

“Arise ‘n’ Shine, Daughter Zion of the Messiah Jesus!”

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Sermon Introduction

Isaiah’s Vision of God’s deliverance of His People, Daughter Zion, entails restoring justice and righteousness such that His people shine forth God’s glory. Isaiah describes a process of restoration that entails 1) stopping doing wrong; 2) learning to do what is right; and 3) seeking justice (1:16–17). At the end of Isaiah, God’s people are called to “Rise up and shine” God’s glory. Altogether, we might summarize Isaiah as Stop, Learn, Grow, and Glow. The Hebrew word “justice” (*mišpāt*) means to make right judgment in terms of having the right view of things, offering the appropriate judgment (punishment) to those injuring others, and rectifying a situation such that injured parties are vindicated and restored. We may understand the Greek word “righteousness” (*dikaïosunē*) as signifying “rightly relating (to one another).” God’s display of justice is found ultimately in the Messiah Jesus. The Messiah’s politics is God’s Kingdom that transcends human-scale political systems. Today, we need to press not into hatred, anarchy,

apathy, but into God's presence to be present, to heal, and to confront injustice. In the end, Jesus likens believers to "a city on a hill that cannot be hidden" and calls them "to let their light shine" in good (Matthew 5:16) so that they reflect a surpassing righteousness (5:20).

In preparing the sermon, I specifically used inductive bible study in the following ways. I observed that Isaiah reaches a final climax in calling Zion to "Rise up and shine" (60:1). Moreover, the book begins with a statement of problem and solution (1:16–20) featuring prominently "justice" (*mišpāt*). Divine confrontation calls for human response while offering divine provision of cleansing for sin (1:18), and yet a choice still exists to be willing and obeying or to refuse and rebel. A cognate-based word study on "justice" (*mišpāt*) across Isaiah reveals the special importance of its pairing with "righteousness" (*ṣedāqah*). Clearly, the problem needing solution is how God establishes justice and righteousness among His people such that they embody these. Correlating this central concern into the New Testament, I observed that the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) reveals the importance of the word "righteousness" (*dikaïosunē*) in the Beatitudes and its general statements (5:20; 6:1; 6:33; cf. 7:12). Also, the list of the Beatitudes progresses to a climax in peacemaking and persecution (5:9–12). Next, the Sermon alludes to Isaiah's vision of Zion, the city displayed on a hill (5:15). Here, Jesus calls for his disciples to be light entailing a purpose statement to shine with good works in order to help people glorify God (5:16). Then, in the following metacomment, Jesus states his own purpose in coming "to fulfill the Law and the Prophets" (5:17), thus abutting human calling and purpose with divine coming and purpose. Finally, making another correlation, I considered Paul's calling of believers to be light before he quotes from some source—likely a generalization of Isaiah's message—"Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Ephesians 5:14). Then, I noted other places where passages of Scripture contain general statements, climaxes, or chiasm, which alert readers to central and important ideas.

Scripture Texts (NRSV)

The Third Song of Isaiah, Canticle 11 (called in Latin, *Surge, illuminare* “Rise up, Shine”) includes Isaiah 60:1–3, 11, 14b, 18–20. I have added 60:4 for the reading because of the gender-inclusive language.

60 Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms.

¹¹ Your gates shall always be open;
day and night they shall not be shut,
so that nations shall bring you their wealth,
with their kings led in procession.

^{14b} they shall call you the City of the LORD,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in your land,
devastation or destruction within your borders;
you shall call your walls Salvation,
and your gates Praise.

¹⁹ The sun shall no longer be

your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
²⁰ Your sun shall no more go down,
or your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Matthew 5:9–20

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever

breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ephesians 5:5–14

⁵ Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be associated with them. ⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Sermon Proper

Good morning. It’s great to be here and seeing you! This bandana mask I’m wearing has become my signature. When medical masks were unavailable, I bought a 24 pack of these. It was a bit weird walking into the police station for a vehicle inspection wearing it. And when I showed up to an ongoing appointment with a regular medical mask

on, the receptionists didn't recognize me. So, this is my signature mask. I mean, we got to have some fun with this COVID situation, right? Let's just admit it—it's been terrible! It's bad on so many different levels. We need some levity.

Wearing this bandana reminds me of my childhood days playing cops and robbers, good guys and bad guys. Those were the days when we had a clear sense of right and wrong, well, at least we thought we did. It was fun being the bad guy, but you could also be the bad good guy, like the Lone Ranger, or like Clint Eastwood roles in Westerns. Come to think of it, maybe it isn't so clear what is good and bad.

The notion of right and wrong really strikes at the core of what it means to be a human being. Even the worst of us—presuming we could determine who is the worst; let's draw straws—we all have a strong sense of justice; we are acutely aware when we are wronged or misunderstood. And when we see other persons wronged, it shocks and angers us. We have a conscience by which we live our lives and a code of conduct with which we judge others and how they live their lives. Humans are hard-wired for justice and when we see any perceived injustice, we rightly are outraged—police murders, violent protests, destruction of property, racial injustices—and two wrongs don't make it right, so we're stuck at an impasse.

But who owns the definition of justice? Who will decide between different versions of justice? We are prejudiced in our justice; we extend mercy to our own and judgment to others. But we must remember, as I've heard it said, "Justice is never about just us." We thus need to consider each other—friends and enemies, neighbors, and especially strangers. But because we have differing and competing views of justice, we need what C. S. Lewis argued for so well, an arbiter, a *tertium quid*, a third perspective to help adjudicate our rights and our wrongs.

Who has the authority to claim that definition? I would point us to Jesus, whose Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), if nothing else, is a Sermon on the Mountain of Righteousness. We'll turn to that

momentarily, but first, I've been struck by Isaiah's third vision in Chapter 60. In fact, it was my Facebook post on this passage that prompted Jessica LaGrone to ask me to preach this morning. I've not preached here for many years, so hold on to your seats, because I want to connect some dots across the testaments from Isaiah to Jesus to Paul about what it means to be God's people, especially in today's climate of COVID, just and unjust outrage, and political turmoil. It's a mess and we all know it. Brothers and sisters, we need to Shine now more than ever before.

Structurally, the Book of Isaiah builds to this Climax in this vision of Zion arising and shining with salvation, praise, the end of mourning, and God's presence fully experienced. But, Isaiah begins with an initial statement of the problem and solution way back in chapter 1. (Power-Point slide content is provided in what follows.) There, Isaiah offers an initial blistering critique that God's people are rebellious and sinful (1:2–4) and are bearing the personal and social consequences of this (1:5–7); they have corrupt leaders (1:10), and they don't realize that their religious practices like sacrifices, prayers, etc., only hide the real extent of their spiritual poverty; despite their religiosity, the Lord is not listening to them (1:11–15). But right here, the text slows down with a battery of commands that outline the solution: 1) "stop doing wrong" (repentance); 2) "learn to do good" and then 3) "seek justice" specified as "defending the oppressed, taking up the cause of the fatherless, pleading the case of the widow" (1:16–17). STOP–LEARN–GROW, and later GLOW. Then, the Lord says, "Come, let's argue it out!" in which God promises that, despite their sins being crimson red, "they will be turned white as snow" (1:18); and this all concludes with a set of alternative possible responses in 1:19–20: ¹⁹ "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Here, Isaiah models sober, prophetic truth-telling and confrontation, a call for human response of repenting, learning what is right, doing justice, and God's promise of a solution to somehow undo the red stain of our sin. But then, there's a continued opportunity to either obey or to continue to rebel. He never forces us one way or the other. And God surprisingly invites us to argue it out with Him! No wonder Isaiah is the longest Book of the Bible (66 chapters!) apart from Psalms (150 chapters). Both Isaiah and the Psalms join with Deuteronomy as being the most quoted OT books in the NT—Isaiah and Psalms both plumb the depths of our struggle with Justice and God's making things right—what we call by the fancy word “theodicy.” Really, all of Scripture is about Theodicy—How is God righting the wrongs of the world, our world, and my world? Scripture reveals to us God's Theodicy, His way of making this right, and this centers in Jesus and the Gospel who teaches us to STOP–LEARN–GROW.

Now, Isaiah 1:8–9 introduces “Daughter Zion” and says that she is like a shelter, a hut, and is “a city under siege.” What is Zion? Well, Zion is a complex idea, sometimes referring to a physical location like Jerusalem, but then also Zion is the cosmic place from which God rules. The daughter of Zion is thought to be the city itself or its people. But I think particularly here, Daughter Zion represents the faithful remnant who are hunkered down, a city under siege. But, I'm guessing that Zion may evoke a certain movie series—maybe you've heard of it—called the Matrix where Zion is this underground place of refuge against the computer-generated virtual world above, a world literally powered by the life of blissfully ignorant human souls reduced to warm bodies in cocoon units. Too late for the spoiler alert.

Now, there is a powerful analogy here, because our world systems in which we live, move, and breathe are in fact, in many ways virtual, not really real. This COVID situation has in some real sense unmasked it. A pervasive deception is occurring. And we as people are influenced and plagued by underlying ideologies and hidden agendas and

worldviews that call for our complete attention, participation, and allegiance—and these ideologies and worldviews and personal beliefs may be quite at odds with God’s Kingdom in Jesus. It’s in fact for this reason that Paul in Romans 12:2 commands us not to be conformed to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. (Slide content is provided below.)

Non-Conformity & Transformity (Rom 12:2 NRSV)

- Do not be [being] conformed to this world,
- but be [being] transformed by the renewing of your minds,
- so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

And the Greek command forms used here are in the present tense (okay, you should have known that I would comment on some Greek grammar!). What this implies is that there is an ongoing and pervasive need to stop being conformed, which is the default. In other words, if we do nothing intentionally contrary to this pervasive influence to conform, we will be conformed to this age, so powerful is it. **We need to STOP–Learn–Grow.**

In fact, a pervasive evil influence is continually the context of our mission and witness and Christian living. And, I think we’ve become deaf and dumb to it; our world has become so humanistic to think that “evil” is simply a construct to be merely educated out of us. But for believers, we should be constantly aware that evil is present in the Lord’s Prayer that comes to its climax as “Deliver us from the Evil One”—which sadly, we simply have been taught to say, “Deliver us from evil”—as in like moral evil. No, it’s much worse than that! Indeed, in the Lord’s High Priestly Prayer of John 17, at the very center of Jesus’s praying for his disciples is this statement: “Protect them from the Evil One,” and this prayer is structured as a chiasm. Notice the

immediate context of being in the world in mission, the Word (of God), truth, and a need for protection. (PowerPoint slide content is provided below.)

The Center of Jesus's High Priestly Prayer (John 17)

14 I have given them your **word** and the *world* has hated them,
for *they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.*

**15 My prayer is *not* that you take them *out of the world*
but that you protect them from the evil one.**

16 *They are not of the world,* even as I am *not of it.*

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your **word** is truth.

But, returning to the Matrix movies, I'm a Sci-fi guy. There's a John Carpenter Science Fiction movie, a B movie, that powerfully portrayed the pervasive, subtle messaging of sinister aliens that had taken over the world. In order to see this evil, however, one needed to wear special glasses to recognize them and their messaging. In fact, for the protagonist in the movie, it took an alley brawl with a guy who was trying to get him to wear the glasses. I mean, the fight lasted many minutes—reflective of the intensity of the struggle—but he finally puts on the glasses only to see the alien invasion and false subliminal messaging behind the glamorous, attractive billboards. Brother and Sisters, it's time to put on God's glasses; it's time to adopt God's view of things as revealed in Jesus, our political ruler.

As Isaiah continues, it is clear that the Lord expects justice and righteousness from His people, and it breaks his heart when they do not. For example, in 1:21, Isaiah says: "See how the faithful city has become a prostitute! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her— but now murderers!" The problem is WHOM we look to as our leaders. In Isaiah, it is a fundamental religious and political problem. Indeed, all of Scripture is so fundamentally political, and

thus it is not surprising that God has ultimately revealed himself as a Political Figure—a Messiah, a King—that we must not ignore since God’s message to us is that His Kingdom, His politics is what Jesus proclaimed to us. And, once again, let me ask it, who gets to define justice? And, who will lead God’s people?

Well, the Hebrew word “justice” (*mišpāṭ*) means to make right judgment in terms of having the right view of things, offering the appropriate judgment (punishment) to those injuring others, and rectifying a situation such that injured parties are vindicated and restored. That’s justice. Righteousness is closely related, but I’ll define that shortly. By tracing the words justice and righteousness across Isaiah, one realizes the nature and extent of the problem and God’s solution. It is a leadership problem! God offers restoration in 1:26–27: “²⁶ I will restore your leaders as in days of old, your rulers as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City. ²⁷ Zion will be delivered with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness.” God expects justice; we need justice—it’s a match made in heaven. But, our human condition is such that, as we see throughout Isaiah, there is a cycle of sinning, consequences of sinning, prophetic confrontation, and God’s solutions offered.

Now this cycle culminates in Isaiah 59 right before the clear vision of Zion arising and shining in Isaiah 60. So, in 59:1–15 we find a litany of sins that God sees and He concludes there is no “justice” (59:15b). Also, there is no appropriate leader or an “intercessor,” a mediator (59:16a). So, in response to this dilemma in 59:16b, Isaiah indicates that it is God’s arm, i.e., the Messiah, that brings salvation and offers loving kindness. Moreover, this arm wears “the breastplate of righteousness” and “the helmet of salvation”—pieces of metaphorical armor that the Apostle Paul urges believers to wear in several different places (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:10–17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8). These are pieces of God’s Messianic armor, tried and true. Then, concluding Isaiah 59, the Lord describes his covenant solution: “The Redeemer

will come to Zion, to those of Jacob who repent of their sins. My Spirit who is on you will not depart from you and words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children, and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever, says the Lord.” Folks, Paul quotes these verses in Romans 11:26–27. This is God’s solution to our problems; this Redeemer is none other than Jesus; He is God’s light and glory that allows Zion to Rise ‘n’ Shine. By gazing at Him, we are being transformed into greater and greater glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). **It’s time for us, brothers and sisters, to Grow and Glow.**

Today, now, in the USA but also across the globe, we are in a climate where we expect our GOVERNMENT(s) to be the solution to our problems; but, governmental systems—be they capitalism, socialism, Marxism, anarchy, or any other; or any instantiations of political parties be they democrat, republican, libertarian, or progressive—are part of the problem, and inasmuch as we look to them as solutions, we are deceived and distracted from God’s Solution. God’s Solution then and now comes to us in the form of a humble servant, “the shoot from the stump of Jesse” upon whom the Spirit will rest (Isaiah 11:1–2). He will delight in the fear of the Lord; He will not judge “on appearance,” nor knee jerk react simply by what he “hears” (11:3) but rather “with righteousness he will judge/give judgment for the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth” (11:4). Again, we see the centrality of Justice and Righteousness. Indeed as 9:6–7 say, “the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.” This Anointed Leader comes to us as a Suffering Servant in the person of Jesus. He is the King of God’s people; He brings with Him God’s Kingdom; He sets the standard of justice and righteousness, and He casts the vision of what it means to be God’s people in the world, even our world, especially in our world right now! Jesus

reveals that God’s kingdom work stands above from, apart from any human political solution! So, why would we fight with brother and sister over earthly politics when we ought to be aligned MOST fundamentally to a different politics?

You see, right now, Jesus and His outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our human space is mobilizing a people to embody the vision of Zion now, the letting of God’s Kingdom come now as we pray as the Lord taught us, “Let Your kingdom come, Let Your will become on earth as it is in heaven.” We are members of a “Jerusalem above that is Free,” as Paul says in Galatians 4:26, and “we have come” (which is a Perfect Tense verb in Greek indicating something attained with ongoing effects now)—and I continue quoting here, “to Mount Zion, to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” as the author of Hebrews says in 12:22. This is our governing reality; this is our vision. It counters the common adage, perhaps you’ve heard it, “you’re so heavenly minded that you’re no earthly good”; actually, it’s just the opposite: “we’re so heavenly minded that we are able to do earthly good!”

Now, Jesus prepares his followers to be Zion in the Sermon on the Mount as he laid out his vision of righteousness. The Sermon features righteousness in general statements. (PowerPoint slide content is provided below.)

The Sermon of Mt. Righteousness in Matthew

- 5:20 For I tell you, unless your **righteousness** exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- 6:1 Beware of practicing your **righteousness** before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
- 6:33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his **righteousness** ...

- 7:12 **In everything** do to others as you would have them do to you; for **this is the law and the prophets**. [this is the final statement on righteousness]
- **Righteousness** is “rightly relating to one another,” which may involve rebuke, mercy, love, compassion, etc.

It's quite unfortunate that we have debated whether “righteousness” is simply imputed as a verdict or imparted as a virtue. All along, we've failed to recognize that “righteousness” is fundamentally a social-ethical concept that speaks to morally upright behavior. The term that we often see translated as “righteousness” is the same word that the Greek thinkers used in political discourse for “justice,” one of their four cardinal virtues and a critical formative goal of society to produce virtuous, flourishing citizens. So, inherently, the concepts “righteousness” and “justice” are ethical and relational, not just vertically, as in our relationship with God, but horizontally in relating to one another as a public virtue. In fact, I prefer to understand righteousness as signifying “rightly relating” (to one another). God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, by which is meant that not only does God uphold and maintain just standards and condemn sin as sin, but God also provides Jesus as a way forward to forgive us AND to show us a better way to live in the world. So, in the Gospel both God's justice (maintaining right standards) and righteousness (rightly relating to his Creation) are revealed.

So, it is especially fitting that Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes. (PowerPoint content is provided below.)

The Beatitudes (Matt 5)

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit ...

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn ...

⁵“Blessed are the meek ...

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger/thirst for righteousness ...

⁷“Blessed are the merciful ...

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart ...

⁹“Blessed are the **peacemakers** ...

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness**’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

...

¹²Rejoice and be glad ... for in the same way they persecuted **the prophets** who were before you.

Now, I used to approach these Beatitudes as a pick and choose smorgasbord of virtues; but, in fact, they build progressively and climactically to peacemaking and persecution. In fact, you need poverty of spirit (humility), mourning over sin, meekness, thirsting for righteousness, mercy and purity for the climactic calling and virtue of peacemaking. Why? Well, peacemaking is trying to reconcile opposing parties, people at odds with themselves and with God. But, this is why the Beatitudes move to being persecuted, because peacemaking will necessarily involve truth-telling, and calling out the wrongs in each party—and, people often do not like that, and so, Jesus indicates that his disciples should expect to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake like the prophets before them. And so, we are sober; we need to be wise as serpents, yet innocent as doves. We are light to the world. (PowerPoint slide content is provided below.)

Being the Light for the World (Matt 5:14–17)

- ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

- Our Purpose: ¹⁶ In the same way, **let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**
- Jesus's Purpose: ¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill [them].

And right here, Jesus likens his followers to a city sitting on a hill for all to see, the daughter Zion present in the world. And it is precisely here in the Sermon of Mount Righteousness that our human calling and purpose to be Light in the World in order to lead people to see and to praise God (5:16) is placed right next to Jesus's purpose of coming to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (5:17) and to urge us to embody a surpassing righteousness (5:20), a way of rightly relating with one another that is true, honest, humble, courageous, and full of love and captivated by God's vision of justice and righteousness. And folks, we need to shine right now—whether it's the ER nurse working extra shifts and then helping clean up after riots in downtown Atlanta; or the single mother raising her daughters and helping them find godly husbands; or the sex-addiction counselor helping people overcome their addictions; or the police chaplain loving on these public servants; or the one joining in protests seeking a more just society. We all need to SHINE where we find ourselves.

In closing, allow me one more connection from Isaiah through Jesus to Paul. Paul understood the need for us to wake up, like in the Matrix movies, to come out of our sleep and so he says, and let us listen to the Word: ⁶⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³ but everything exposed by the light

becomes visible,¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” I love this last verse that is inspired by Isaiah. Christ shines on us so that we can shine as light in the World.

And so, brothers and sisters, in this time of chaos and confusion, you see, we have a higher citizenship, a greater allegiance, a better political Leader in Jesus who gazes down with justice and love upon us. He has become one of us—teaching us how to rightly relate to one another—to **Stop, Learn, Grow, and Glow**. And he wants and hopes and even prays in John 17 that we would live differently in this world in alignment with Truth and Justice, to live beautifully, graciously, humbly, courageously, and faithfully. As much as we may enjoy to fight and to be right, we must always look to Jesus who is God’s *tertium quid*, God’s adjudicating perspective for us. And he’s prepared the way and continues to be our *tertium quid*, showing us the way to do this so that our human wills and his divine will come together as a light for the world to see.

That’s the invitation of this table prepared for us this morning, a chance for us to see the light and be the light. Christ is shining on us at this very moment; it’s time to Arise ‘n’ Shine, Daughter Zion, Your Messiah has come! Amen