

Time To Shine

(Pastor Wendell "Skip" Kapena Wright, KWM, 3/6/2012)

Wow! What diverse selections of weather patterns we get to "enjoy" here in our neck of the woods, eh?! First, sunshine and clear skies, then, WHAM! SNOW! Then, SUNSHINE again! It's awesome! Totally awesome and yet, in all that, the underlying Truth is very evident that "stuff happens"!

How we live our lives and what determines how we handle things is a choice, unlike the weather system. And yet, so many choose to let the circumstances in their lives determine whether or not they walk in faith or not, whether they believe God or don't, and whether they Allow Jesus Christ to shine through them or His Holy Spirit to work in them, no matter what's going on around them. Sadly, the end result is that the light that should be shining ends up being shrouded or hidden behind or amidst all that "stuff" we choose to wallow in or place our focus on.

Our key verse is, **Isaiah 60:1 – “Arise, Shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.”**

In our previous lesson, we focused on the first word, "*Arise*", and I shared from the **AMPLIFIED** version, of that portion of the scripture verse which tells to, "*Arise (from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you—rise to a new life)!*"

I hope that of anything you remember about God, it's this; it's not His desire that we be "down and out". He wants up and running for Him. Remember what I'd shared in the first lesson as I introduced this teaching, God wants us to ***produce and not deduce, be proactive and not inactive, to proceed and not recede, and progress rather than digress***. I'd venture to say that you could add more comparisons to that like, God would rather we ***promote than demote others, or show ourselves grace-full rather than dis-grace-full (without any grace at all for others)***. I'm sure you can think of so many more, but, I've made my point so enough said about that.

We spoke of the Hebrew lepers outside the gates of the Syrian Army who had nothing to lose by entering the camp of the enemy and how those lepers ended up better than what they'd been thinking they'd end up. Then, we considered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and their decision to follow God, no matter what the consequences and how God not only delivered them, but also in a subsequent chapter, also delivered Daniel from hungry lions, for making that same quality decision of keeping God first in their lives, no matter if it would have cost them their lives. The result was not only that they were delivered from their impending deaths by God, but the kings who sent them to their intended fates also came to know and worship their GOD!

(II Kings 7:3-5; Daniel 3:16-18; Daniel 6:10-28)

Keep that in mind in all that we're doing and in all we face in our life because the decisions we make for God will most definitely make an impact on the lives of those around us. So, the choice is ours, do we want to be that impact player, that powerful representative, that reflection of God's goodness and His glory (which we'll get to in coming studies) to others, thus opening the door for those who are watching us and may, in fact, be secretly pulling for our success(es).

So, that's pretty much where we left off, though I'm not totally finished with that subject, but will reserve the right to revisit it at a future time. Okay, I'm going to revisit that subject many times over because it's worth returning to.

Now, I'm really excited at the next word in our key scripture verse, "Shine".

The Bible teaches us that we (as God's children in Christ Jesus) are the *expressed (articulated, uttered, verbalized, spoken, explicit) image (copy, twin, double, duplicate, persona, aura, semblance, picture, representation, reflection) of Our Father, God.*

[Gen. 22:18; Psalm 89:3, 105:15; Isaiah 41:8-10, 42:1, 45:4, 65:9,22; Matt. 24:22,24, 31; Mark 13:20,22,27; John 15:16; Rom. 8:33, 9:11, 11:7; Col. 3:12; I Thess. 1:4; II Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; Heb. 5:4-6; I Pet. 1:1, 2:9;)

Here are just a few more scriptures that should help us remember just how God sees us and how we should see ourselves and appear to others.

To begin with, we need to get something straight. From the beginning of our time as we know it, from our initial inception and creation, God has always meant for us all to be in His image.

Genesis 1:26-28 [Amplified] - "God said, Let Us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), *make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the (tame) beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth.*"

But, we know that because of a sinful (God-less) choice, made by Adam and Eve, we lost a very critical part of that image that was meant for all of mankind, God's glory. His covering that allowed man to not only be in God's image, but allowed man to walk and talk with God without hesitation, without reservations, without any kind of doubt or shame, but fully exposed to the Creator and all of His glory, fully reaping all the benefits of that relationship. But, once sin entered in, that image was tarnished for all mankind and the only way back to regaining not only that image, but that relationship, was through a second Adam, Jesus Christ.

We learn from **Romans 5:12-14** "*You know the story of how Adam landed us in the dilemma we're in – first sin, then death..But Adam, who got us into this, also points ahead to the One who will get us out of it. (Jesus Christ.)*" [The Message]

And further, we're reminded that, "*The first man (was) from out of earth, made of dust (earthly-minded); the second Man (is) the Lord from out of heaven.*" **I Cor. 15:47** [Amplified]

So, we can take heart in knowing that God knew us from before we made any decisions in our life and has given every man the same opportunity to come to a closer relationship with Him and be in His image, in Christ Jesus.

Paul writes in **Romans 8:29** [Amplified] - "*For those whom He foreknew (of whom He was aware and loved beforehand), He also destined from the beginning (foreordaining them) to be*

molded into the image of His Son (and share inwardly His likeness), that He might become the firstborn among many bretheren."

(I Cor. 11:7 [NKJV] - ..since he (man) is the image and glory of God.."; I Cor. 15:49 - "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (Jesus).")

(Eph. 4:24 [Amplified] - "And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, (Godlike) in true righteousness and holiness.")

(James 3:7-10 [Message] - "This is scary; you can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue--it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women *He made in His image*. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! vs. 9 [New Living Translation] - "Sometimes it praise our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who *have been made in the image of God*."

And that's just talking about our "image" as God sees us and means us to be! I believe you'll be "enlightened" when we talk about "shine"!