



## Christ Is Worth It

*Note: This lesson is geared toward high school students, but it could easily be adapted for a college audience.*

*Youth leader shares:*

So far you have learned a lot about persecuted Christians, specifically ones who have faced Islamic extremists and now have to live in exile as refugees. For our final session, we are going to take a little time to look at our own lives as Christians here in the United States. What does it mean for each of us to live as an “N” Christian? Let’s start by imagining that we are in a situation similar to those faced by our brothers and sisters.

*Ask for three student volunteers, and have them come stand in front of the group. Explain that each volunteer represents a Christian living in Iraq. Then say the following about each of them:*

Volunteer 1: Your dream college just sent you an acceptance letter, along with a large and unexpected scholarship.

Volunteer 2: Your older sister is getting married next month, and you have waited your whole life to stand beside her as maid of honor.

Volunteer 3: You’re an aspiring soccer player. You have amazing talent and hope to eventually play for the national team.

Then, ISIS overruns your town.

You now have 3 options:

- Claim to convert to Islam (and keep your Christianity a secret)
- Flee the country, leaving your home, friends and family behind
- Be killed by ISIS

What will *you* do?

*You can ask the volunteers to take a seat, then address the whole group by sharing the following:*

Wouldn’t it be easier to “convert” to Islam rather than stand for your faith? You wouldn’t have to give up all of your dreams and plans. Besides, doesn’t God want you to be comfortable and happy? Your life would be easier, and didn’t God give you these dreams, skills and abilities so you can use them to help others?

In Matthew 10:32, Jesus says, “Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”





I know it can be hard to imagine, but this is a choice that people are making every day. These are real people and real situations. Tonight you have had the chance to meet some of them, to watch some videos and hear their stories.

There are members of your persecuted family who have lost all their records of having ever been in college. People have lost their businesses, left their homes and given up respected positions in their community because of their faithfulness to Christ. Worse than that, many people have lost loved ones or been severely injured because of their decision to follow Jesus.

Many of these people are now sitting in refugee camps because of the choice they made. While you are living like a refugee for one night, many of them have little chance of ever improving their situation. These believers have chosen to remain faithful to Jesus, even though it has cost them everything, including relationships, physical comfort and even their dignity.

But they would do it again, because Christ is worth it all. The Apostle Paul talks about how much he has lost and suffered, how he has nothing, but then he says he still “possesses everything.”

*Ask a student to read 2 Corinthians 6:4–10.*

“But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

As I look around this room, I see the faces of people who are walking through different circumstances, some of them very difficult. We all go through different seasons. Sometimes in our lives we feel like we are on top of the world, we wake up ready to face every day with joy. Other times it’s hard to get out of bed in the morning. We are bogged down with worries and fears, and our situation seems hopeless.

Wherever you are at today — trying to figure out hard situations, feeling extremely happy with life or somewhere in between — let’s remember that our happiness doesn’t depend on our circumstances. No matter what, we are rich because of what Jesus did on the cross; we possess everything because we possess Christ.

Can we say with confidence that if we have Christ, we have all we need? Christ came to set us free from sin and from anything that could keep us enslaved. He wants us to be free in Him.

What does freedom in Christ really look like? This is a hard concept to grasp, but it will change your life when you understand it. Freedom in Christ means that everything is already set, already paid for. It’s as though you’re entering a class in school having already received the A+ on your transcript, but a thousand times better than that. You don’t have to try to fix yourself or be good enough to come to God. Jesus already did it for you.





When we embrace the freedom that Jesus gives us, the things that used to worry us or consume our thoughts slowly start to align to the truth of the Scriptures. The Lord's desire is not that we lead happy and easy lives but that we be alive and free in Him.

We are free from worrying about the future.

*For more student interaction, you can ask students to read the following scriptures:*

Philippians 4:6–7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

We are free from the guilt of the past.

Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” And 8:33–34 says, “Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

We are never alone.

Psalms 23:1–5 says, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.”

And we are promised a future.

Romans 8:18 says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Maybe you will never be persecuted for your faith like some of the believers we have heard about tonight. In fact, you probably won't be. But God still desires for you to want Him more than anything else. And chances are, if you haven't already, at some point in your life you will go through a very difficult time. When that time comes, what will matter most is your relationship with Christ and whether you have determined that He is worth everything.

We shouldn't exalt Christians who are exiled as if they are super-hero Christians. They are people just like you and me. You have access to the same Holy Spirit that they do. The same God who gives them joy, courage and strength to forgive and sacrifice is working in your life as well. There are no super-Christians, just weak men and women who have chosen Jesus over everything, and He is strong in them.

They are simply Christians who have truly understood the message and power of the cross and the One who died on it. These believers, even though they've lost everything else, have the one thing that matters, the one thing that cannot be taken away from them — Jesus. These are “N” Christians.





With the message of His salvation seared into their hearts, they are compelled by His love and can rejoice even in difficult circumstances, because He gives them hope.

So what about you? Can you confidently say that you are an “N” Christian, too? As we continue with our Exile Night, eating and sleeping like refugees, let’s pray for them. Ask the Lord what He is calling you to do as an individual and us to do as the body of Christ. I want you to do some soul searching of your own as well. Ask yourself if there is anything holding you back from being completely surrendered to Christ. If you would like one of our leaders to pray with you about this, I know they would be happy to.

Remember WHY these persecuted believers are going through this. They suffer willingly because they truly know with everything in them, that Christ is worth it.

He always is.

*At this point you can dismiss students, have leaders available to pray with them, or break them into small groups to further discuss or share personal prayer requests in regard to the lesson.*