

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP**JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Message Series: Light & Life****Message Title: Conquering Light****Scripture: John 1:1-9; 1 John 2:13-14, 5:4-5; Revelation 5:5**

As Americans, we're obsessed with winning, with conquering. When we hear the word conquer, we usually imagine strength, power, domination, a winner, and a loser. In our world, conquest is loud, aggressive, and even forceful. Conquest extends beyond the playing field to include armies, defense systems, violence, and war. We don't like to lose. We like to win. We want to conquer.

But the Scriptures provide a very different picture of conquering: light conquers darkness, love conquers fear, truth conquers lies, and a Lamb conquers the world.

Throughout this series Light and Life, we've been tracing the theme of light throughout the grand story of God's redemption. We began with Creation Light, then talked about waiting for the Coming Light, and last week we looked at how Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise in the darkness of Zebulun and Naphtali. Today, we're tracing the theme of conquering light.

Advent reminds us that we live between the time of Christ's birth and his return. We live between the phrase we sang this morning, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," and the last phrase of the scripture in Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus." We live between the birth of a baby and the return of the King. Jesus has won, and when Jesus returns, he will win. And he will be the conquering King.

The Eternal Conquering Light (John 1:1-14)

- John never uses Jesus' name, but as we keep reading, we know he's talking about Jesus.
- John uses two metaphors to talk about Jesus: word and light. As the Word, Jesus is not a part of the creation; he is the source of creation. The very word God spoke in the beginning was Jesus, the Word. Jesus was the source and agent of all creation, as nothing was made without him. John equated life with light.
- In John 1:5, John introduces darkness in contrast to light. Darkness is not equal to light. Darkness only exists in the absence of light. Darkness is parasitic. *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
- This language about darkness trying to overcome light is not just ancient language. A shooting at Brown University in Rhode Island and an attack on Jewish people in Australia. These were different incidents with different circumstances on different parts of the planet, but the same grim reality in both situations. Darkness is still trying to overcome light.
- In John 16:33, Jesus said, *"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

The Slain Conquering Lamb (Revelation 5:1-6)

- Jesus is the conquering light, but he didn't conquer in the way you and I, or the world, would conquer.
- John sees God Almighty on his throne, holding a scroll with the plan of God's redemption written on it. No one could open it, so John wept. But the shout from the elders redirects John's mourning to hope. They redirect his attention to the Lion, to the heir of the throne of David, to the one with strength and power. This one has won the victory. This one has conquered.
- The Greek verb used throughout the New Testament, meaning to overcome, to prevail, to be victorious, is *nikaō*. It's where the global brand name Nike originates, an athletic brand built entirely around the idea of victory.
- The New Testament uses *nikaō* in a completely different way. John first saw a Lion, an image of strength and power, then in verse 6, John saw "a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered..." Lambs are generally weak and fragile, yet John sees Jesus as the Lamb.
- Jesus conquers by suffering. He overcomes by obedience. He defeats evil by absorbing it.
- The world says you win by defeating others. Jesus showed us that we overcome by laying down our lives. The cross conquers. Victory is faithfulness, not force. Revelation reminds us that Jesus conquers not by retaliating with violence, but as the Lamb who was slain.

The Faithful Conquering People (1 John 2:7-14, 5:4)

- When we hear news of darkness striking out, what is our response? The world tells us to strike back, retaliate, to return darkness with darkness. However, Jesus gave us a different model for those of us who follow Jesus.
- The question for followers of Jesus who follow the conquering Lamb is, "How do we remain faithful as people of the conquering light?"
 - *Love others* (2:7-8; 5:4)
 - How we treat each other reveals light or darkness in us.
 - *Live in the Light* (2:9-10)
 - Allow the light of Jesus to shine through you in interactions with others.
 - *Live Victoriously through the Lamb* (2:13)
 - Remember your identity as God's children who have overcome (*nikaō*) the evil one.

Whatever darkness you face today, Jesus has already stepped into it. Until Jesus returns, follow the Lamb, the conquering light. Live faithfully. Live victorious by laying down your life.



Advent: Born to Dwell Reading Plan on the Bible App

Spend 20 days recounting the Bible's Christmas story from Old Testament passages and the Gospels. Slow down, worship Jesus, and cherish Him by faith. Receive and rejoice in God's greatest gift. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh to dwell among us. Scan the QR to set Harvest Spings as your church and join the featured plan.