

Your Insight

"Rise and Shine"

By Meliza Farndell

Rise and Shine!

One of my most precious childhood memories is my mom walking into my bedroom in the mornings, pulling my curtains open and shouting: "Rise and shine!" Her way of letting me know that I have spent enough time in bed; it was time to get up, time to get moving, time to wash the sleep out of my eyes and get into action!

I now remember it fondly but at the time, I have to be honest: I wasn't too pleased. Getting up out of bed has never been my most favourite activity. I love the snooze button on my alarm. Snuggling into the pillows, sinking into the fluffy blankets and pulling the duvet over my head to get away from the harassing daylight, seemed like a much better idea than getting up and facing the day. But there's nothing that motivates like a determined mother, so after a bit of grumbling I reluctantly pulled away the covers and swung my feet out of bed, slowly the life started returning to my body and eventually I turned into a functional human being. All the credit to my mom who announced the arrival of daylight every morning!

My mom knew a bit about the value of light. I discovered this as I was unpacking my suitcase on the day I arrived in the UK. She had lovingly filled a little notebook with some of her favourite recipes, some pressed flowers from her garden, some notes on memories that made us laugh and some of her favourite scriptures.

On the last page she had written Isaiah 60:1 – "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." Tucked away in my suitcase was his little reminder to "Rise and Shine" in the morning, even on days when I just can't seem to get out of bed and face life. This little reminder has been on my mind quite a lot lately...

I don't know about you, but for me 2013 came to a bit of a chaotic halt. Rushing from one activity to the next: Christmas parties, Nativity plays, pushing through busy shopping centres to find perfect presents... it's a lot of pressure! And before you know it you're catapulted into 2014, the curtains are drawn and it is time to get out of bed and face the New Year.

Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you...



I have had a few days where I would have gladly pulled that duvet cover over my head and just snuggled back into sweet, comfortable slumber. But then I was reminded about that little note: Arise... As I was reading the Bible on my YouVersion app one evening, I read Isaiah 60 from the Message translation:

***"Get out of bed, Jerusalem!
Wake up. Put your face in the sunlight.
God's bright glory has risen for you.
The whole earth is wrapped in darkness,
all people sunk in deep darkness,
But God rises on you,
his sunrise glory breaks over you..."***

I have to say, my first reaction was not one of tremendous excitement. I felt tired, weary and just not ready to get into action. But as I was thinking this over, I really felt God speaking powerfully through this piece of scripture and I believe there is something special for all of us in this Word. I believe that this year we will see God's glory arise on us and through us like never before, as we get out of our comfortable places and step into the His light.

Waking up

I don't know how I still manage to get myself in that place of complacency at times. When my focus is so arrested by the cares of this world and the routines of life... when I stop seeing God in the little things... when what's going on, on the outside seems to become more important than what God is doing on the inside of me. Everything feels hard and difficult. It is like a sleepiness comes over me and I forget that there is more to life than what I am experiencing in the natural.



Romans 13 from verse 11 onwards says:

But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed. We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

When we wake up to God's reality in our life, we are putting ourselves in a position to experience what He is doing in our world. What an amazing privilege! By keeping our attention on Him, we are part of a much bigger adventure than the mundane routine of everyday life. How exciting! I love the bit that says: Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about! We all have to dress ourselves in the morning; I haven't been able to delegate that job since I was about 5 years old. I have to do it every morning. It is the same with putting on Christ; this is something that we have to do for ourselves, every morning. Declaring that we are in Him, that we are righteous in Him, that we are loved, free, transformed, accepted, healed, strong in Him, is like dressing our spirit, ready for whatever the day brings!

Sunlight

It's never pleasant to put your face in the sunlight when you have been in a dark place. There is nothing comfortable about it. But there is also nothing that will wake you up like switching the light on. And sometimes it may feel like that when we go to the Word of God. The light may be a bit uncomfortable, but the longer you look into the light, the easier it is to see.

Psalm 119:105 says: *"By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path."*

We put our faces into the sunlight by going to God's word. We need that sunlight to keep us alert, to keep us awake, and to help us see and keep our focus on Him.

People sunk in deep darkness

We are called to be light to people who are sunk in deep darkness. And I believe these people are not just people without God, but you may even know God-loving people who are struggling through life, who need some sunlight in their lives.

Matthew 5:14-16

Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Isn't it amazing to know that God not only restores us, cleans us up and make us new, but He also puts His light in us, so that we can shine and bring light to the broken, the lost, and the hurt? As the people in your life see God's amazing work in your life, they will be drawn to His light, it is inevitable!

Sunrise glory breaks over you

God's glory, His presence is with you and in you today, every day in 2014 and beyond! His sunrise glory breaks over you... what a relief that we don't have to manufacture our own light. God has put His wonderful Light inside of us.

Colossians 1:26

This mystery has been kept in the dark for a long time, but now it's out in the open. God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple.

We simply have to get into the Sunlight and God's grace will enable us to shine.

Happy New Year

So I want to encourage you today to put away the pressure of everything that "has to be done" this year and simply bask in the Sunrise glory of God every day. Spend less time worrying about the things of this world and just receive God's unconditional Love, His Grace, His Strength and His Light for your journey. I know it's going to be a remarkable one! A journey full of adventure as God works in you and through you to set people free!

With Lots of Love,

Meliza x