

# Marks of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading  
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual  
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

January 8, 2023

## Day 1: Isaiah 60:1

**"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.**

With each new dawn we have new possibilities. The night is not a fearsome thing on its own, it is because we cannot see very well and things at night look different than in daytime that we find the night menacing. Darkness always represents chaos and uncertainty. We feel better when we can see what is going on. In Isaiah's time there were no street lights. The only illumination at night came from the moon and stars. Dawn is a sign that God has not forgotten his people and has given us a new day. God created light so that when we see light we automatically feel closer to God.

**Question:** Do you find more inspiration from a sunrise or sunset?

**Challenge:** Try to see one or more sunrises this week and greet the new day with a prayer of thanksgiving.

## Day 2: Isaiah 60:2

**See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.**

The Lord had chosen the people of Israel to shine as a light to the nations. Isaiah is trying to encourage the exiles to go back to their homeland. Isaiah is telling them that God has not abandoned them but rather chastised them for past sins. God may be angry for a moment but His love lasts forever (Jeremiah 31:2-4). If they go back to their land and live as faithful people then they will be the light of God to the nations

**Question:** If the author is not talking about physical darkness as in night time, what is he talking about?

**Challenge:** Think about why the sunrise is like God's glory shining on you.

**Scripture:** Exodus 24

## Day 3: Isaiah 60:3

**Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

All of the various nations of the world will be drawn to Jerusalem because it will shine so brightly that people will want to see its light. When the wise men saw the star they went first to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is to be

a city where God's mercy can be experienced, where God's law is followed cheerfully, and where God's presence can be felt by all who live there. Jerusalem, and by extension all of the people of Israel were to

be a sign of hope to the world - a sign that God will redeem all of creation from the pain and fear of death.

**Question:** Do you think Jerusalem has lived up to what God wanted?

**Challenge:** Think about a time when you felt the presence of God. What was taking place and can you reproduce that experience?

**Scripture:** Psalm 112

## Day 4: Isaiah 60:4

**"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.**

Along with the leading persons of the nations coming to Jerusalem, all those who had been forced to leave will also come. The sons and daughters are the children of those who were taken into captivity. Isaiah means that Jerusalem will be once again a place where others find inspiration and hope. Jerusalem is more than a physical city, it is a sign of hope. It is a place where peace, justice and mercy are found. The concepts of justice and peace are fine ideas but without a physical manifestation they do not on their own have the power to instill hope.

**Question:** Do you think the author is speaking figuratively or is this something he is seeing? Why?

**Challenge:** What would for you be a physical manifestation of hope?

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52

## Day 5: Isaiah 60:5

**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.**

During Solomon's time Jerusalem (even though it was in the hills and inland) was a important and prospers trading city. A lot of wealth flowed into and out of it. Trade is different than tribute. Tribute is brought to appease a ruler or in fear of a powerful ruler. Tribute is designed not only to enrich the one receiving it, but to keep the giver in a state of poverty so they cannot gain power. Trade implies that two parties each receive what the other needs without one impoverishing the other. When the worship at the Temple became more giving tribute, God withdrew his protection for the nation. Isaiah says nations will once again come to Jerusalem when it uses the wealth it receives for God's work. The same is true in the 21st century. If we use our wealth for selfish reasons and not for God's work, our wealth will pass away.

**Question:** Why do you think the Bible asks that we give 10% of our wealth to God's work?

**Challenge:** You may spend a lot less on yourself than you think. Go ahead and see how much you spend on yourself in a week.

**Scripture:** Isaiah 59:1-22

## Day 6: Isaiah 60:6

**Herd 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.**

Wealth will come to a people to the degree that they will acknowledge God as the giver of all things and use what God has given them as God would have them use it. In the New Testament, Jesus (in the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30) tells us that God's wealth will be given to those who will use it, not to those who will hoard it. In another place (Mark 8:36) Jesus said what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul. God will provide us with the wealth we need in both money and ideas if we will use it for God' purposes.

**Question:** Where else have you heard in the Bible of gold and incense being brought as a gift?

**Challenge:** How well are using the wealth that God has given you in money and time and talent?

**Scripture:** Isaiah 61:1-7