

April 14, 2024 (Lesson 7)

LIVE VICTORIOUSLY IN CHRIST

1. **Victory Over the Evil World** (1 John 5:1-5)
2. **Those Who Believe Have Eternal Life** (1 John 5:6-13)
3. **Live Confidently in God** (1 John 5:14-21)

Central Truth: Christians can live confidently and victoriously in Christ.

Focus: Know and rejoice in the assurances we have as Christians.

Evangelism Emphasis: Through salvation, anyone can receive the power and hope needed to endure the storms of life.

Golden Text: “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

In chapter 5, the Apostle John summarizes all he has taught in his first epistle. He begins by reminding us of the need to be born again. The new birth comes about by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving Him as our Savior. Through the shedding of His blood, Jesus made salvation available to everyone.

John also confronted the false teachers of his day. Many false teachers had arisen who denied Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The apostle declared these impostors had no part in the kingdom of God. They were to be resisted and rejected. There was to be no place for them in the community of believers.

Throughout this letter, John said if we are to live an overcoming life, we must base our life on the truth—the Word of God. The principles set forth in the Word will enable us to live triumphantly in the midst of a world that opposes all that is Christian. It is important that we search the Word daily, asking God for guidance.

There is victory in Jesus. We sing about it, but do we live it out so others see Christ in us? Our lifestyle will either draw others to Christ or turn them away from Him. What an awesome responsibility we have to live in a way that unbelievers will want to experience what we have found

in Christ! We need to be able to say with the Apostle Paul: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20 NKJV).

1. VICTORY OVER THE EVIL WORLD

A. Children of God by Faith (1 John 5:1-3)

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Believing Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, is a recurring theme in John’s writing. In fact, he gave this theme as the reason for the writing of his Gospel. Although he could not record everything Jesus did, his writing was designed to aid the reader in believing in Jesus as the Christ. He declared: “Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31 NKJV).

The message of the false prophets who troubled the church in John’s day was a denial of the messiahship of the Lord. John makes it clear that anyone who believes in his or her heart that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God (1 John 5:1). Also, anyone who loves God the Father also loves Christians, because they are His children. So, not only do we love the only begotten Son of God; we love all God’s children. When we are born again, we enter into a new family—the family of God. We are surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ. The common bond of Christ within draws us to one another. We enjoy a holy love for one another that this world knows nothing about. They can only wonder and marvel at the bond that exists between believers.

We frequently hear our love for other believers is an evidence of our love for God. But in verse 2, the apostle is saying the opposite: Our love for God is evidence of our love for His children. Why is this important? Friendships in the world may be formed for a variety of reasons, some of them less than noble. The motivation is as important as the friendship itself. If our love for Christians stems from our love for God, we know it is based on pure and genuine motivation. As Christians, we relate to each other through the grace of God, and find common ground for our respect and admiration.

There is a second factor in this relationship. This love for God is coupled with obedience to God: keeping His commandments. When we obey the commandments of God, we show our love is more than a mere profession. Our deeds prove it is genuine.

Some people have the wrong idea about the commandments of God. They view them as hard and difficult to obey. They do not realize we walk in His commandments by the grace of God. When we look at obedience in that light, we understand His commandments are not burdensome. Jesus made that clear in the beautiful invitation He extended to all who will hear: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

- *Why are God's laws not considered “grievous,” burdensome (1 John 5:3)?*

Loving God

To love God does not mean to meet His needs, but rather to delight in Him and to be captivated by His glorious power and grace, and to value Him above all other things on earth. All the rest of the commandments are the kinds of things that we will do from our hearts, if our hearts are truly delighted with and resting in the glory of God's grace.—John Piper

B. Overcoming the World by Faith (1 John 5:4-5)

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

The apostle here identifies overcomers as those who are born of God. Apart from the new birth, we cannot hope to be triumphant in this life or in the life to come. But being born from above, we can stand face-to-face with the world and all it can throw at us and come out victorious. The god of this world is no match for Spirit-filled believers. He who is within us is greater than he who is in the world. The lustful things of this world lose their appeal to those who are living a Christ-centered life. As long as our faith is anchored in Christ, the promises or threats of this world do not move us. Walking in obedience to the Lord, we are “more than conquerors” through Christ who loves us (Rom. 8:37).

Nothing within ourselves enables us to overcome the world; however, when our faith is in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we are united with Him and His victory becomes our victory. We conquer by faith because we derive our strength from Christ. Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). We can be victorious over Satan, the world, and our own flesh by total surrender to Christ and total dependence on His power. The formula for victory is spelled out in Revelation 12:11: “And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

What we believe about Jesus and the extent of our trust in Him determine the degree to which we live an overcoming life. Do we believe He is the Messiah? Do we embrace the supernatural nature of His birth? Do we fully accept Him as Savior and Lord of our life? Only when we come to

grips with these truths can we expect to receive the benefits of His passion. Only then can we give thanksgiving to God who “giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

§ *Who overcomes the world, and how is it accomplished?*

2. THOSE WHO BELIEVE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

A. Witness to the Son of God (1 John 5:6-8)

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

John continues to assert Jesus is the Son of God and that believing in Him is essential to salvation. In support of this declaration is the witness of water (v. 6), representing Jesus’ baptism and attested to by God the Father. What greater witness could there be than to have God himself say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17)? Not only did the Father voice His approval, but the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and lighted upon Him (v. 16). Jesus’ baptism was one of the first steps in His journey toward fulfilling all righteousness (see v. 15).

The proof Jesus is the Son of God is seen not only in water, but also in blood (1 John 5:6). On the cross, He accomplished what He had come to do—make salvation available to all people. The apostle wants us to know the One who died at Calvary is the One whom John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan. The blood shed on that hill was precious blood, special blood, atoning blood—the only blood which could cleanse sins.

When the soldier pierced the deceased Jesus' side with his sword, both "blood and water came out" (John 19:34 NKJV). This offered proof that He who died on the center cross was not only the Son of God but also the Son of Man—that His death was a real death, and thus His resurrection would be a real resurrection.

Not only does Jesus' baptism and crucifixion bear witness that He is the Son of God, but the Holy Spirit also confirms this truth with His testimony. The Holy Spirit is behind all of the declarations of Scripture regarding the sonship of Christ, beginning with Moses and all the prophets as well as the writers of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit supported the witness of the apostles, as seen in Acts 5:32: "We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him" (NLT). In addition to His witness through the Word, the Holy Spirit witnesses to the hearts of individual believers as well as to the community of believers that Jesus is the Christ.

§ *What is the testimony of Jesus' blood, His baptism, and the Holy Spirit concerning Jesus Christ?*

§ *Why should we believe their testimony?*

B. Belief in the Son of God (1 John 5:9-11)

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

In numerous ways, we accept the witness of other people. Juries listen to various witnesses and then decide who is telling the truth based on these testimonies. If we act on the basis of human

witnesses, how much more should we rely on the witness of God? People can deceive us, but God will not. He is the personification of truth; His testimony is always trustworthy (v. 9).

Those who do not believe Jesus is the Son of God make the Father out to be a liar (v. 10). Nothing shows more disdain toward “God, who does not lie” (Titus 1:2 NIV). Paul wrote in Romans 3:3-4, “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”

The sum and substance of God’s testimony is He has given believers life in the Son, even eternal life (1 John 5:11). This life we have received by the grace of God was purchased by the Son, resides in the Son, and is ours as we believe in the Son and walk in obedience to Him. This never-ending life begins now and will come to its fullest realization in the future. Knowing Christ means enjoying a little bit of Heaven while we are still on earth. Think of what life will be like when we are free from all sorrow and sadness, and when all imperfections have been removed. John alluded to this glorious state earlier when he said: “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (3:2 NKJV). The Apostle Paul drew a contrast between this present life and our future life in these words: “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

Overwhelming Evidence

I became a Christian because the evidence was so compelling that Jesus really is the one-and-only Son of God who proved His divinity by rising from the dead. That meant following Him was the most rational and logical step I could possibly take.—Lee Strobel

C. Eternal Life in God’s Son (1 John 5:12-13)

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

In the clearest possible language, John draws a distinction between those who have received Christ into their heart and those who have not. It is the difference between being spiritually alive and spiritually dead. Only those who have Christ have life. By faith, Christ lives and reigns within those who have accepted Him as Savior and Lord. The moment we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we experience life in a way those who reject Christ can never know. We enter into a foretaste of what we will enjoy on an exponentially larger scale for all eternity.

Since eternal life originates in Christ, no one can have this life apart from Him. The external appearance and good deeds of some individuals may suggest they deserve life based on their own merit. But God looks on the heart, and only the heart committed to Christ enters into everlasting life. When Jesus asked His disciples if they wanted to leave Him like many others had done, Peter responded, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68 NKJV). Those who have not believed in Christ are dead in sin, alienated from God, and have nothing to look forward to but eternal death.

In 1 John 5:13, the apostle says he is writing to those who believe Jesus is the Son of God so they may know they have eternal life. What wonderful news! The false teachers of John’s day had vigorously denied the sonship of Christ and, lest some believer might have doubts about their standing with Christ, John offers these words of encouragement and affirmation. For those in his day and for all generations to follow, the apostle offers the assurance of eternal life to those who “believe on the name of the Son of God.”

§ *Why is there no life without the Son (v. 12)?*

§ *Why did John write this letter (v. 13)?*

3. LIVE CONFIDENTLY IN GOD

A. Ask According to His Will (1 John 5:14-15)

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The idea of Christians being able to boldly approach God is found several times in this epistle and is supported by the writer of the Book of Hebrews: “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:14-16 NKJV).

We can approach the throne of grace with confidence when our prayers are in accordance with God’s will. When we pray in the name of Jesus—that is, when we pray as Jesus would pray in a given situation—we can offer that prayer boldly, knowing God hears us and will answer our petition. Jesus said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13-14). The Lord favorably regards any prayer we offer in His name. When we humbly submit to His will, God will grant our petition because what we are asking is for His glory and our ultimate good.

§ *How do we know if we are praying according to God’s will?*

B. Pray for a Faltering Brother (1 John 5:16-17)

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

John follows his strong statement related to answered prayer with a few specific instructions. He calls on Christians to pray for fellow believers who get caught up in sinful activity. When, by an impulse of the Holy Spirit, a Christian realizes another believer has fallen into sin, the Christian is to go to God in prayer on behalf of the faltering believer. The assurance is God will answer their prayer and bring renewed life to the one who has succumbed to temptation. Jesus set us an example in the case of the Apostle Peter. Foreseeing Peter would fall, Jesus interceded for him. He said to Peter, “I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:32 NKJV).

However, there is “a sin unto death” (1 John 5:16). The apostle does not advise believers to pray for those guilty of such sin, nor will the Holy Spirit prompt the Christian to pray for them. In the Old Testament, there were sins punishable by death. In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of lying to the Holy Spirit and met instant death. There is also a form of apostasy from which there is no recovery. When a person rejects Jesus Christ as the way of salvation, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:26), for Jesus is the only Savior (see 6:4-6; 10:26-29). Then there is “blasphemy against the Spirit,” which “shall not be forgiven” (see Matt. 12:22-32)—intentionally and knowingly attributing the miraculous works of Christ to the devil. John tells us “all wrongdoing is sin” (1 John 5:17 Amp.) and needs to be repented of.

Restore in Love

It is important that when we are engaged in admonition or exhortation or confrontation with a brother who is overcome in sin, we call attention to the truth in an extraordinarily compassionate and tender and loving spirit.—R. C. Sproul

C. Do Not Practice Sinning (1 John 5:18-21)

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

John gives a summary of the message he has related throughout his first letter. He reminds believers because we are born of God, we do not practice sin; and because our life is under the blood of Jesus, Satan cannot touch us (v. 18). We are safe in the hands of God. However, those who have not put their trust in the Lord have reason to fear the “wicked one” (v. 18).

Salvation is not guesswork. Repeatedly John used the words “we know.” As partakers of the divine nature, we have a certainty about our relationship with God. While we have absolute assurance about our life in Christ, unbelievers are in the grip of Satan (v. 19). While we enjoy the life we have with Christ now and forever, they have nothing to look forward to but spiritual death, physical death, and even the second death.

John spent much of his time in this epistle defending the faith and refuting the false teachers who denied the Son of God has come. Once again, he affirmed we know Jesus is the Son of God, He has given us eternal life, and He purchased that life for us with His own blood (v. 20).

The apostle closes this book with a warning to guard against idolatry, keeping away from anything that would take God's place in our heart (v. 21). We are to avoid the worship of false gods and inward idols that would take us away from our love for God. We are to trust God to defend us against Satan and his minions, and find our fulfillment in God alone.

§ *How do verses 18 and 19 compare the status of the world with the condition of Christians?*

§ *Why must God give us "an understanding" (v. 20)?*

CONFIDENT AND VICTORIOUS

The key to victorious living is confidence in God. Have you found that confidence? Do you believe Him to be an all-sufficient One who will see you through every situation life may bring your way? Are you practicing the principles of victorious Christian living set forth by John in this epistle? It begins when you place your faith in Jesus Christ and continues as you walk daily with Him.

Daily Devotions

- M. Living in Covenant With God (Genesis 17:1-10)
- T. Confidence in God (Psalm 20:1-9)
- W. Trust in the Lord (Jeremiah 17:5-8)
- T. Overcoming Evil (Matthew 5:38-48)
- F. Power to Overcome Evil (Luke 10:17-20)
- S. Overcome Evil With Good (Romans 12:14-21)