

It's Hard to Interact With People of Other Faiths  
TTAHTD #15 | Isaiah 60:1-5  
May 23, 2021

### **Scripture Reading | Isaiah 60:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines over you. <sup>2</sup> For look, darkness will cover the earth, and total darkness the peoples; but the Lord will shine over you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup> Nations will come to your light, and kings to your shining brightness. <sup>4</sup> Raise your eyes and look around: they all gather and come to you; your sons will come from far away, and your daughters on the hips of nursing mothers. <sup>5</sup> Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will tremble and rejoice, because the riches of the sea will become yours and the wealth of the nations will come to you.

### **Pre-Sermon Remarks**

- Two last weeks on TTAHTD, then Sermon on the Mount

## **PRAYER**

### **Introduction**

Premise: American Christians aren't very good at interacting with people of other faiths

- 1st Century Christians in the Roman Empire did it more than we do

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. **U.S. Constitution Bill of Rights, December 15, 1791**

- America has always been predominantly Christian and non Christian
- English-descent protestants primarily | 1% Catholic @ Revolution
  - Maryland = tolerant | Virginia = Officially Anglican
  - Other states, like Virginia, enforced one denomination (Anglican)
- 1850–1915 | Major Catholic immigration from Ireland, Poland, and Italy
- 1960 presidential election, JFK vs. Richard Nixon
  - Roughly 25% of Americans were Catholic
  - JFK's opponents said that he would be controlled by the Vatican in Italy
- The point: as recent as 60 years ago, we were still wrestling with Catholic/Protestant

### **Fast Forward**

- Jewish immigration to the U.S. during WW2 and 1970's
- Muslim immigration to U.S. in recent decades (also historic muslim African enslavement)
- Rise of alternative spiritualities such as wicca, pantheism, indigenous spirituality
- Rise of the "nones"—a full 25% of Americans

**Big idea:** God's people love people of other faiths because of Jesus.

\*Starting point: understanding where we find ourselves in the **bigger** story of redemption

### God's Plan for the Nations

1. The nations created | Acts 17:26-27
  - a. Genesis 1 mandate: fill the earth, spread out!
  - b. **Acts 17** <sup>26</sup>From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. <sup>27</sup>He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.
  - c. Genesis 11 rebellion, so God scattered them
2. The gods of the nations | Deuteronomy 4:19, 32:8
  - a. **Deuteronomy 32** <sup>8</sup>When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.
  - b. **Deuteronomy 4** <sup>19</sup>And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.
  - c. Israel was chosen to be God's rescuer to bring the nations back
  - d. But eventually, they themselves were scattered in exile
3. A gathering promised | Isaiah 60:1-5
  - a. **Isaiah 60** <sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines over you. <sup>2</sup>For look, darkness will cover the earth, and total darkness the peoples; but the Lord will shine over you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light, and kings to your shining brightness. <sup>4</sup>Raise your eyes and look around: they all gather and come to you; your sons will come from far away, and your daughters on the hips of nursing mothers. <sup>5</sup>Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will tremble and rejoice, because the riches of the sea will become yours and the wealth of the nations will come to you.
4. The Messiah for all | John 12:31-32, 19:19-20
  - a. **John 12** <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."
  - b. **John 19** <sup>19</sup>Pilate also had a sign made and put on the cross. It said: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. <sup>20</sup>Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.
5. To the ends of the earth | Acts 13:47-49
  - a. **Acts 13** <sup>47</sup>For this is what the Lord has commanded us: [Is. 49] I have made you a light for the Gentiles to bring salvation to the ends of the earth." <sup>48</sup>When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup>The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

## Interacting With Grace

1. The differences are real | Acts 17:30-31
  - a. Culture (recent past): “all religions teach the same thing”
  - b. Culture (current): you *must* believe the new secular creed
    - i. *In this house, we believe black lives matter, women’s rights are human rights, no human is illegal, science is real, love is love, kindness is everything.*
  - c. <sup>30</sup> “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”
2. The gospel is not forced | Luke 9:51-56
  - a. The European failure (Holy Roman empire), modern fundamentalist problem
  - b. *...do you want us to call down fire from heaven?*
  - c. America as a pluralistic society
3. Remember the true enemy | Ephesians 6:12
  - a. These people who follow rival gods are not our enemies, the rival gods are
  - b. **Psalm 96** <sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols
4. Know what they believe | Acts 17:22
  - a. <sup>22</sup> Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, “People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect.
  - b. This holds true in any debate: if you want to *actually* change someone’s opinion, you must *first* be able to articulate *their* beliefs accurately.
    - i. Example: Mormons and Jehovah’s Witness are not the same
    - ii. Example: Christians and Muslims have a *lot* of overlapping beliefs
5. Know what you believe | Acts 17:17-18
  - a. Paul was so well-versed in his beliefs that he could adapt to the audience
    - i. <sup>17</sup> So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, as well as in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also debated with him.
  - b. You can’t just say “the bible says” | Acts 17
6. Know your mission field | 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
  - a. <sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.
    - i. Paul might be unique, we are going to have different calling
    - ii. Different people, different callings, different seasons

## **Conclusion**

1. Recite the Apostles' Creed
2. Prayer for nonbelievers

## **Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**\*Prayer time\***

## **Benediction**

**Psalm 67** <sup>1</sup>May God be gracious to us and bless us; may he make his face shine upon us <sup>2</sup>so that your way may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.