

Moving outwards

Isaiah 9:1-4

Isaiah proclaims light and freedom for those in the region of Israel – the Galilee of the nations. We hear again the well-known words, often heard at Christmas, about light dawning on those who have been walking in darkness. The coming of the servant means that their oppression is over and joy abounds.

This week, we will move outwards beyond the Christmas associations of the Isaiah passage and see our calling mirrored in that of the first disciples.

Read this week's passage:



CREATE

Draw and colour in a simple fish shape. As you do so, think about people you would like to help, or get closer to when they are ill or unhappy. Stick the fish to paper and cover with a fine net or fabric to represent the love that reaches out to them.

Remember

Create a family jar of joy by decorating a jar then fill it each day or week with items, or write down something that fills you with joy. At the end of the month or year, take a look through your jar and share your memories. Thank God for all the joy in your life. Learn more about jars of joy online. www.jarsofjoy.co

Pray



Use marbles when you pray together. Have some marbles each and as you pray each prayer, roll a marble into a central space. Think about things to praise God for, to say 'thank you', to ask for help and guidance for yourself and others. When you have finished, look at your marble prayers. Then keep the marbles in a special prayer jar or box until next time.



Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:

Living Scripture

'He will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.' Psalm 46:10

God's plan was always global. From the command in Genesis to 'fill the earth', and God's promises to Abraham and David, 'all the nations of the Earth will be blessed through you', God's plan was to save and restore the whole world.

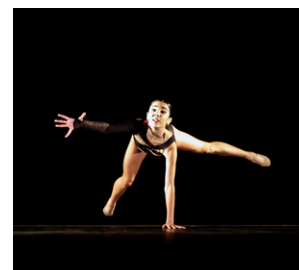
Sometimes the story of the Old Testament focuses in on one person, one family, or one nation, but the trajectory is towards the world. The Jews were meant to be a light to the Gentiles (non-Jews), showing what God is truly like. Many times they failed to demonstrate with their lifestyles and obedience what God was like (they mistreated widows and foreigners, didn't follow God's laws and worshipped idols), and God sent them into exile among the nations so that they would come back to God, and their light could shine even brighter among the nations.

In the passage, Isaiah prophesies that the northern tribes of Israel would be humbled, taken into exile, but Galilee – a land famously settled by foreigners – would one day see the light. Jesus lived and spent most of his ministry in this multicultural region and commissioned his disciples to make disciples of all nations.

The gospel is not just for us, but for all nations, all people. How can we live so all can see God's light? Are there people from other cultures or nations you could befriend? How can you let your light shine, so they can see your faith in Jesus?

First impressions

- What does 'outreach' mean to you?
- Is there a place – outside your neighbourhood – where you would like to see growth and renewal?
- When you see signs of growth in your church, do you take time to rejoice and to share what is going well?



Pray

God of light,
keep us faithful as light-bearers.
Help us to keep our focus on you and then outwards to others.
Be with us as we move outwards beyond our comfort zone.
Help us, like the fishermen, to leave behind the familiar and safe and move into your light with freedom and joy.
Amen.



ACT



Amnesty International lists Urgent Actions with links where those interested can send an email to the appropriate authorities urging action. Choose a current one and act!