

# “Light Brings Victory”

Light (Advent 2022) Sermon Series | Week Two | Newbreak Church

December 11th, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we talk about the way in which Advent reminds us of Jesus, the light, and his victory over darkness.

## Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is the best Christmas lights display you have ever seen?
- What is the symbolic power of Christmas lights?

## Going Deeper Into the Message

*What does it look like to walk in victory this Christmas season?*

### Read John 1:1–5

#### Point 1 – Look for places where light is shining in the darkness.

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

Translators struggle to fully capture the word the NIV translates “overcome.” It’s one of those words in Greek that can mean two different things... it can mean either “overcome” or “comprehend” depending on context.

John’s style of writing is fun to read because he likes to use terms with dual meanings. Words where you say, “is it this or that?” And it is both!

The darkness both does not *overcome* the light and does not *comprehend* the light.

- **Overcome** - It doesn’t extinguish it. Note the present tense of the light shining. When we see Christmas lights, we note the light did not shine (past tense) but

shines and continues to shine. Every time the light confronts the darkness, it wins.

- **Comprehend** – We give the devil too much credit. The powers of darkness did not understand how Jesus would have victory over the powers of the darkness by willingly giving His life. Think about how Satan went into Judas to betray Jesus to have Him killed. The powers of darkness thought they were winning, but no, they didn't know that the death of God was part of His great victory! That's Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 2:8 when he talks about the overthrow of the powers of this present darkness. They would not have crucified Jesus if they would have known that was the very means by which Jesus was going to overthrow them!

The Gospel of John presents the ministry of Jesus as the light confronting the darkness and vice versa. Nothing can stop the light from *shining* (John 1:5, present tense verb in the Greek), but we can reject the light from entering us. That present tense verb for “shines” tells us that the light of Jesus continues to prevail over the darkness! As Christians we are those who have seen the light and allowed it to penetrate our hearts, casting out the powers of darkness who once oppressed us and the inner darkness of our sin.

Whether you accept Christ, the light, or not, you cannot extinguish His light. It shines whether acknowledged or not. The present tense for “shines” displays the consistency of how the light shines in John's day and in ours.

Challenge: read the Gospel of John for yourself and be on the lookout for the combat between the kingdom of light and darkness. It is all over!

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Do you remember life before being saved? What was it like? When you got saved, how did it feel to have your eyes opened to the Light (Jesus)?
- How does the technical explanation of light “shining” (present tense) and prevailing over the darkness enlighten your understanding of what John is saying in John 1:5?
- With all of the information we are exposed to about what's going on in the world around us, it's easy to become disheartened, or even depressed at times. How can you actively look for the light in the darkness? What examples of the light shining in the darkness have you witnessed recently?

- What can you do to show the light of Jesus in the dark world around you?

*What does it look like to walk in victory this Christmas season?*

**Read John 1:6–14**

**Point 2 – Understand that God’s victory may look different than my expectations.**

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him (John 1:10–11, NIV).

It’s amazing how God literally had come to us. Jesus—God incarnate—came as a baby and lived among us, taught, and offered the Messianic salvation God’s people longed for! Yet... so many people missed it. How did the very people, religious leaders especially, miss Jesus as the Messiah in their midst? The answer is quite simple: *Jesus did not fit the profile of what many were expecting of the Messiah*. In other words, the victory God had planned in the person and work of Jesus was unexpected.

Redefining victory doesn’t mean I get what I want (Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is just one quick example). *What it does mean* is that the light does shine in the darkness. Jesus—the light—wins. He has. He will. Darkness cannot thwart his victory. And so, in our lives today the victory comes often in subversive ways that undercut the ways in which darkness is working in the world.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What’s something that God has done in your life to give you victory that happened in an unexpected way? Did you see it coming?
- Why do you think you have preconceptions of what Jesus should look like or how He should behave? What can you do to be more open to *how* Jesus wants to show up in your life?
- When is it hardest to believe that ultimately the light will always have the victory? How can you remind yourself, and others, of this truth?

*What does it look like to walk in victory this Christmas season?*

**Read 1 John 1:6–7; John 1:12–13**

### **Point 3 – Cut ties with the darkness.**

<sup>6</sup> If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:6–7, NIV).

What areas of darkness am I still holding onto? What areas of darkness seem to still be holding me?

Something scientists have discovered about light is that it actually serves as a disinfectant.

In other words, light has “purifying” properties.

It’s such a profound insight that you wonder if the Holy Spirit knew what he was doing when he inspired John to make the connection between light and the purifying power of Jesus.

But that is why we must be willing to cut ties with the darkness.

We can’t be both in the darkness and the light.

We have to proactively make the realm of light where we live day to day.

This goes far beyond Advent season but is something we are keenly aware of with all of the Christmas lights and talk about Jesus as “the light of the world.”

What might it look like to walk in the light of Jesus and experience some healing and purifying in the process?

You can’t walk in light if you don’t spend time in the light.

- Some of us want a thriving marriage, but our eyes are looking for love somewhere else.
- Some of us want to lose weight, but are cuffed to comfort food.
- Some of us want to break free from addiction, but we keep hanging out with the same friends who bring us down.
- Some of us want to practice generosity, but greed has a hold over our lives.
- Some of us want to get out of the cycle of alcoholism, but we keep drinking from the same well.
- Some of us want to go into the mission field, but we’re being held captive by fear.

When God sees darkness, his plan is to always bring light. In the beginning he brought light to overcome the darkness. As humanity disobeys and goes our own way, darkness (sin) entered the world again. God saw darkness and needed to bring light to overcome

it. That light is the Hope of Jesus. When we have darkness in our life, God doesn't leave us alone but wants to bring light to the dark areas of our lives. The idea that sin staying hidden away in the darkness is a lie from the enemy. Jesus wants to shed light in those areas and make everything new.

This changes how we view our Bibles. Our Bibles provide us light! They give us illuminated hope that changes our trajectory because it changes us. Psalm 119:105 says: "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path." There is a connection between God's word and God's light!

*What areas of darkness am I still walking in?*

*What areas of darkness do I need God's light and victory?*

When God's light illuminates our life we have revelation and fresh insight. Maybe life is more complicated than you want it to be. Maybe you feel like you are crumbling underneath the weight of the expectations on you. Maybe you are having a crisis of faith. Whatever it is, God can shed light on it!

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What darkness do you need to cut ties with? How can you give God permission today to shine light on those hidden sins and bring them to light so you can be cleansed? What would it look like to have those areas exposed to the light and healed?
- What does fellowship with one another look like when you don't have anything hidden or in the dark? What can you do to participate in that kind of fellowship?
- How much light is required to cut through the darkness? He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20, NIV). Ask God to use your little bit of faith to cut through the darkness in your heart and around you.

**Memory Verse:** John 1:5 (NIV) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?