



Advent, Part 4

Light in Darkness

You'll see that I put in your notes "John 1:5." Remember, John was a very close disciple of Jesus who wrote the book of 1 John that we studied this fall. This verse is from his account of Jesus' coming. He starts at the very beginning talking about how Jesus came to bring light to the world. He says, "*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*" This verse is a perfect lead-in to Revelation 1, another book John wrote. The second half of this chapter paints what is quite possibly the most majestic portrait of Jesus that has ever been written down on paper. The whole picture revolves around light in darkness.

Whenever we study the Bible, we need to start by stepping into the shoes of the first people who read a particular text. I want you to imagine you're a Christian in the Roman Empire in the first century which would not have been an easy time for you. Because you are a follower of Jesus, you face danger on every side—persecution from the Jewish establishment and persecution from the Roman government. Imagine that there are members of your church—maybe even some members of your family—who are imprisoned right now in dark dungeons. You have seen hung on crosses or thrown before wild beasts. People you know from your church have been beheaded.

So you get this letter from John, a follower and close friend of Jesus who is now exiled to an island because of his faith. And there you sit, facing daily pressure to bow down and worship the Roman emperor, knowing that if you don't, you may lose your job, along with your ability to support your family. You may lose your family or you may lose your life. All inclinations are pointing to things getting worse, not better—and it's all because you're a follower of Jesus.

Think about it even in our shoes right now. Have you ever followed Jesus—or maybe just taken a big step of faith in your life—and all of a sudden things got worse for you, not better? That kind of thing causes you to question your faith.

Put yourself back in the shoes of those folks in the first century when it was pretty tempting to compromise your faith, or at least just tone it back and try not to make a big deal out of your faith. These were dark days for men, women and children who were reading the book of Revelation.

This is what I love about how John starts the second half of Revelation 1, beginning in verse nine. He says, "*I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the*

testimony of Jesus.” Don’t you love that? “*I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation...and the patient endurance...*” In other words, John is saying to these Christians in dark days, “We are family. I’m your brother over here. We’re family together. This is not easy, but none of us is alone. We are partners together in tribulation, helping each other patiently endure.”

I want to pause for a moment here in the text to just say that as I was reading, studying and meditating on this passage this week, I couldn’t help but realize how thankful I am personally to be part of this family called McLean Bible Church. It was two years ago tomorrow night, on Christmas Eve, that I got pulled over by the Secret Service in front of the White House for running a red light on Constitution Avenue. I ended up having a conversation with one of the agents about McLean Bible Church in a weird chain of events that led to me eventually coming here. I was just thanking God that I ran that red light. I don’t know exactly how that works theologically—although I still maintain it was yellow. I was thinking about the family here and I just praise God for the brothers and sisters in this family, which is what we are as a church. I praise Him for the opportunity for me and my family to be part of this family.

I had taken one of my kids out for lunch last week and asked him, “Hey, Buddy, since we moved here, what’s been the best thing and what’s been the hardest thing?” The first thing that came out of his mouth for the best thing was McLean Bible Church. My heart just leapt when he said that. I asked him, “What is it about the church that you like most?” I thought he might mention some program or activity. He said, “The people. I just really love the people at McLean Bible Church.”

All month long we’ve been talking about and challenging each other to give, having camped out on that a good bit last week. I really want to encourage you, based on that word, to give as we come to the end of this year. We have a long way to go in light of the opportunities we have here and around the world. I want to encourage you to give, not just for the sake of Yemen or Title 1 school communities where we’re working all across the DMV, as we talked about last week. I want to encourage you to give because it’s what families do.

Dale and DJ and Thomas, who lead worship here at Tysons, made some visits this week to some of our families in the church who are facing particular needs. I want to give you a glimpse into one of those visits as a picture of the kind of family God created us to be, especially amidst dark days. Watch this video with me.

Worship leader: The first house is a great family from our church, Luiz, Luzette, Jonathan and Joy. They are wonderful friends. Luzette has been diagnosed with cancer and just had major surgery. They thought they were going to get it all, but found out instead she’s going to need five months of very intense chemotherapy. She’s losing her hair and going through all the sickness that goes with it. So we want to stop by and cheer them up a little bit.

They are really struggling financially with this, because she obviously is not able to work, and now his work has slowed down as well. We're going to try to help them out some as a church, as I know our church family would want us to. Come on in and meet Luiz and Luzette.

Luzette: The chemo has been processing in my body for seven days, so today I feel much better. What God has been doing through His Word has been my foundation. My spirit is stronger. What I'm learning now is that like the natural air I breathe, now I'm breathing the Spirit. I know I look different, but it doesn't affect me because my real life is in my spirit. The Word is in my brain, so I'm thinking more freshly and clearly. That's what is keeping me as I go through this process. Thank God they found everything on time. The doctors have been doing such good work and I'm learning how God is faithful to His Word.

Worship leader: We have a little gift to help you out. With everything that's going on, the church wants to pay your rent for the next four months, during the time you're going through all this chemotherapy to try to lower the pressure a little bit. [Luiz begins to cry, followed by happy conversation and singing "Joy to the World."]

David, with Luiz and Luzette: So, church family, this is Luzette and Luiz. I just wish you all could have the few minutes I've had the privilege of having to sit down and hear from this brother and sister. Luzette told me, "I find myself growing so much closer to Jesus in the middle of this." She's just at the beginning of five months of a marathon treatment, but she said, "Jesus is my life. Death is a win too," quoting Philippians 1. We praise God for what you guys mean to our church and we want to pray for you. Join me in praying for them.

God, our Father in heaven, we come to You as brothers and sisters, as Your sons and daughters, and pray for our sister and our brother as they're walking through challenging days. We pray that You would continue to show Your grace, Your power, Your love, Your mercy, Your strength, Your peace to them on their behalf, amidst every bit of this journey of patient endurance. God, we pray that You would sustain them and satisfy them every step of the way. I praise You even for how You're using this in their family already to point people to Jesus, how You're using them right now to point us to Jesus.

We pray for Your blessings on Luiz and Luzette and that You would glorify Yourself. We pray for healing. We pray that You would physically bring her to health and healing. At the same time, we praise You for her confident trust in You and that more than anything You would glorify yourself through this journey they find themselves on, using it for their good and the good of many others. We pray for our brother and sister before You, our Father in heaven. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Would you thank God with me for Luiz and Luzette? Love you guys. The church is not designed to be just a place where we come and sit next to each other during the week. It's designed to be a family where we share life together in all that life involves. It's good to be part of this family.

Back to the text. How do you encourage each other as family members when you're walking through hard times? How do you encourage each other as family when things look dark all around you? Here's what John does, under the inspiration of God's Spirit. Follow with me, beginning in verse ten:

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

John was told to write a letter to these churches that were spread throughout the Roman Empire. Then he continues in verse 12, "*Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands.*" Think about that with me. What's the purpose of a lampstand? To give light, right? In the middle of dark days, he turned and saw seven golden lights.

¹³ And in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

This is a vision of Jesus and John is overwhelmed.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

What does all this mean? I've heard it said that Revelation is the book of the Bible people most want to hear taught because they don't understand it. I've also heard it said that Revelation is the book of the Bible that preachers least want to teach because they don't understand it either. There's so much imagery here. Especially during Christmas, as we think about this picture of Jesus as the Baby in a manger, I want to give you another picture to put at the forefront of your mind this Christmas. In this passage, I want to show you 20 characteristics of Jesus that lead to two massive takeaways for us.

Now, if you're any good at math, that's a total of how many points? Twenty-two. And you're thinking, "I'd like to have lunch at some point." I get it—me too. So we're going to go pretty quickly here. I just want you to see Who Jesus is.

For those of you exploring Christianity, maybe you'll see Jesus for the first time today for Who He is. I pray that God would open your eyes to see Jesus for Who He is. Then for those of you who may have been Christians for years or decades even, I pray that you would understand Who He is in a deeper way today, because His greatness is inexhaustible and in a sense indescribable.

Just think about John's assignment in verse 11. A voice like a trumpet booms behind him and says, "*Write what you see in a book...*" That's not an easy thing to do. It's one thing to write down words you hear; it's a whole different thing to write down in words the wonder of what you see with your eyes. Imagine you have a pen and a piece of paper, then somebody says, "Write down what you see in the Grand Canyon." You look at your pen and paper, you look at the Grand Canyon and you think, "There's no way to write down the grandeur of what I see out there."

That's what John is trying to do. Feel the difficulty of his task as he turns and "sees the voice." How do you see a voice? He sees the voice of the One Who's speaking to him and attempts to describe Him in words.

1. Jesus is fully human.

He is "*like a son of man...*" (1:13). So characteristic number one: Jesus is fully human. Imagine John's perspective. He had spent three years with Jesus on the earth, every day, walking together, talking together, eating together. After three years, he had seen Jesus brutally slaughtered on a cross, then three days later He had risen from the grave. He ascended into heaven and that's the last glimpse John had of Jesus. So now he turns. It's like at Christmastime when maybe you see family members you haven't seen in a while. Maybe they look a little different.

2. Jesus is fully God.

John turns and sees Jesus again. He's fully man and fully God. Throughout this picture we see links between Jesus and God the Father. Earlier in Revelation 1 God had spoken and said, "*I am the Alpha and the Omega...*" Now Jesus speaks and says, "*I am the first and the last...*" Jesus is God. There are so many allusions in this passage and all over Revelation to pictures in the Old Testament. I wish we had time to look at them all, but if you want, you might write these down. Daniel 7 describes God as the Ancient of Days, Whose clothing is as white as snow, Whose hair is like pure wool. That's the description of God in Daniel. Here it's the description of Jesus. John is describing Jesus in terms in the Bible that are only used for God. Jesus is fully man and fully God.

You might also write down Daniel 10. In both of those prophetic passages in the Old Testament, we see a vision of the Son of Man clothed in linen with a belt of fine gold around His waist, with eyes like flaming torches, with arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, Whose voice echoes like the

sound of a multitude. This is a picture in Daniel 7 and 10 of the Son of Man Who is ushering in the Kingdom of God.

3. Jesus is the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy.

So now we see that this is Who Jesus is, just as has been prophesied centuries before. Realize that these images are not just John's answer to the question, "What kind of fashion style does Jesus have in heaven? What does He wear? Where does He shop?" That's not what John is answering. These are images that would have been familiar to John's readers, images that would have triggered in their minds the words of prophets, images that would have invoked in their hearts awe and wonder at a vision of the One the Bible was speaking about centuries before. There are 300 specific references to the coming of Jesus, written over 1,000 years, prophesying where He would be born, as well as the circumstances that would surround His birth, His life and His death.

4. Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin.

This leads to next characteristic: Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. He's the fulfillment of prophecy and the final sacrifice for sin, clothed with a long robe and a golden sash around His chest. Six of the seven times a long robe like this is mentioned in the Old Testament, it refers to the clothing of the high priest, who would enter into the Most Holy Place to offer sacrifices for the sins of God's people. Jesus is pictured here as the One Who entered into the presence of God the Father and has offered full and final, once and for all, sacrifice for the sins of God's people.

If you are exploring Christianity, this is the essence of why Jesus came. We have all sinned against God; we are all separated from God and if we die in our sin, separated from God, we will be separated from God forever. But Jesus came to offer His life as a sacrifice for our sin. That's why He died on the cross. That's what He was doing. He had no sin to die for, but He chose to die for our sin—for your sin and my sin—so that when we trust in and follow Jesus, His ultimate sacrifice covers over all our sin. Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. All your sin against God can be completely covered by the sacrifice of Jesus on a cross.

5. Jesus is infinitely old.

Jesus' hairs are white, like white wool, like snow. That is a deliberate biblical picture of age. As I mentioned a minute ago, this is the description Daniel gives of God as the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7. Now it is applied to Jesus, because Jesus has existed forever. He did not begin—He has always been. He's infinitely old.

6. Jesus is infinitely wise.

In ancient culture, white hair was a symbol of accumulated wisdom through years of experience. The experience and wisdom of Jesus knows no end.

7. Jesus sees all things.

His eyes are like a flame of fire. Nothing escapes His gaze. He sees it all, and He sees through it all. Jesus sees through all the pretense. He searches every area of our hearts. He sees the impurity of our hearts; He sees the stains in our hearts. Jesus sees everything we would like to hide. Nothing in your life or my life escapes the pure and penetrating gaze of Jesus.

8. Jesus knows all things.

This means Jesus knows all things. This image of Jesus' eyes being like fire reappears in the letter to Thyatira in Revelation 2, where He says, "I know everything about you." Jesus knows everything, including everything about you—better than you know about you.

9. Jesus' purity has no error.

Jesus' feet are like burnished bronze—bronze metal that has been purified in a furnace so it might glow in purity. Jesus is absolutely pure.

10. Jesus' power knows no equal.

Jesus' purity has no error and His power knows no equal. Burnished bronze is also a picture of glory and might and strength.

11. Jesus' voice resounds with authority.

First, His voice was like a trumpet, but now it's like the roar of many waters. What imagery! And from His mouth comes a sharp, two-edged sword.

12. Jesus declares eternal salvation.

The first side of the double edge is this: Jesus declares eternal salvation for all who trust in Him. To all who trust in Him, Jesus declares, "You are saved from your sin."

13. Jesus decrees final judgment.

At the same time, Jesus decrees final judgment for all who turn from Him. Later in Revelation 19:15-16, we will see Jesus at the final judgment. The Bible says, "*From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the*

winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” Jesus is the Judge Whose declaration finally and forever decides your fate and my fate.

14. Jesus’ face radiates with light.

Jesus’ voice resounds with authority and His face radiates with light, like the sun shining in full strength. It’s a picture of radiating light. We’re told not to look into the light of the sun. Here, it causes John to fall on his face as though dead.

15. Jesus had the first word in creation.

Imagine this: Jesus lays His right hand on John and says these words: *“Fear not. I am the first....”* Jesus said the first word in creation. Colossians 1:16-17 states:

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

16. Jesus will have the last word in creation.

Jesus had the first word in creation and He will have the last word in creation. Jesus will fully and finally usher in new creation. Jesus is the force behind all of human history. He alone is able to bring the divine purposes to pass, because He has conquered.

17. Jesus was dead...for a time.

Jesus says, *“I died...”* For most, that’s like the period at the end of the story, but that’s not the case here.

18. Jesus is alive...for all time.

“I died, and behold I am alive forevermore.” Jesus was dead for a time, but now, ladies and gentlemen, Jesus is alive for all time. He is the living One Who will never, ever die again.

Side note here: Did you know that one of the best-selling supposedly Christian books of the past 10-20 years was titled Heaven is For Real? It was a fanciful account of heaven told by a four-year-old boy. It talked about how he got a halo and wings, but he didn’t like them because they were too small. He claims he sat on Jesus’ lap while angels sang to him. He even met the Holy Spirit, Whom he described as “kind of blue.” Over seven million copies were sold.

It’s not to be confused with another book entitled The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven. This was another best-seller by a man named Kevin Malarkey, whose son claimed to see Satan many times.

He described him as having a funny-looking mouth and a few moldy teeth, no noticeable ears, two bony arms and two bony legs.

These books are not to be confused in the bookstore with My Journey to Heaven: What I Saw and How It Changed My Life by Marvin Besteman, or Flight to Heaven by Dale Black, or To Heaven and Back: A True Story by Mary Neal, or 90 Minutes in Heaven by Don Piper, or Nine Days in Heaven by Dennis Prince, or 23 Minutes in Hell—that’s a different twist—by Bill Wiese. Make no mistake—there is money to be made in peddling fiction about the afterlife as nonfiction in the world of Christianity today.

To be clear, these books are written by sinful people just like you and me who will die, who will all succumb to death one day. Why listen to them when we have the words of the King Who has conquered death for all time? Let me free you—and hopefully these are not stocking stuffers you have purchased for anyone this Christmas. If so, take them out and give them this instead.

19. Death is controlled by Jesus.

Jesus was dead for a time, but now He is alive for all time—which means death is controlled by Jesus. He has the keys of Death and Hades. A key is a symbol of authority in Jewish thought. Jesus says, “I have authority over Death. I speak and Death listens. I speak and Death obeys.” Because Jesus has authority over Death, He has the ability to turn it into gain for you and for me.

This is what Luzette was talking about with a smile on her face. She was saying, “I have nothing to fear, because Jesus holds Death in His hands.” Praise God—death is controlled by Jesus.

20. No one or nothing compares to Jesus.

This all leads to the last point: no one or nothing compares to Jesus. No one or nothing in all the history of the world compares to Jesus.

Again, if you’re exploring Christianity, I challenge you to consider anyone who even comes close to comparing with Jesus. You ask, “Well, how do you compare religious teachers and leaders?” I would encourage you to start with this question: who else has defeated the grave?

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no one like Jesus: fully human and fully God, the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy, the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin, infinitely old, infinitely wise, Who sees all things and knows all things, Whose purity has no error, Whose power knows no equal, Whose voice resounds with authority, declaring eternal salvation and final judgment, Whose face radiates with light, the One with the first and last word in creation, Who was dead for a time and is alive for all time, and Who rules over death itself. There is no one like Him!

This leads to two massive takeaways for every one of us in this room right now, from the youngest to the oldest, two days before Christmas. Two takeaways and two ways to respond, because

every one of us who's listening and seeing this picture right now has a choice for how we're going to respond.

A. Fall down in worship before Jesus.

I urge you not to yawn in the face of Revelation 1 and move on with the busyness of your life. I urge you to fall down in worship. To every person within the sound of my voice: see the gulf of grandeur and glory that separates you from Jesus and fall on your face at His feet. Specifically, if you are not a follower of Jesus, I would say to you, "Have much fear. Have much fear."

Here's what I mean by that. If you are not a follower of Jesus, if you have not trusted in Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for you on the cross, if you are separated from God in your sin and have not turned to this Jesus as Savior and Lord of your life, then you have much reason to fear today. You will meet Jesus one day as either Savior or Judge—and that day could be today for any one of us. Or He may come back before we get to Christmas. Not one of us is guaranteed tomorrow. So I urge you to worship Him today.

The Bible teaches that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The question is not, "Will you bow?" The question is, "Will you bow now, or will you bow when it's too late?" I urge you to trust in Jesus today, right now, in your heart. I've prayed for this moment specifically, for anyone who does not know for sure that if you were to die now, would you spend eternity in heaven? If you do not know the answer to that question absolutely, then I invite you to trust in Him now.

I was speaking at Faith Day at Nationals Park a couple months ago and one of the leaders of the event said to me, "I hope we don't talk about judgment or hell or anything like that." I get what he was saying. Why would we talk about judgment and hell at a baseball game? Who wants to come to hear that at Christmas time? But here's the deal. Just imagine for a moment that it's true that Jesus is the Judge and eternity is dependent on how you respond to Him. If that's true, then certainly you want somebody to say something about that and not pretend like that doesn't feel popular. If that's true, then we want to know that.

I want to encourage you, this is the Bible speaking loud and clear. God has brought you here right now to hear this news loud and clear: your eternity hinges on how you respond to Jesus. I assure you that He loves you. He has offered the sacrifice for your sin. He's made a way for you to be forgiven of all your sin and reconciles you to God forever. I urge you: trust in Him today. If you're not a follower of Jesus, have much fear. But for all who have trusted in Jesus and for all who trust in Jesus today—if you are a follower of Jesus—have no fear. No fear.

In our church, we've surveyed some of the struggles that most people have. At the top of the list is fear, in so many different ways. I want you to hear what the Bible is saying. I want you to picture Jesus putting His hand on John's shoulder saying, "Do not fear."

Listen. Get the picture of what's happening in this passage. You've got the lampstands, the stars—what does this mean? John tells us that Jesus is standing the middle of these seven golden lampstands which symbolize the seven churches that John is writing to. These are churches that are filled with Christians who are going through dark days. So where is Jesus while all of that's happening? He's right in the middle of them.

He's holding seven stars in His right hand, which are the angels, He says, of the seven churches. Angels in some way represent these churches. The picture is Jesus holding them in His right hand, protecting them in the midst of all they're going through. He's using these churches for a purpose. Remember the point of the lampstand is to provide light.

The Bible is teaching, and God is saying right now to men and women who are going through all kinds of things in life, work, family, in this world—needing patient endurance and grace to go on, needing wisdom, needing peace, all these things—Jesus is saying in the middle of it all to you right now, "Have no fear." Why? Because Jesus is present with you.

This Jesus—with all 20 of these characteristics—is with you. No matter what you're going through right now or what you will go through in 2019, know that Jesus is not distant from you. He's not just over you. Jesus right there with you. In the middle of dark days in a dark world, you are never alone. Jesus is present with you. Jesus possesses you. He holds you in His hands. He protects you. Feel His protecting power. In a world of tribulation, trial, hurt, heartache, sin and suffering, Jesus is your Protector.

And ultimately, Jesus has a purpose for you. His purpose for you is to shine light in greater Washington, DC, in your life, work, family, neighborhoods, offices, schools and communities all across the DMV. I just want to encourage you—especially tomorrow as we celebrate Christmas Eve when the gospel will be crystal clear—invite people who are around you to come to one of these gatherings: friends, family members, coworkers who don't know the gospel.

Pray that God would open their eyes to see the love of Jesus for them, to see Christmas as not just a holiday to be observed, but to see Christ as a King to be praised and loved and worshiped for all of eternity. This is why we're here. Jesus has a purpose for us: to shine light in greater Washington, DC, and to shine the light among the nations in Yemen, Ethiopia, West Africa and East Asia in all kinds of different ways. This is why we exist as a church.

B. Rise up as witnesses.

So fall down and worship, then rise up as witnesses. Jesus said to John, “Rise up and write down what you have seen.” Obviously, we are not writing a book of the Bible today, but we have much to tell. So let’s tell others about Who Jesus is with hearts and minds that are captivated by His glory. May we never cease to be amazed by the magnificence of Jesus. May we never tire of gazing upon His glory. May His glory continually captivate our imagination and overflow into our proclamation, as we give our lives on a passionate mission to proclaim His gospel, to proclaim the light of Jesus in a world of darkness.

I give you the portrait of Jesus in Revelation 1. As you reflect on a Baby in a manger, reflect on these 20 characteristics as well.

Let’s pray.

O God, I’m overwhelmed by this moment. We’ve just seen this picture of Jesus in Revelation 1, and each one of us—including myself—has a choice right now for how we’re going to respond to it. God, please, please, please keep us from yawning and moving on with the busyness of our days and all the activities of this week. Please, O God, keep us from giving a tip of the hat to Jesus. Keep us from a religious, monotonous routine that says, “We’ll give Jesus nominal adherence or casual attention once a week.”

Jesus, You’re worthy of so much more. You’re worthy of our lives. You’re worthy of all our worship, all our praise, all our adoration. In You we trust. We praise You. We glorify You. So help us, God, help us we pray to fall down in worship. God, I pray that even some who are here who may have been going to church for decades, that today might be the day when they see Jesus in a fresh way, even really for the first time, and say, “I trust in Jesus. I want to live my life in the worship of Jesus.” God, I pray that You would cause that to happen.

I pray for some who are just exploring Christianity, maybe even coming to church for the very first time. I pray that this moment they might see Jesus, that they might see Your love for them, that they might put their faith in Jesus. God, I pray that right now You might shape and change the trajectory of their lives for eternity in the power of Your Word that we’ve just seen.

Then, O God, for all who have put their trust in You, help us grow in our awe and amazement at the glory of Jesus. Help us grow in the surrender of our lives, in our trust in Jesus amidst all the things we go through in a dark world. Jesus, we praise You as the Light that overcomes the darkness. We exalt You for all of the characteristics we have seen in Your Word today. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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