6/7/26

Sunday 1st

Arise and Shine the Light

Isaiah 60:1-7

God sees the world as dark and covered in thick darkness. Verse 2 says, “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples…” The reason is that the world is in a state of complete spiritual ignorance. Even though mental illness is widespread, no one truly understands why such suffering has come upon mankind. No one denies that diseases of the mind and heart are becoming more severe with each passing day, but because people's spiritual eyes are dim, they have no spiritual strength and remain helpless in the face of these problems. Suicide does not happen without a reason, yet no one presents the true answer. Even after countless studies and research, people merely offer misguided and irrelevant explanations. Schools around the world may promote transcendental meditation, but there are no places that provide proper spiritual training.

The problem is that these issues continue from one generation to the next and will only become more severe. That is why we devote ourselves to the Remnant Movement—the movement to raise up those who remain. The Bible also places great emphasis on the gospel movement for the next generation, and those who had the greatest influence were the parents.

Joseph received the gospel from his father, Jacob, and grew up within his father's prayers. The gospel is the foundation of all mankind. Moses received the gospel from his mother, Jochebed, and one can easily imagine how desperate and earnest her prayers must have been. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Samuel became who he was because of Hannah's covenant of the Nazirite and her prayers. Not one of Samuel's words fell to the ground, and throughout his lifetime the Philistines could not invade Israel. We should see that all of this originated from Hannah.

1. **Arise and Shine the Light**
    1) Verse 1 says, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." Therefore, arise and shine, and that light will be relayed to the world. The world is dark and covered with thick darkness that shadows the earth and all peoples. Since no one in the world knows this light, you must bring it to them, illuminating the world and leading people into this brightness. This is the mission God has given us, and once again it reminds us of who we are. We are the light of the world, the ones who remained who possess the light of God.
    2) As 1 Corinthians 4:1 says: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." The light God has given us is the mystery of God. Because it is an absolute mystery, anyone who enters into this light cannot remain in darkness. This light is the gospel; it is Christ. If anyone whose heart and mind are trapped in darkness enter into Christ, who became the light, there is no one who cannot be healed.
    3) Ultimately, we must shine the light of Christ. But practically speaking, how can we do this? The Bible contains many examples of people who shone this light. Each one fulfilled God's plan for their age, and their stories were recorded and left for future generations. It is a message to keep this in mind and continue this movement of light. Joseph saved his age with this light according to God's plan for him. Moses likewise proclaimed the light of Christ to both the world and God's people.
    4) Although the Bible provides many examples that we should follow, perhaps the closest example for us is Apostle Paul. Evangelism is the work of relaying this light, and Paul's lifestyle and culture are closer to ours. Moreover, the Bible records his evangelistic ministry in detail. Therefore, studying Paul's evangelism field is perhaps the best way to learn how to shine this light in the field.

5) The very first thing God did for Paul was for him to know Christ. In Acts 9:1–15, while traveling to Damascus, Paul encounters Christ and realizes that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ he had been waiting for. It must have been such a shock. In this way, he first came to know the gospel.
6) Then, looking at Acts 11:26, after about ten years, Paul came to the Antioch church, where he shared the message that he had organized up until then and raised up many disciples. In the midst of this, Acts 13:1–3 records God's command: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Thus began Paul's first missionary journey. During his second missionary journey, Paul repeatedly found the doors closed when he tried to preach the gospel in Asia. As he prayed, God led him instead to Macedonia, as recorded in Acts 16:6–10.
7) In Macedonia, Paul found many disciples in the field. He established one disciple in each region and then moved on to another place. Even after Paul left, the works arose in which evangelism continued without him. During his third missionary journey, he hardly traveled at all. Instead, he remained in one place, the Hall of Tyrannus, continually preaching the Word. The disciples moved back and forth between the field and the training center at Tyrannus, carrying out the gospel movement. Eventually, this reached Rome, completing the system for world evangelization, after which Paul was martyred.
8) In broad terms, this is the gospel movement of Christ, the light, as carried out by Apostle Paul. Looking at this process, each of us should ask where we currently are. Am I in the time schedule where I need to receive the gospel? Am I in the time schedule of serving as a minister to revive the church? Or have I found my answer within the church's ministry and should I be commissioned to the field? If I am already ministering in the field, instead of simply going around sharing the gospel, should I be seeking out the disciple who will be responsible for that region?
9) Or perhaps I am in the time schedule of staying in one place, reviving the disciples who come to me, sending them out into the field, and helping them conquer their regions. Or, like Paul in the Roman prison, maybe my role is to oversee and encourage many disciples who have already been established, and send, call, and deliver God's message as a spiritual commander. Each person should carefully examine his or her own time schedule, hold firmly to God's covenant for that time schedule, and not lose hold of it.
10) Then this is the most effective form of the evangelism movement that shines the light. That is why God did not preserve merely the work of another apostle in the Bible, but specifically the evangelism of Paul. This is the picture of evangelism we must follow. God is still working according to this picture today, so through the Bible each of us should personally confirm where we stand and organize ourselves accordingly.
11) The distinguishing characteristics of Paul's evangelistic ministry were the accurate gospel, disciple-centered evangelism, and prayer-centered evangelism. Yet behind all of these was another vital characteristic: he always followed God's word. Throughout Paul's entire life and ministry, there was never a moment when the word of God was not his standard.
12) Even when he first received the gospel, the Lord came and spoke to him. Later, God sent Ananias to deliver His word, and Paul's entire life was determined by it. This reminds us once again why we must live centered on God's word. Nothing else matters; when God's Word is fulfilled, everything is finished. Every problem is resolved. There is no problem that cannot be solved when God's word comes upon it. Therefore, when facing problems, we simply need to receive God's word pertaining to them. May we once again remember God who does all things through His word.