

Read: **Isaiah 59:14-60:5**

**From where we were to where we are going, it is the Word and Spirit of God that gets us through.**

We don't have to be aware of much to realize things aren't great. There is a perennial darkness that looms over humanity. There are voices crying out for justice and it never seems to come. What is evil is called good and championed as the aspiration of all people.

Beyond the headlines it is our experience too. A low groaning for something better. Wracked with anxiety for the unknown future. Insecure. Hungry for something that will actually satisfy.

And good students of history quickly realize this is nothing new. While the sickness has different symptoms, it has always been present. Wearing different clothes but just as dark. Humanity turned in on itself.

Into the darkness something has come. Action has been taken by the only One capable of change. And it is seriously good. Here in Isaiah 59 we have the promised deliverance of God seen as a historic fact. God works redemption, for his glory, upending the experience and giving his people life-defining hope.

But what's more, he gives another promise of the future, a destination for those he calls his own - if that is us, today we want to be reminded of it and look forward with great expectation.

All of our struggle and wrestling is dealt with here. Salvation is here, purpose, and eternity are here in the story of Jesus. And it's for you.

Our business today then is to see how God has dealt with the past, long for the promised future and uncover what he has given to get us through between the two.

## 1) Past

We kicked off today right in the middle of Isaiah 59 where there is a view of reality that we barely want to see. The people do not know the way of peace, justice is far from them, humanity groping and walking like the blind... stumbling, growling and moaning for something more. Hoping for justice, to be advocated for and there is nothing to solve our ache.

“Justice is turned back and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares and uprightness cannot enter.” **v. 14**

God sees it and it displeased him, that there was no justice. Not far off and aloof, God witnesses the corruption of humanity, the rejection of his way. And it has infected not only his people Israel, but all people.

He looked for just one to be righteous, to find someone interceding for the people but found no one.

We understand this, we are familiar with the sense of it. Earning the displeasure of our Creator. Attempting to take his place as our own. Re-writing his decree. Lost in the dark adventure of satisfying self above all things. No matter who gets in the way.

Where God could have wiped everyone out, he does something unexpected. It has been what Isaiah has been promising all along. “...then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.”

He, in his strength, establishes salvation.

When no one could gain righteousness as their own, the ability to stand before God blameless and right, God wears it like body armor and extends it to those who believe and turn to him.

Here he is retelling of what has come already - redemption worked by the Servant - the One appointed to be judge who came driven by the “wind of the Lord.”

So friends this is Jesus. His finished work on the cross; calling his people to himself, the spread of reverence for the Lord from the west and the east, the whole world. Justice has its answer. Truth has a name. Uprightness its champion.

For a humanity corrupted by sin and rebellion, God sends his Son to fully meet the wrath against sin, the death it deserves and solves the crisis of our existence. Forgiveness available in Christ. Salvation won by the might of his arm.

The salvation that is the core of the redemptive story that is Scripture.

The life of Jesus lived for us in obedience to the Father. His death as our substitute. And his resurrection as proof of victory over death and the gift of new life to those that believe. We rejoice in this.

This is about you!

That Jesus would willfully ascend the cross and be forsaken so we would never have to be, that he would cry out that “it is finished” as the atoning sacrifice needed to cover sin was surrendered.

This brings us out of the soup of sin and rejection of God. This is why we go on about the gospel, the good news of Jesus, because God has flipped the script and given freedom and life where there was only burden and despondency.

This is enough for us, to present the way out, the only way of life before the king of the universe.

But God, through Isaiah, goes on promising that this Redeemer is coming back. Having worked in the past he is set to come again bringing with him exceeding joy.

## **2) Future**

**Isaiah 59:20** “And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.” (ESV)

We move into chapter 60 and we see a vision given to Zion, the city of God. A description of what is to come, far beyond just a reconstituted Jerusalem - a new city for all people. The very beacon of the kingdom of God.

Maybe for some of you this is new. Here it is, Christians believe that not only has Jesus provided salvation by taking on the cross in the past but that he is bringing his people all together to be with him, to thrive and live with him for eternity. This is what we have to look forward to.

“You shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult...” The city pulsing with life, the abundance of the nations shall come.

If we keep reading in verses 6-9 we have the account of all those gathered in. Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nebaioth... A diversity brought in to the kingdom. Even the sons of Ishmail... Then from the corners of the world, Tarshish (Spain), Coastlands (far away places)... all of them hoping for God.

This city made beautiful by God for his glory. We live in a pretty special place, climate makes it beautiful, the scenery as well. But this city is beyond our dreams for beautiful. “... the earthly city glories in itself, the Heavenly City glories in the Lord.” – Augustine, City of God

Filled with those we least expect! **Isaiah 60:10–11** “Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. [11] Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.” (ESV)

The old masters who enslaved God’s people will submit to the authority enthusing the city. And the place has a wall!!! But the gates are always open as the wealth of the nations is brought in - the wealth being people, souls!

“God has committed himself to the future of this world, his grace will triumph permanently and universally, and the races and cultures of this world have a place of honor in God’s plan.” Ray Ortlund

Here is the city of God is honored above its persecutors and it is going to be a place of peace... “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.” **60:18.**

And the Redeemer, he will be your light in the city of God. “The sun shall be no more... nor the moon for brightness... the LORD will be your everlasting light.” **60:19**.

Held before God’s people as our destination - what a wonderful promise and picture of what is to come. We can keep going on the journey because we hope in this final renewal that is coming.

A vision meant to bolster God’s family, kingdom citizens. The first recipients of this message needed it. Waiting for the arrival, the redemptive work of the Servant. This promise keeps the remnant afloat, clinging to the Lord.

Just like John’s vision for the church in Revelation. A letter given to the churches facing persecution, trouble and waiting on revival.

**Revelation 21:1–7** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

[5] And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” [6] And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. [7] The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”  
(ESV)

“It is done!” All that he set out to accomplish leads here. Forever.

What joy this is going to bring - eternity with the Redeemer, with Jesus! The very real and permanent presence of God; his grace as the overarching reality of the new creation.

Oh the dancing we will do!

From a past like ours, to the future with Jesus for all of eternity. Wow.

Seeing and knowing the past and longing for the future we have to recognize a hinge, a turning point, in two verses.

In the middle of the description of the city comes this, **Isaiah 60:12** “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.” (ESV)

Be part of the city of God that glories in the Lord, or perish. There is no other option.

**Isaiah 59:20** “And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.”

**John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (ESV)

This is the call ever before us, to turn from transgression - to repent and believe in Jesus. This is the switch between eternal darkness and glorious light.

Have you turned? If no, please don't delay. If so, rejoice, salvation is a done deal, you stand justified in Jesus, and you are headed home with him for eternity.

And know you are given what you need by God to get there. He solves our present reality as well.

### **3) Present**

**Isaiah 59:21** “And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,” says the LORD, “from this time forth and forevermore.” (ESV)

His Spirit and his word, given to his people to get them through.

Word - promises, guidance, truth to hold fast to.

Spirit - power to live, to know truth, to be transformed by it

This is the Lord using his Word and Spirit to seal his people, it will not depart out of your mouth... for generations, from this time forth and forevermore.

Cherishing one we are given the other...This is the promise from Jesus for his people.

**John 14:15–17** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (ESV)

“He guarantees our future, and he explains how he’s going to get us there. He gives us his Spirit and his Word, and he’ll never take them away. We should never separate the Spirit and the Word. God doesn’t. And we need both. Without the Spirit, we get dry. Without the Word, we get weird. But the Spirit and the Word together are enough to re-create the world.” Ray Ortlund

This is why at Reservoir we rally to both Word and Spirit - we need both the declarer of truth and the applier of it.

And this is what carries us through - we can face anything in light of this gift. We stand on the promises of the word and we desperately need the power of the Spirit to keep standing, to experience the outworking of the promises.

The word and Spirit does something in us. We are made into light...

**Isaiah 60:1–3** “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. [2] For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. [3] And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

Here God is applying his salvation to his people, making them a light to the world. He is proclaiming good news that draws back the veil, revealing his promises and says to us, "Arise, shine, for your light has come." No more fear, your future no longer holds death. Believe the gospel and in it by the Spirit of God you will grow strong giving glory to God. This is revival for us now.

"When the Redeemer has come to Zion, gathered penitents (59: 20) and appointed a covenant mediator to share the Lord's Spirit with them, it is not just that they are bathed in light but that they are irradiated, inwardly charged with new, outshining life."  
Alec Motyer

The church made a light to shine the path home for those Jesus calls to himself. God's presence already among us by his Spirit drawing in the nations.

Oh that we might live free, bold lives, excited in Jesus for his glory.

**From where we were to where we are going, it is the Word and Spirit of God that gets us through.**

**Believe** - you don't need to be convinced of the darkness, you know it well. But friend today be convinced of the light. Jesus is for you, his life, death, and resurrection has secured for you salvation, that which you could never earn he gives you as grace. Claim it for yourself; repent of the past disregard and rebellion and trust in Jesus.

**Hold Fast to the Word** - Like food take in the word. Let it awaken you, challenge you, stir you, and guide you. Cling to what it says of you in Christ.

**Rely on the Spirit** - As to be continually filled by his truth, his power to be a witness of Jesus and to thrive for his glory. Long for him to move among you, as he makes the church a light to call the prodigals home.

We are going there together. Out of darkness and into the glorious light of Christ.

Rejoice, let your heart thrill and exult in the Lord.