

Arise And Shine

Part 2 of “Awaken The Dawn”

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- In response to the overwhelming sense of death's imminence during and after World War II there was a rise in theology and Christian practice that led to an extreme focus on assuring people's eternal destination. The beauty of this ideology and practice was that it launched believers in the western world into a tenacious advancement of evangelism. At that time a deep sense of responsibility existed in the church for individuals to share the gospel with those around them. Incredible men of God like Billy Graham were products of this focus and drive. There was such a surge in devotion to evangelism that churches even worked cross denominationally to put on gatherings and events dedicated to getting people into heaven. However, even with the incredible heart to help people make heaven, there was a large portion of the gospel of God's kingdom that was set on the back burner. While millions upon millions of people were attending crusades and evangelism events, and confessing Jesus as Lord, there was a decline in focus on the importance of what should be done with a person after they were born again. A study that surveyed many of the people that were touched by this movement, found that only 6% of the millions who made Jesus Lord of their life remained faithful to their commitment. In an interview with Billy Graham, who is said to have seen over 3.2 million people pray the prayer of salvation, he stated, “we should have engaged with local churches and ministries to perform follow-up discipleship with those who came forward. The great commission calls for discipleship, not just evangelism. It calls for people to learn about Jesus and follow Him; not just pray a prayer or make a decision about Jesus.” It has taken years for the wisdom of Evangelist Graham's words to truly set in for our nation as the affects of the lack of discipleship are felt to this day. A 2015 survey by the Barna Group found that only 20% of Christian adults are involved in some sort of discipleship activity, and we can only imagine what those numbers would be in the wake of a pandemic that has driven us further out of contact with one another. Our assessment of this reality can only be that while the western church is a well oiled evangelism machine, our ability to maintain and disciple those won for Jesus must be attended to if we want to see sustained change in our national landscape. We must make a firm decision in our hearts that the expulsion of darkness and the

releasing of light in our city is not only found in the winning of souls, but in the discipling of them as well.

- We find this to be true through an eschatological prophecy found in Isaiah 60:1-3:
- **““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. - Isaiah 60:1-3 NIV**
 - This prophecy spoken by Isaiah starts with two commands from the Lord. The first is to ARISE, and the second is to SHINE.
- **Arise - Qum - to restore to life. To bring back to life. To raise to life after death. To revive from the dead.**
 - This end time command was an obvious call to spiritual resurrection or what we would call: “being born again” or “getting saved”.
 - God’s first emphasis in this end time prophecy is on the experience of being raised to life in Christ.
 - **But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ... - Ephesians 2:4-5 NASB**
 - We cannot stress enough how important this part of the prophecy is!
 - You cannot experience the excitement and joy of all the promises found in Isaiah 60 without first arising, being brought back to life, or being revived from spiritual death.
 - But, we must realize that it is the beginning.
 - Being raised to life isn’t just about going to heaven. There is an earthy implication and purpose in arising.
 - If we put all of our emphasis on this command we could potentially miss out on everything after it!
 - How? You might ask?
 - It is impossible to shine without first arising, but it is possible to arise and never shine.

- We must cross the threshold of arising, and move into the ultimate goal of this prophecy, which is to SHINE!
- **Shine - Or - To become light.**
 - The idea being presented to us in this verse is that after we arise, we enter into the process of becoming light.
 - **“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” - 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV**
 - What is the purpose of being called into His light?
 - **...everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. - Ephesian 5:13 NIV**
 - God’s desire is for us to become like the light that brings us to life.
 - **All of us, with no covering on our faces, show the shining-greatness of the Lord as in a mirror. All the time we are being changed to look like Him, with more and more of His shining-greatness. This change is from the Lord Who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18 NLV**
 - He do have to realize this is not automatic!
 - **“So don’t hide your light! Let it shine brightly before others...” - Matthew 5:16 TPT**
 - We decide whether or not we will shine.
 - The question we have to ask then is how do we shine? How do we become light?
 - **“Those who look to him are radiant...” - Psalm 34:5a ESV**
 - The more we behold the light of God, the more we become like that very light.
 - The light of God is found in the face (presence) of Jesus.
 - **“For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” - 2 Corinthians 4:6 NASB**
 - How do we look at Jesus’ face?

- **The word - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him [b]not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. - John 1:1-4 NASB**
- **Community - For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst. - Matthew 18:20**