

Introduction:

1. Who do you know who is so reliable that when they promise to get something done it's as good as done?
2. What was your worst experience of being in the dark because of a power failure?

Understanding:

3. Look at verse 2: **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.** Why did Isaiah write about this event 700 years in the future as if it already happened? What does this have to do with what prophets do?
4. In verse 3 the prophet predicts that the fulfillment of joy comes in the person of Jesus Christ. Read John 15:10-12. Does Jesus' joy appear in us automatically? If not what needs to happen? What do you think he is asking as a requirement to accompany joy?
5. In Isaiah 9:4 it talks about how the Lord "shattered the yoke that burdened them". Now read Matthew 11:29. What is the difference between the two kinds of yokes? Explain the effect of the yoke described in Matthew on your daily life.
6. Isaiah's prophecies in today's passage get fulfilled in the fullness of the gospel. Read Colossians 1:19-23. Here the gospel which is hinted at in Isaiah is made very clear. What exactly is made more clear here? Pay special attention to verse 20!
7. If you are a believer in Christ you have moved from darkness to light. If someone said to you "that sounds nice-glad it works for you" how could you use today's passage and 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 to explain to them how they need the Light to come into their darkness? How does our being a "jar of clay" connect to our attitude in explaining their need to them?
8. Today's passage, in verse 4, compares what Jesus does to the defeat of Midian. Read Judges 7. How much depended on the work of Gideon and the Israelites and how much on the power of God? What would be the effect of seeing that on Isaiah's original readers? How does it affect you?
9. In verse 7 it talks about zeal in Jesus' kingdom. Read John 2:13-17. Some think that zeal just means to have a pumped-up attitude. But what this passage explain about zeal?
10. Read Psalm 72. This is another one of those Psalms that is a great prediction of Christ. What is the quality of Jesus' rule that is mentioned here more than any other? What do you see about how Jesus looks at weak people and powerful people?
11. Verse 4 spoke of Jesus getting rid of the rod of their oppressor and the bar across their shoulders. Read Hebrews 2:14-15. What is the huge fear? Who holds the power of the fear? How is it broken? How does this reassure you?

Application:

12. In John 1:5 it says "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." In view of this and the whole series, give a prayer of thanks for what the Lord has already done for you, and ask God specifically about an area of your life where you want to see more of his light.
13. Pray for a person you know who is still walking in darkness, that they will see the great light of salvation through Christ.