



# Sermon Growth Guide

**December 7, 2025**

**Everlasting**

**Isaiah 60:1-3, 18-22**

**Key Verse:** “The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” Isaiah 9:2

**Big Idea:** Much of what we experience is temporary, but the light of Jesus impacts our lives in lasting ways.

## Foundations

This week’s sermon offers a contrast between that which is temporary and that which is lasting. Much of what we experience in life tends to be temporary. If we depend upon it for meaning and joy, we’ll inevitably become disappointed.

In contrast, the light of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate this time of year, impacts our lives in ways that are lasting. Isaiah twice refers to the light Jesus brings as “everlasting” (60:19-20). His unconditional love is unchanging. The hope He provides is unending. The power of Jesus’ light to pierce the darkest places of our lives is everlasting.

Yes, we still experience darkness today in our lives and in our world, for we’ve not yet experienced the fullness of Isaiah’s promise. But just as a jeweler places diamonds against a black backdrop to shine more brightly, Jesus’ light shines most brightly against the backdrop of darkness.

Even if there’s darkness in our lives that we wish wasn’t there, the everlasting light we experience in Jesus is more than many around us have, and we’re encouraged to shine Christ’s light for others to see.

## Understanding God’s Word

Together, read Isaiah 60:1-3, 18-22.

The first two words, “Arise, shine” are both commands. What is Isaiah calling God’s people to do in response to his message?

After entering our world Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) In what ways is Jesus light for us?

## Applying God’s Word

How many things can you name that are temporary? In contrast, how is what Jesus offers us lasting?

Isaiah writes of God’s light shining amidst darkness. If someone asked you today where it’s dark for you, how would you answer?

The sermon encouraged us to Look, Hope, and Shine. Which word feels most applicable for your journey through this Advent season?

## Witnessing God’s Word

In what ways can you shine this week as a beacon of God’s love and hope that encourages others there’s something more than the darkness of this world?

I invite you to turn to Isaiah 60 as we continue our series Everlasting Light. This Advent we're focusing on the promise from the familiar Christmas hymn O Little Town of Bethlehem: "Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light." We're remembering how God's light can pierce the darkness in our lives. Let's pray and then read today's text.

In recent years, I've become increasingly comfortable referring to myself as a dinosaur when it comes to technology. So, it was somewhat of a surprise when I purchased a smart watch earlier this year. The first morning I wore it while walking, I felt the watch periodically buzz, until I finally looked at it. When I did, I saw a message: "Hey dummy, it looks like you're working out. Do you want me to record it?!" I love many of the watch's features, but there's one thing that's annoying: I have to charge it every day.

Today we're going to contrast two things: that which is temporary versus that which is everlasting. I invite you to ponder the question: Would I rather experience something that's temporary or lasting?

Most of what we experience tends to be temporary. How many of us have been inconvenienced by a car battery that's died? Or perhaps love hasn't lasted in a relationship the way we'd hoped it would. That excitement many of us felt when the Broncos won the Super Bowl 10 years ago . . . it didn't last long, did it? Civilizations don't last forever: the Persian, Roman, Aztec, and British Empires are all no more. Our own bodies are wearing out, and even our sun is burning itself out.

A certain company touts its batteries with the phrase, "It keeps going and going and going." But they don't last forever, do they? Most things in life don't. If we depend upon what's temporary to provide meaning and joy, we'll become disappointed at some point.

Today's theme of Everlasting begs the question: Is it possible/experience something that can last forever, besides Hostess Twinkies? Some weeks ago, I visited one of our members whose life here on earth was nearing an end. I saw in him a peace, hope and confidence that was undiminished in any way by the threat of death. Over the years, I've witnessed this many times in First Pres saints preparing to leave this world.

You see, though much of what we experience in life is temporary, a personal relationship with God anchors us deep within in ways that last. His unconditional love is unchanging. The hope He provides is unending. The power of Jesus' light to pierce the darkest places of our lives is everlasting.

Would you like to learn more about this? Let's look closer at Isaiah's assurances. He writes, "Your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you." (60:1) And then again, "The Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you." (60:2) Isaiah declares that the darkness will be no match for the light of Jesus. David McKenna seeks to flesh out Isaiah's words when he writes, "Witnesses to a dawn in the Middle East report that the sun does not gradually arise to bring the daylight. Rather, the sun bursts upon the horizon to turn deep darkness into dazzling splendor. The glory of God's redemption is also like a sunburst. Sin's deep darkness is instantly turned into the radiance of redemption."

This is what Isaiah is describing. In fact, this theme is so important, he repeats it again later in the chapter: "The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light." (60:19-20)

Did you hear the promise for us? Isaiah mentions it twice: "everlasting light" (6:19-20). A light ignited by Jesus entering our world that will never go out or even flicker. While Isaiah's audience had to anticipate this coming

of God's light, we experience it today. For the light of Jesus' coming tangibly illuminates God's love for us and His longing to be with us. The light of Jesus' ministry and interaction with others illuminates to us God's character. The light of Jesus' willingness to give His life for us illuminates God's desire to do whatever it took to keep us in relationship. The light of Jesus' resurrection illuminates to us that death no longer has the last word.

The birth of Jesus brought God's shining light into a darkened, sin-sick and broken world, not just for a few years, but forevermore. For the one who entered our world as a baby grew up to proclaim, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)

Isaiah's words promise an everlasting light that we experience in Jesus. And yet, if we're honest, we still experience darkness today, don't we? Divisions among people continue to deepen. Random acts of violence are seemingly becoming normalized. Our political system is too often paralyzed. And there's a general hopelessness that things will get better.

Then there's darkness in our own lives that we may feel even more at this time of year. Christmas is a joyful season, but when we're not doing well the joy of others can salt our wounds. If a loved one has died this past year, holiday traditions become a painful reminder of what we're missing.

It may interest you to know that Isaiah's words were also written during a very dark time. We read, "See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples" (60:2). Both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel had been conquered, and the people exiled to a foreign land. The glorious city of Jerusalem and its grand temple had been destroyed. Hope was scarce.

I wonder where hope may be scarce for some of us this morning? Perhaps you feel worn down by physical pain or limitations,

or by challenges that seem unending. Or maybe you're experiencing emotional pain caused by loss, loneliness, depression, or a lack of purpose or meaning. If someone asked you today where it's dark for you, how would you answer?

Just as a jeweler places diamonds against a black backdrop to shine more brilliantly, Jesus' light shines most brightly against the backdrop of darkness. When shadows and the darkness of life creep into our lives, Jesus meets us in lasting ways. Christ's everlasting light accompanies us when we feel alone: "I am with you always." (Mt. 28:20) Christ's everlasting light anchors us when we're anxious: "The peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7) Christ's everlasting light strengthens us in times of hardship: "my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

Friends, unlike the Energizer bunny, the impact of Christ's light upon our lives truly does keep going and going and going!

Given this promise of Christ's everlasting light, how do we journey through this season of Advent? Let me offer three suggestions this morning. First, We look. Christmas is a busy season, as additional activities and responsibilities fill the month. As a result, it can be harder than usual to notice signs of Jesus' light. It's easy to see the darkness; glimpsing God's fingerprints in our lives requires greater attentiveness.

Isaiah declared that people would see evidence of God's coming light. "No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise . . . your days of sorrow will end. Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation." (Isaiah 60:18, 20c-22a) At Christmas we celebrate that Jesus not only came years ago, He still comes to us today. What glimpses of His light can we

notice this month that'll encourage us? Would you carve out space in your days to look attentively for reminders of Jesus' presence and activity?

Second, We hope. The College of William and Mary is the second oldest university in our country. The school was founded 150 years before the Civil War, but after the ravages of that war and Reconstruction, the college went bankrupt. The campus became deserted and the school was considered finished by all except the school's President.

Each morning, President Ewell continued to act as if the school was still going, climbing the bell tower on the campus and ringing the bell to call students to class. President Ewell did this for seven years! Every morning, driven by hope, he rang that bell. Eventually, others caught President Ewell's hope. Students and teachers began returning and money was eventually raised to operate the school again. America's second oldest university exists today in large part because of this one man's hope.

Like President Ewell, in moments when we can't see what Jesus is doing, we lean into hope that He's still actively involved in our lives. As the Apostle Paul encourages, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18) If you're experiencing places of darkness this Christmas, it's natural for that to be your focus. Could you begin to shift your gaze from what's visibly hard to a perspective shaped by hope? Hope in how God will meet us, or in what He's doing that we have yet to recognize?

Finally, We shine. Wait—what does that mean? Look back to our opening verse, which begins with two words, each of which is a command: "Arise, shine" (60:1). In other words, our experience of Jesus' light is to impact how we approach our days. We're to not only receive His blessing of everlasting light, we're also to reflect it to others. Paul touched on this when he wrote, "we reflect

the Lord's glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Isaiah pictures God's people as an island of light amidst a sea of darkness. We're still tasked today with being His lighthouses in the dark by reflecting God's light.

Isaiah also reminds us that light attracts, particularly light that shines in the darkness: "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (60:3) Friends, even if there's darkness in your life that you wish wasn't there, the everlasting light we experience in Jesus is more than many around us have. Who in your circles needs to see God's light through you this Advent season?

I close with these words from Horatio Bonar's hymn, "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say:"

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
I am this dark world's Light;  
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In Him my Star, my Sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk,  
Till trav'ling days are done.

Is your life dependent upon that which is temporary, or upon that which is everlasting? Perhaps you haven't taken the step of inviting God's light through Jesus into your life. If you sense a nudge within to do so today, members of our prayer team would love to meet with you after the service. If the light of Jesus is part of your life, find ways this season to look, hope, and shine.

In the same way that this communion table reminds us what Christ has done for us, may we remember this Christmas what Jesus is still doing, through His everlasting light. As we come to the table today and receive these elements, take a moment to ponder how you need to experience Christ's light this season. And then prayerfully ask Him to meet you in those places.