

# Faith Unto Enlargement Through Adversity - Part 6

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing resurrection and its effectiveness in attracting people and bringing wealth and resources to those who have experienced it.*

**Duration:** 31:47

**Scripture:** Isaiah 60:1-17, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Adversity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a vessel of light that brings effective and enriching solutions to others. The light mentioned in the sermon is described as vital, powerful, and born out of a deep experience of resurrection. The speaker highlights the effectiveness of this kind of light and how it can impact both individuals and collective groups of believers. The sermon also emphasizes the need for believers to go through deep and trying experiences both individually and in relation to their fellow believers.

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## Transcript

Prophecies of Isaiah, Chapter Sixty. Chapter Sixty of the Prophecies of Isaiah. Arise, shine, for thy light is come.

The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples. But the Lord will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy shining.

Lift up thy eyes round about and see. They all gather themselves together, they come to thee. Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be carried in thy arms.

Then shalt thou see and be radiant. Thy heart shall thrill and be in love. Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah. All they from Seba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.

All the fox of Cedar shall gather themselves unto thee. The rams of Nabiah shall minister unto thee. They shall come up with acceptance on thine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall weep for thee, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the Lord thy God, and for the holy one of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. Foreigners shall build up thy walls, their kings shall minister unto thee. For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee.

Thy gates also shall be open continually. They shall not be shut day nor night, but men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings led captives. For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the pear tree, the pine, the box-tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow down themselves at the soles of thy feet. They shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel.

Do not read more just now. The rest of the chapter is very similar to the part that we have read. Go back to the first half of the chapter.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come. We are all familiar with the fact that there is usually a twofold interpretation of Old Testament scriptures. There is the historical and there is the spiritual.

That, on the one hand, which is after the flesh, and that, on the other hand, that is after the spirit. Very largely, it is that which relates to Israel, naturally, and, on the other hand, that which relates to the Church, as seen through and beyond what relates to Israel, that which relates to Christ. This, of course, is very apparent in the prophets.

We haven't the time to give instances of it, but there are so many, and it is perfectly clear. Sometimes you do not know whether the prophet is speaking about himself or Israel, or whether he is speaking about Christ. You know that that very problem arose with the Ethiopian in the chariot in the desert, whom Philip joined.

Whom of whom speaketh the prophet? Of himself, or of some other? Many have thought that Isaiah 53 relates to Israel. It is perfectly clear that while there might be a measure of truth in that, that is not the whole truth, by any means. But here is the fact.

There are always two interpretations, and what is true in other parts is very true here in the chapter from which we have read. It is an example of that fact. Again, it is said that this chapter relates to the remnants of Israel, which will be found at the end in Jerusalem.

All right, we're not going to argue about that, call that into question, but it is as near impossible as anything can be. To fail to see that there's another side even to Isaiah chapter 60. And it is that other side with which we are going to be occupied as much as possible in the time which we have.

Here is Zion, and Zion's life, and Zion's wealth, and you people are very familiar with that name, Zion. And you know very well that our New Testament does tell us that we are come. Not that we are coming, not that we are marching to, but that we are come to Zion.

The city of the living God. And yet I suppose it is true that we are, in a sense, on the way to Zion. Not as a place, but as a spiritual state of fullness.

We are come to Zion. If that is true, and we will not for a moment dispute with the apostle who said it, then may it not be equally true that the things that are said in the Old Testament and here, particularly about Zion, if they refer to some later literal Zion on this earth, certainly the more refer to the Zion to which we have come. And therefore the exhortation is to us, the people of this Zion, this city of the living God, to which we are come.

Indeed, of which we are part. The exhortation is to us, arise, shine, for thy life is come. We want to just look for a moment at the ground and the nature of this light which has come to us.

And again we are brought back to this open door to everything, where everything begins, and where the light bursts forth the resurrection of our Lord, and our resurrection with him. We read that wonderful chapter this morning, John 20, how moved we were as we read it. I confess that there is no chapter in the Bible which moves me more than that chapter.

But the thing about it was the breaking light, wasn't it? It is as though after a very dark night, the night the sun suddenly rose over the horizon, began to throw its sharp rays over the sky. And there from the early morning, even before it was day, there were hearts in darkness waiting, longing. And then we saw the day opening, the light breaking and spreading, one by one caught in its rays, and what a transformation.

And surely they did arise and shine because their light had come. Now you see the setting of this chapter in Isaiah just like that. There's a fragment in it which we read about God's wrath.

The dark night of God's wrath which had passed. Certainly to use the language of one of the prophets, Ezekiel, the people had been in a dark grave. In a dark grave, in their exiled captivity.

Far off. It was a dark night, a night of spiritual death, and it was therefore death to Zion during that time. Zion was dead and buried for that whole period of the captivity.

But here again, using Ezekiel's language, the graves had been opened. Resurrection had taken place. Prophet Isaiah is the prophet of resurrection, looking through and beyond the cross, the death.

And here in this latter part of his prophecies, we have the morning, the morning breaking. And here is this cry out from the shadows, the departing shadows. Arise, shine, for thy light is come.

You see it is on the ground of resurrection that the light come. And that gives to the light its character, its nature. That being its ground, its nature is at that time the light.

You see as we go on how tremendously potent this light was, what it did. Look at it in a moment. But here is light that is not just a kind of mental grasp of things.

It is certainly not the light of collected truth, of studied matter, of the intellect, even in the things of God. It's a different kind of light from that. I don't want to oppress this.

It's not just a statement of things. Dear friends, light, if it is to be as effective as the light in this chapter was shown to be, has got to be of this kind. You may collect what is being said into your notebooks with your ministry in view.

Don't retail it. That will not be light of this kind. These too often, when we are reading and when we are listening, we have other people in view.

We are thinking of how we are going to get this over to some others. And thereby we are more concerned for ministry and work, and having material to give to others, than we are for this fundamental thing, Christ-likeness. Because all real light springs from the reality of Christ as born in our own experience.

And this light, quite clearly in the case of Israel, or the remnant, and certainly even more so in the case of the Church, is the light that springs out of a deep experience by which, and through which, resurrection was the only answer. God had not done what he said he would do for the remnant. He said, O my people, I will open your graves and will bring you out and will plant you in the land.

The Lord had not opened their graves and brought them out. This part of the prophecy would never have been written because there would be nothing to write about. It would never have been possible on any ground to say, Thy light has come.

The meaning of this is, Thy light has come because you have been in the dark and you have been delivered. Because you have been in death and have come to know the power of resurrection. And therefore the very nature of light, which is light indeed, light after disorder, light which is to have this effect, the very nature of this light is that it is born out of an experience of resurrection, or out of continuous experiences of resurrection.

One thing we have been trying to say in this conference all the way through is just that one thing. That we have got through the necessitated exercise of faith again and again to reach the ultimate thing of faith. And the ultimate, the final, the last thing of faith is resurrection.

When the letter to the Hebrews in the 11th chapter is recounting the faith and the faith activity of those of old and deals with Abraham, the last stage in Abraham's faith is when he received Isaac back as from the dead. And that is always the ultimate point to be reached by faith. This is not faith in the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and not faith in the historic act of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is faith in the resurrection of Christ as a present active power. The resurrection of Christ has got to be brought up to date. It has got to be remembered once a year at Easter.

It is no merely sentimental or traditional thing. It has got to be something for every day of our life. Every new morning has got to be a new occasion for our proving the power of his resurrection.

It has to be so. And if that is to be so, then there will be a necessity for it. And the Lord will keep us on the ground of a necessity for knowing resurrection power and resurrection might.

And let me say, dear friends, that if you are in any way engaged in ministry for the work of the Lord, your ministry, no matter how much you study, how much you read up the subject matter, how diligent you are in your research, it will count for nothing if there is not behind it an experience of resurrection, which means a deep experience which makes resurrection the only way out. God hasn't any place for mere mechanical teachers and preachers. He reproduces the matter second-hand.

The Lord's principle is to bring everything right into experimental and experiential relationship to the person concerned. And so it is kept in power, and in freshness, and in reality. So the very setting of Isaiah 60, arise, shine, for thy light has come.

The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, is the setting of resurrection in the experience of the people concerned. May I repeat, don't be more concerned with ministry than you are with knowing him. And the only way to know him is the power of his resurrection.

Be sure that if you have that as the basis and background of your life, you'll have ministry without research. I'm not saying that study is not important. I think you'll see that what I am saying is that while it may have its place, there's got to be something more than that.

There's got to be the experience of the thing that we are saying. And the experience is the experience of life saving us in deep and in desperate situations. The Lord keeps his servants, his true servants, on that ground.

For after all, life is not something objective to us. Life is what we are. Life is what we are.

We are the light. We are the light of the world. It is what we are.

And what we are through deep history with God. In our experience, in our lives. So God makes his light bearer.

Therefore, the light that is mentioned here is light which is vital. Light which is vital. Light which is power.

Light which is effect. And note that the rest of this chapter shows how effective the light is. What tremendous effectiveness is related to this kind of light borne out of this experience of resurrection.

Or any experience of resurrection. How effective it is. I would like to spend an hour with this chapter.

I've got about two minutes. But look again, underline all the words in this chapter which refer to wealth. Wealth.

The abundance of the seas. The wealth of the nations. Gold and frankincense.

Silver and gold. The wealth of the nations. And so on.

That's the value, the effectiveness of light after this kind. It means the possession of wealth. It means resources for the enrichment of people.

Oh, do believe this, dear friend. If you want to be able to help people. To enrich them.

To bring them into the wealth that is in Christ. To deliver them from their poverty. And God knows how poverty stricken his people are.

And how little they know of his wealth. If you want to know it. And if you want to help others to know it.

To bring them into this wealth. It's by way of this light which comes through resurrection. That is, putting it more simply, if you are going through a deep and dark time.

You may have very rich treasures of darkness. If only we would take the right attitude toward our times of death and darkness. That this can mean wealth.

The Lord means more riches out of this. This is going to be, may I dare use the phrase, stock and trade. I ought not to use it after what I've been saying about retailing.

But it's something for others. For their enrichment. That is going to come out of our times of spiritual death. It's like that always. But it must be like that. It's effective light that enriches. That endows. That brings into wealth. And then Lord again, how it attracts. Pass through the chapter quickly and see, thy son shall come from far, thy daughter from the ends of the earth, ships of parcels bringing them. And they're all coming. They're all coming. Why? Why? You've got something to give. You've got the light which answers to their problems and their questions and their difficulties. You've got it. And as the light attracts the mass, so need is attracted to where there is supply. And out of these experiences of death and darkness into resurrection there is something that others want. And they come for. It is true from the ends of the earth. If it's like that, if it's after that light order, not just teaching, not just interpretations, not just doctrines, but real living light born out of experience. And the experience of resurrection again and again, how it attracts. I do not believe, dear friends, that it's necessary to have tremendous attractions of other kinds to get people together for spiritual purposes. I believe that if there is real, vital light, they'll come. They'll come. They'll be founded. The answer to empty churches is living light, not entertainment and attraction. It's that. That can be proved. Oh, that there were more of this light then. There might be a drawing. So you see how effective it is. Now that's the point at which I was going to stop, which I must close for the time being. Perhaps we'll go on with that this afternoon. But oh, do recognize that the Lord has really called us into this light. He has called us into this light. An abundance of effective light he has given to us. But my last word must be this. Did you see this word? While, of course, it applies, it must always apply to individuals, because you can have nothing collective unless there are individuals to make it so. It's a word to a company. A word to, shall I say, a group. It's a word to a collective vessel of light. Zion is something corporate and collective. And the Lord wants these vessels, these vessels of light after this kind. And my point in saying that is this. That we not only go through deep and dark and trying experiences individually, but we go through them in relation to our fellow believers. And that there is such a thing as companies of the Lord's people going deep down into experiences where only the power of his resurrection can meet the need. And let us therefore realize that we are sharers, sharers in this ministry. That we are involved in something that may not just be our own personal. No doubt some of you are saying yes, but that's out there, somewhere out there in the air. It belongs to relate to somebody, some people, or something. I'm just nothing.

I don't signify, and all that doesn't apply to me. But it does in a related way. You're a part of that body of Christ which is to be the expression of his risen life.

And therefore you are a part of the suffering which comes upon the people of God. And the necessity for knowing his resurrection power. And we are suffering together with him.

Remember that together is not only we are suffering with Christ. We are suffering together with Christ. It's our collective or corporate suffering with Christ.

And the reigning is to be collective and corporate suffering together. We reign together with him. It's the church that is in view.

So what might never come to us individually and personally comes to us by reason of our relationship with something that's bigger than the Lord wants to use. We become involved in something that is not after all our own personal responsibility. The Lord is after a vessel and we are a part of the vessel.

A part of the vessel. And we in a related way have got to know this power of his resurrection that the light might shine. We must leave it there for the time being.

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