

Small Group Discussion Guide — December 20, 2020

- Series: Hope in the World
 - Sermon: “The King of Light”
 - Scripture: Isaiah 42: 1-6 (New Living Translation)
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

What is one moment from the past week when you have felt hopeful?

CONNECT:

1. What one thing stood out for you from this weekend's services?
2. When daylight savings kicks in and it gets dark earlier, how does this change your routine? Do you like it or not, and why?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Isaiah 42: 1-4.
 - Based on these verses, how would you describe this servant of the Lord? What adjectives would you use?
 - To whom is this passage referring?
 - Why will God's servant “not shout or cry out”?
 - What is meant by a “bruised reed” and a “smoldering wick”?
2. Read Isaiah 42: 5-6.
 - Compare and contrast these two verses, in terms of God's power and personal attention toward you. Which one more accurately depicts your personal understanding of God?
 - How does it change your perspective of God to see these two verses as compatible with His nature?

APPLY:

1. David took us on a kind of “Neighborhood Light Tour,” with each “neighborhood” showing us the nature of Jesus. Out of the five (Creation, Moral Goodness, Hope, Direction, and God’s Essence), which one inspires you the most to come closer to God? Which one feels the most unfamiliar to you during this season?
2. The scripture teaches that two forces are in play - light and darkness (Colossians 1: 12-13). Darkness represents the reality of evil in the world, and light represents truth and goodness. How comfortable are you with the idea that evil exists? Why do you think people often try to minimize or explain away evil? In what ways does evil try to disguise itself as light (2 Cor 11:14)? How can you tell the difference between that and the real light of Christ?
3. Timothy Keller said, “Jesus is the glory of God in human form.” He’s the miracle in the mess, of all of our mess; what’s in our minds, hearts, relationships, even closets. He brings glory into the ordinary. As David describes it, “glordinary.” Everyone with eyes and ears has access to His glory in the ordinary, and this is the essence of God. How have you seen God in the ordinary during this hard season? What has it taught you about Him? During the next seemingly ordinary task (e.g. cleaning the kitchen), consider the essence of God, and how you can embrace the “glordinary” of the moment.

PRAY:

Dear Father, thank you that You have not left us to grope around in the darkness. From the beginning, You are light, and you show us the way to life through Jesus. May the lights of Christmas remind us of your eternal light and bring us hope. In Jesus' name, Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

1. On Monday night, 45 minutes after sunset, look up into the night sky to see "The Christmas Star." It's a phenomenon that last appeared this clearly in the year 1226. While our calendars and traditional celebrations may not accurately pinpoint the time of Jesus' birth, we know that His birth comes directly after the longest day of darkness. What message of hope can you glean from this beautiful surprise? [See article here.](#)
2. Consider the two scenarios in which Jesus was wrapped in cloths - at his birth and in his burial. He outgrew the cloths as a baby, and he outlived the burial cloths in his resurrection. What significance can you draw from this, considering Jesus is the eternal light of all mankind?

SUPPORTING VERSES:

- John 1:4
- John 8: 12
- John 12: 46
- Colossians 1: 12-13
- Hebrews 1:3
- 2 Corinthians 4: 6-7
- John 3: 19-21
- 1 John 1: 5
- Revelation 21: 23-24
- Psalm 104: 1-2

QUOTES:

"Jesus is not a late-comer who is adding his two cents to everything that has already been said through the years by Abraham, Moses, David, Socrates, Confucius, and Buddha. He is previous to all of it, preexistent. He is the first cause, the primary source. He is that which is eternally at the beginning. That means that when God appears to us, he is not something or someone to be added on or not added on to everything else that we have experienced, thought, and supposed. He antedates everything. He is not an option to a style of life about which we can make a peripheral choice. He is the beginning of life itself."

Eugene Peterson

"Jesus was not solving the world's problems in any sense that the world could understand, he was not reforming society or abolishing poverty--"the poor you will always have with you" was his comment on that (Mt 26:11)--he was not doing any of the things some modern Christians think he should have been doing. And many people considered him a nuisance. But he was giving himself, he was giving all he had got, he was giving his very life.'

Simon Tugwell

"Jesus Christ not only died the death we should have died - he also lived the life we should have lived but can't. His was perfect obedience, in our place. It doesn't matter who you are - centurion, prostitute, hit man, minister. The curtain has ripped from top to bottom. The barrier is gone. There is forgiveness and grace for you."

Timothy Keller

"Here is the old king in Rome, turning sixty in the year Jesus was born: he represents perhaps the best that pagan kingdoms can do. At least, he knows that peace and stability are good things; unfortunately he has had to kill a lot of people to bring them about, and to kill a lot more, on a regular basis, to preserve them. Unfortunately, too, his real interest is in his own glory. Already, before his death, many of his subjects have begun to regard him as divine. Here, by contrast, is the young king in Bethlehem, born with a price on his head. He represents the dangerous

alternative, the possibility of a different empire, a different power, a different glory, a different peace. The two systems stand over against one another. Augustus' empire is like a well-lit room at night. The lamps are arranged beautifully; they shed pretty patterns; but they haven't defeated the darkness outside. Jesus' kingdom is like the morning star rising, signaling that it's time to blow out the candles, to throw open the curtains, and to welcome the new day that is dawning. Glory to God in the highest - and peace among those with whom he is pleased!

NT Wright

"Is this Mount Sinai all over again? No, because there's a head-snapping twist. Moses had reflected the glory of God as the moon reflects the light of the sun. But Jesus produces the unsurpassable glory of God; it emanates from him. Jesus does not point to the glory of God as Elijah, Moses, and every other prophet has done; Jesus is the glory of God in human form."

Timothy Keller