

Read: Isaiah 8:19–9:4

Better Than a Flashlight

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever been in your house at night and had the power go out? It can be scary when this happens, especially if you're in your room all by yourself. You're suddenly surrounded by thick darkness, and sometimes you can't even see your hand in front of your face. Every noise seems louder, every shadow seems more frightening, and you can't help but imagine that there are monsters under your bed just waiting to pounce.

But then a flashlight beam carried by a parent shines in the doorway, and you don't feel so scared. It's amazing how one little flashlight (which isn't really all that bright) can pierce through the darkness and take away all your fears. There's something about a little light shining in the darkness that makes everything better.

In today's reading, the prophet Isaiah talks about something worse than the power going out. He writes about people walking in darkness and living in the land of deep darkness. You can turn on a light anytime you want, so you might think these words aren't meant for you. But they are.

Isaiah isn't talking about darkness you can see with your eyes. No, he's talking about something much scarier—he's talking about darkness in your heart. You're a sinner, and that means you naturally have darkness in your heart. On your own, you wouldn't have any hope of breaking free of this darkness. You'd walk around in it and live in it and eventually die in it.

If Isaiah would have stopped writing there, there wouldn't be any reason for hope. But did you hear what else he said? He said that the people living in darkness—you!—have seen a great light, that a light has dawned. And unlike a little flashlight beam, this light is brighter than any light the world has ever seen.

Can you guess where this light comes from? If you said "Jesus," you're absolutely right. Jesus is the One who shines brightly as a light in the darkness of sin. He's the One who lights your path as you live each day here on earth. And he's the One who will shine so brightly in heaven that there will be no more night.

So the next time you see a flashlight beam, think of Jesus. Remember that he is the light shining in the darkness of sin. You don't have to be scared, because Jesus, your light, has come!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What makes you feel better when you're scared of the dark?
- Who is the light that today's devotion is talking about?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does it mean that we used to have "darkness" in our hearts?
- What is something you can do to show people the light of Jesus?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- If Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness, why do some people prefer to not believe in him and live in darkness?
- Think of someone you know who is living in spiritual darkness. What could you say to them to tell them about the light of Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to this world and being a light to save me from the darkness of sin. Amen.