

Sermon: Jesus Has Come
Series: Advent: The Light Has Come
Scripture: John 1:5
Speaker: Kevin White
Date: Sunday December 26, 2021

Hope everyone had a blessed Christmas and got to unwrap some presents.
I'm going to wrap up this series on Advent.
See what I did there?
Cause it's Christmas and you wrapped and unwrapped presents
And then I said wrap up this series?

I was also going to say something like ...”and like your presents, I'm going to present to you on the presence of Jesus...” but that would be cheesy.

Anyhow, my name is Kevin and I'm your friendly neighbourhood youth pastor at Cornerstone.

We are going to wrap up this series today but first a question.

Question: Have you ever been in the dark before? I mean like 'real dark.' Like pitch-black darkness. My parents grew up in rural Jamaica so they have plenty of experience but I grew up in the city where there were always lights. Even at night, there were lights from the streetlights, or from my clock radio, or something. I was never completely in the dark. Until 2003.

In 2003, there was a blackout that took out most of Ontario, and from Chicago to all down the Atlantic coast. If you care about numbers it was over 24, 000 square miles.

It was pitch black. No street lights, no clock radios, nothing. At night, when I turned my flashlight off, it was completely dark. I can't lie. I was scared. And I was 27 years old.

I had never been in darkness like that before.

Complete darkness is scary.

Let's do a poll. Since we're all online, **click the hand that pops up**. How many of you are scared of the dark?

That's physical darkness.

What about spiritual darkness?

Have you ever gone through something where it was so dark, so heavy, you just couldn't see a way through?

Are you going through something right now? I am.

On Instagram, there's a guy I follow, "Aussie Dave." and he was talking about how this Christmas could be a tough one for many people because it would be their first one - without a loved one, without a job, separated or divorced, sick or alone.

Even if none of these things apply to you it's still a tough time with this pandemic still looming over us. It seemed as if it was getting better but at least for those of us in Canada and particularly in Ontario, it seems to be getting worse - the situation seems to be getting darker and darker.

There's so much chaos in this world - so much darkness.

But then...

SCRIPTURE

John 1:9 - The light shines in the darkness, and darkness has not overcome it.

We spent some time on this in our signpost series, so you can definitely go back and check it out.

The Greek for the word "overcome" could also be translated "understand."

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not understood it.

There is darkness in the world and as Pastor and author Tim Keller puts it, the world's hope comes from outside of it.

The same way the sun shines into the darkness every day, we need the Son (Jesus) to shine into our world and our lives every day.

Left on its own, the world just can't find solutions to its problems. The world is a dark place and we can't find our way unless Jesus is our light (Tim Keller)

I mean I don't want to open up a can of worms but look at the pandemic. Whatever you believe about it, you can't deny that it's had a huge impact on our world. It's pretty dark and we don't seem to have control over it.

What about the violence that happens, the racism, the starvation, the oppression? How is it that we have enough resources for the entire world, but yet so many people don't have the basic necessities of life?

How is it that we are so smart, so advanced and yet we still have the exact same problems that we've had since Adam and Eve?

The world is a dark place and we can't find our way without the light of the Son.

But that's the good news. We're not left in the darkness.

The light shines in the darkness

God had a plan, and Jesus completes God's plan (Grow youth curriculum)

Dave talked about this last week but in Genesis - before the creation of the world, there was darkness and chaos, and then God spoke and light burst into the darkness. The darkness couldn't overcome it.

When Adam and Eve sinned and were hiding in the dark - I was afraid so I hid. God pursued them and burst into their darkness.

When Jesus burst on the scene, he was healing and showing us a different way to be with each other and God - he turned the world upside down, which is really the way it was supposed to be all along.

It's not up to us to fix the world. As Tim Keller says, we need hope from the outside. We need the son to shine from the outside.

Christmas reminds us that no matter how hard we try, we can't solve things on our own. But we don't have to.

Things are really bad. But they don't have to stay that way. There is hope. For those living in darkness, there is a light that shines.

I heard a pastor talk about how no other religion claims what we claim at Christmas. A baby can become a king. But a king has never become a baby - until Jesus.

Aussie Dave talked about how the actual cave that Jesus was born in was smelly and nasty and dark - not a brightly lit manger with cute animals.

Andy Stanley says that the nativity is 99% chaos and 1% hope.

Does that sound familiar? That's my life.

Thank God for that 1% hope.

It seems as though without the chaos we miss the hope.

Jesus enters into our chaos - the chaos of humanity to give us hope.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it

Darkness has not overcome

- The world doesn't understand the light
- But the world doesn't overcome the light

Every day, we get a reminder that darkness doesn't win. Every day since the beginning of time, the sun rises and reminds us that darkness doesn't win. Have you played rock paper scissors? I played with my nephew recently and he had all these cheat codes. Whenever I would beat him a few times he would come up with a new one like a gun or bomb or something. Then he say, "I win!" and laugh.

We know how this story ends. Light beats darkness.

Light beats depression.

Light beats anxiety.

Light beats COVID-19

Light beats fear.

Light beats loneliness

Light beats...

Light beats darkness.

JESUS CAME TO BRING LIGHT TO THE WORLD'S DARKNESS.

JESUS CAME TO BRING LIGHT TO YOUR DARKNESS

Reflection/Response

How can you partner with Jesus to bring light to the world's darkness

Share your faith this Christmas. This is good news. This season literally is about the birth of Jesus - use this opportunity to share your faith, share a verse at your socially-distanced, reduced in number pandemic Christmas dinner.

Story of Paulette - model homes, kidney, prayer, tears.

Share your stuff this Christmas.

Do you really need all the gifts that you're gonna get? Tithe one, give one away.

Sponsor a child from compassion - Cornerstone's trying to sponsor 100 children this year.

Make a year end donation to Cornerstone.

What about you?

Is it time that you let the light of Jesus shine in the dark areas of your life?

Are you willing to let go and give God control? Trust him for the first time? If you want to be a follower of Jesus, and you've never made that decision before, I'd love to hear about it. Email me or any of the pastors so that we can pray for you, encourage you and give you some resources to help you along the way.

This Christmas could be the brightest Christmas of all.

Jesus came to bring light to the world's darkness

And he came to bring light to your darkness.

I heard a sermon talk about the fact that Jesus' first coming (which we celebrate at Christmas) was light bursting on the scene to make it right between God and us - we don't have to be separated by sin anymore. So there's hope and peace, and love and joy in that.

His second coming is where the world will be made right. Where the light will finally break through eternally to all the dark places in the world.

In the meantime, we are his light bearers. We can shine light in the world. Bring the light of Jesus to the world.

Are you the one who needs to be in the place where the light of Jesus can shine on you? Here's the thing. It's already shining.

But will you stop and notice it?

Will you follow it?

Will you live by it?

Will you accept the gift of Jesus this Christmas?

Who is the Paulette who is waiting for you to shine the light of Jesus to them?

My prayer is that you would feel the light of Jesus bursting through and that you would be a part of that light bursting through to the world.

Pray

BENEDICTION

Thank you so much for joining us today

Make sure you come back in the New Year - we start a new series - called, "A reflective pause."

So much has changed over the last couple of years. In this next series, we make space to reflect on our journey through the pandemic, and we'll gain perspective on what matters most, and that will help us know how to move forward into the future God has for us.

Benediction

The Lord bless you...