

VICTORIOUS

Light

JOHN 1:5, 8:12, 3:19

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5

I. The Bible tells us that if we want to shine the light of real faith, the world will not accept it. (2 Cor 6:14)

- A. Paul tells us that our persecution will increase in the end times. (2 Tim 3:12)
- B. Peter reveals that Christians will pay a price for being associated with Jesus. (1 Pet 2:21)
- C. Jesus encourages us that we will experience suffering if we're associated with Him. (Jn 15:20)

II. Jesus tells us the reasons why the darkness in this world does not accept the light of God. (Jn 15:17-23)

- A. The world possesses a _____ different from ours. (vv. 17-18)
- B. The world resents any lack of _____. (v. 19)
- C. The world hates us because we have a different _____. (v. 20)
- D. The world hates us because they don't know the Creator _____. (v. 21)
- E. The world hates us because its _____ is exposed. (v. 22)
- F. The world hates Christ and us because sin has made them _____. (v. 23)

III. History tells us that the light of Christ was never more hated by the darkness than now. (Jn 3:19)

- A. The darkness is oppressing the light of Christ intensely in several areas today:
 - North Korea • Iraq • Afghanistan • Eritrea • Syria
- B. The light of our testimony will always be victorious because:
 - God rewards proportionately those who suffer persecution. (Lk 16:10)
 - The process is meant for our benefit. (Jas 1:2-4; 2 Cor 4:9)
 - The experience proves that God is at work in you. (1 Pet 3:13-17; Rom 8:35)
 - It gives us an eternal perspective rather than our own limited viewpoint. (1 Pet 4:16; 2 Cor 4:9)
 - It teaches us to love our enemies. (Rom 12:14)

The light will keep shining as we ...

Pray for our brothers and sisters in North Korea, Africa and the Middle East.

Give financially to relieve some of their suffering. (PEW ENVELOPE)

Write a letter of encouragement to a pastor on the front lines. (SEE BACK)

Be courageous, because your Savior has overcome the world! (Jn 16:33)



DEVOTIONAL / HOME GROUP LESSON

1. Have you ever interacted with an individual or group of persecuted believers, or visited an area where persecution is active? What impact did the experience have on your life? If you have not experienced any of these, how did this sermon impact you?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. If one member suffers, we all suffer. Why is association with the worldwide body of Christ important in living out this passage of Scripture? How associated with the persecuted church have you been in the past, and how has this sermon encouraged your association going forward? Is exploring a short-term mission trip part of these plans?

3. Read Matthew 2:1-18. In this passage, how was the darkness aware of the coming light, and what attempt was made to extinguish it? How is this story repeated with Christians the world over? How might the darkness come after us, even in our nation of freedom, if it could? How does the example of persecuted believers fill you with hope?

4. How can we avoid the trap of feeling guilty that we don't suffer for our faith in the way others around the world do? After hearing this sermon, what are some ways we can actively support those under persecution even during this holiday season?

5. What would you say to encourage a persecuted brother or sister in Christ as you write a letter to Christians in areas of severe persecution (see box below)?

Close by praying for believers in regions where persecution is severe. Prayer guides are available on the websites listed below.

Write a letter of encouragement
TO A PASTOR ON THE FRONT LINES

www.e3partners.org/syrian-pastors-letter-submission

Offer support for persecuted Christians in Syria and Iraq. You can send them some encouragement with your favorite Bible verse, a special prayer, and a personal note, which will be translated and sent to the families, letting them know you stand with them.

• FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION •

www.OpenDoorsUSA.org www.VoiceOfTheMartyrs.com www.i-am-n.com

Killing Christians: Living the Faith Where It's Not Safe to Believe by Tom Doyle

I Am N: Inspiring Stories of Christians Facing Islamic Extremists by Voice of the Martyrs

No God but One: Allah or Jesus? A Former Muslim

Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity by Nabeel Qureshi

Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross by Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity
by Nabeel Qureshi (study guide also available)

COMING UP AT CHRIST CHAPEL

Here's a glimpse at what you need to know for this week. Like to plan ahead a little more? Pick up a copy of "The Source" at a stand around campus or near the exits, or visit www.cbcfamily.org/events. They're your source for everything going on at Christ Chapel.

COME TO TODAY'S TA ETHNE MISSIONS LUNCHEON. If Pastor Ted's sermon interested you, hear more from our guest in The Den at 12:15 p.m. Over lunch he'll share details on what it's like for Christian refugees in the war-torn Middle East. Gain insight on what life is like for churches in this tumultuous part of the world and how you can support them.

EVENSONG RESERVATION REMINDERS AVAILABLE TODAY. On Saturday, Dec. 24 we'd love for you to join us at a Christmas Eve service at 1:30, 3, 4:30, 6 or 9:30 p.m. Pick up Reservation Reminders in the Great Room, Atrium or at www.cbcfamily.org/events. Next Generation Kids Care through age 3 is available during the 1:30, 3, 4:30 and 6 p.m. services by RSVP at www.cbcfamily.org/evensong.

TOPICS IN PARENTING MEETS TODAY AT 9:15 A.M. IN LINK CLASSROOM SOUTH. Pornography is as damaging as it is available, which is why we want to equip you to lead your children through the issue. Join us and other parents for practical, biblical tips.

LIFE STAGE 4, DON'T MISS CHRISTMAS IN THE GARDEN TODAY. Come at 12:30 p.m. to the Garden Room for a merry afternoon of fun and refreshments. We'll see you there!

YOUNG ADULTS, DON'T MISS THE LAST RENOVATE OF 2016 THIS WEDNESDAY, DEC. 14. We'll have a tailgate going at 6 p.m., worship at 7 p.m. and AfterWord activities at 8:30 p.m. For more info, visit www.renovatefw.org.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS, REGISTER YOUR TEEN FOR STAINLESS. We want your teen to honor God with his or her whole life which is why Stainless, happening Jan. 27-29 at Pine Cove, is a weekend retreat for them to learn about biblical integrity and finding their identity in Christ rather than in relationships. We always have a ton of fun and make the weekend a highlight of the year, so be sure to register your teen at www.cbcfamily.org/events. The cost is \$130 per person.

LOOKING TO SERVE THIS CHRISTMAS? Get together with your family, friends or home group and head to www.cbcfamily.org/holidayserve to find special opportunities to be the heart and hands of Jesus during the holidays. For questions, email Wes at WesleyT@christchapelbc.org.

NEW CONVERGE BAND WORSHIP RECORD IS AVAILABLE NOW! We are excited to announce the release of "The Privilege of Knowing the King." With a range of sounds and styles, it's a worship soundtrack for everyday life. Buy it on iTunes, Amazon Music or in The Bookstore.

COLLEGE BELIZE TRIP APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN. Over spring break College Ministry will serve our brothers and sisters in southern Belize. Work in nearby villages during the day and bond as a group. This trip can change your life! Learn more at www.cbcfamily.org/collegebelize.