is. here, we have him, speaking, something like, 700 or so years, before, the physical appearance, of the Savior.

And yet, this chapter, remember, referring to Christ. Yet, he is referring to Christ, in the present text. Arise, and shine, for thy light, is come.

Arise, and shine, for thy light, is come. Because, the coming of Christ, had been foreordained, long, long, before, 700, BC.

And it is this, ever-present text, which is the, infallible foundation, foundation, on which he asks us, to build, our faith.

And, through faith in him, and his encouragement, go together. One, supports the other, one strengthens the other, one builds the other, and together, they both grow.

[21 : 46] Faith in him, and his encouragement, both, bind together, and grow together, as one. Hand in hand. The glory of Lebanon, shall come unto thee.

The fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify, the place of my sanctuary. And, I will make, the place of my feet, glorious.

I will make, the place of my feet, glorious. glorious. The church, God's people, in an exalted, context.

I will make, the place of my feet, glorious. The church, God's footprint, and he will make it, glorious. But, we must, be, kind of careful, of the sense, in which we see this.

Because, remember, when we used to, word footprint, that was my word, footprint. And, the footprint, a footprint, is, it marks, while, somebody's foot, has dropped, in the past, even, if the person, is no longer, to be seen.

[23 : 07] God, does not say this, simply, in the sense, of a footprint. What he says is, the place, of, my feet, or the place, of my fruit. This, is not, a mark, which identifies, what God, has been, or the place, where God's fruit, has dropped, in the past.

Because, that's not, what makes it glorious. The place, of my feet, identifies, not only, where God, has been, where God, has stood, or where God, has walked.

It identifies, for us, and for a skeptical, and a disbelieving world, where God, is, now. And, he makes it glorious, because, he himself, is there.

Because, he himself, is here. We shouldn't talk, about there. He himself, is here. Because, these three, these three words, there, God is, God is here, God is here, now.

All come, all come together. And, as I, and I must confess, to be guilty, of this as well. And, and, it's a, a trait, that, us who are, of a normal generation, are, probably, guilty of.

[24 : 45] We are, often, preoccupied, with reflecting, on the past, glories, of the church, as we see it. This church being full, the church on the hill up there being full, all the other churches being full.

And, that is fine, provided, we don't think of it, as being, only, in the past. Because, that would be, faithlessness, faithlessness, almost, in the extreme.

The place, of my feet, identifies, not only, where, where, where, where, God has been, but as we said a minute ago, where God is.

And, God makes this church, glorious, not because, it was, but very much, because, he, is. glorious. Not because, it was, but very much, and only, because, he, is, glorious. Not, to, elevate ourselves, too much, but, in our prayers, we often, articulate, in the same, words, as those, who read, and read, in the gospel of John, Father, glorify, thy name.

[26 : 12] And, that's fine, if we pray for that, and, we pray that, his name, will be glorified, on earth, and among us, and throughout the earth.

The problem is, that while, this prayer of Christ, was a yielding, to the will of the Father, with us, it may be so often, a prayer of, faithlessness, as if his name, or his cause, was not, already glorious. As if his name, was not, already glorious. God's answer, to us, is the same, and yesterday, and today, and forever.

Father, for, in his word, he rebukes, our faithlessness, and if we, if we, think back to that, chapter in the gospel of John, where we read, Father, glorify thy name, and, we hear the words, a voice said, and if we hear it, let's hear it, about the view, for our faithlessness, I will both, glorify it, and, I will glorify it, again.

He urges us, to renew faith, and he encourages us, to move, onward, in his old footprints, as he goes before us.

[27 : 47] We'll reflect, a wee bit on that, with a small regard, clearing the way, before us, making the valleys, elevated, and, taking down the mountains, and the obstacles, and the, and the barriers, which confronted us.

He urges us, to renewed faith, and he encourages us, to, to move, onward, and forward, and upwards, in his own footprints, as he goes before us.

Always telling us, always encouraging us, and always reminding us, arise, and shine. That is your purpose. Arise, and shine. Why?

Because, thy light, has come. Amen. And may he add his blessing, to these, for you, and these few thoughts, and those. Thank you.

Allison Mitchell, and your friends, and his awareness. Good morning. From now. Many. I love you. I love you.

[28 : 56] Some. And my love. Lu. And I love you, some. I love you. Some. I love you.