SERMON NOTES:

Title: Dark Hearts & Christ's Light
Big Idea: If we reject the light, we are left with darkness, but darkness cannot overcome the light.

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. **16** But Peter remained standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought Peter in.

1. We can't stand by our own power.

17 Then the servant girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" "I am not," he said. **18** Now the servants and the officials had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself.

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." **26** One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" **27** Peter denied it again. Immediately a rooster crowed.

2. You have to be tested to pass a test.

II Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me.

29 So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?" **30** They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have

handed him over to you.” **31** Pilate told them, “You take him and judge him according to your law.” “It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death,” the Jews declared. **32** They said this so that Jesus’s words might be fulfilled indicating what kind of death he was going to die.

3. God’s plan prevails.

33 Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the king of the Jews” **34** Jesus answered, “Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about me?” **35** “I’m not a Jew, am I?” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?” **36** “My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” **37** “You are a king then?” Pilate asked. “You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” **38** “What is truth?” said Pilate. After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging him. **39** You have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” **40** They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Group Discussion Leader Guide

LIFE Group Guide:

General Timeline Guide: (Adjust as appropriate for your group’s needs.)
5-10 minutes connecting personally with how everyone is doing.
45 minutes going over message with discussion questions and life applications.
5-10 minutes praying for each other

Discussion Questions

Look over these questions before your group time. Write down your answers or ideas for at least a few questions if not all. You may not get to every question during your time but speak up if you want to talk about one of them in particular. Always try to start with question #1.

1. What stood out to you and/or what do you think God might be speaking about from this message?
2. Peter wanted to follow Jesus but couldn't in his own strength. When are you tempted to rely on your own strength rather than Christ?
3. Peter's denial didn't surprise Jesus or make Peter weak, it just revealed the weakness Jesus knew was there. How can these ideas help us view failures and process shame for ourselves and with others?
4. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul says God's power is made perfect in his weakness. How does this challenge the way culture and even churches, define strength?
5. Pilate seemed to want to do what was right but also want to do what was best for himself. How do we navigate the pressure between doing what is best for us and doing what is right according to God?
6. Jesus died personally in the place of Barabbas. How does realizing Jesus died personally for us not just corporately or theologically, influence how you think of the cross?