

Overcome...or...Overcomer

(1John 5:1~5)

¹Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. ⁴For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

I am so grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ...I can't even begin to tell you how grateful. Human words simply cannot express, how thankful I am to God, for offering up His Son for me. Where would we be, without the gospel of Christ? I ponder that question quite often, "*Where would I be right now, if not for the gospel of His Son?*" It was twenty three years ago, at the age of twenty five, in April of 1991, that I first heard the gospel. God used a preacher from Ripley Mississippi, to declare the message of Christ, and Him crucified for my sins...to forever change my life! I often look back and wonder, where I'd be right now, if not for the gospel. What paths would I have walked down, what roads would I have taken? There's simply no telling where'd I be today...(maybe dead) if it were not for the gospel in my life.

I am very passionate, when it comes to preaching the gospel, because I know, that there is no other hope for man! Literally, the souls of men hang in the balance! There is absolutely no other hope for a man's soul, no other hope for a man's salvation, no other hope for a man to be delivered from sin, from this world, from death, from destruction and the wrath and judgment to come...other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16) *¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for IT is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* For IT...is the power of God, Paul says! Contained "*Inside*" this message, "*IN the message of Christ and Him crucified*" is the very power of God, that is able to save the soul of a man. There is no other message, and there is no other way, beloved! It is the gospel of Christ, and the gospel alone. Given that, we must do everything in our power to preserve the purity of this message, and preach it to as many as we can. All around us, there are men and women who are dying in sin, and unless they hear the gospel, they will surely perish.

It is to the subject of the gospel's ability to deliver men from sin, and the ways of destruction, that I want to speak to you this morning. Our main text this morning will be what John says here in verses 4~5. The first three verses here are really a continuation of chapter four, concerning the subject of loving our brother, that would have been better suited to be included in that section. Still speaking in the context of loving our brother, here John points to a basic principle of life, to prove his point...

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

Still arguing his case, that whoever knows God and loves God, will love his brother, here John points to one of life's basic principles, to make his point, and that is, how it is only natural that family members love one another. The King James language, makes it a little hard to understand, but what John is saying here is this... *¹Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God...he is a child of God...and everyone who loves the Father will also love His children.* That only makes sense right, they are your brothers and sisters, right? For example, I am one of four boys, I have three brothers. We were all born of the same father, and thus naturally, we love one another. It's just one of those basic principles of life. Well here, John points to that principle to make his point of how anyone who loves God, will love his brother as well. It explains the statement he made back in verse 20 of chapter four... *²⁰If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* John's point there was, how can a man say that he loves "*the Father*"...but not love "*his brother?*" That would be like me, saying I love my dad, yet not wanting anything to do with my brothers...who are the flesh and bone of my dad. Do you see that? That's why

John calls a man who says he loves God, yet hates his brother, a “liar!” How can he hate the one who is flesh of the father? It just doesn’t make sense...

(Vs 3) John says...thus ⁴³*We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, And his commandments are not burdensome.*” What are His commandments? John just made that clear back in (Vs 21)...⁴²¹*And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.*” **Summing up what John is saying here, I’m paraphrasing...** *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is a child of God...having said that, everyone who is a child of God, and loves the Father, will love His children as well. Based on this truth, whether or not a man truly knows and loves God, will be manifested by whether or not he his loves his brother. In other words, John equates loving our brother with loving God. Since God is a Spirit, and not a physical entity, and can’t be seen...love for our brother becomes the physical, tangible expression of our love for God. Given that, anyone who claims to love God, but does not love his brother, is a liar, and reveals he does not know God. Because the truth is, you simply cannot love God without loving your brother.*

Now as I said earlier, these first three verses here would have been better suited, to have been included with chapter four. That brings us to what I really want us to look at this morning, and that is, this matter of **“Overcoming the world”** that John speaks to here in verses 4~5...⁴***For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.*** ⁵***Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***

Clearly the context of these two verses is this matter of **“Overcoming the world.”** Three times here John makes reference to **“overcoming the world”**... That word **“overcome”** carries the meaning, **“to conquer,” “to defeat,”** to... **“triumph over.”** According to John, *we overcome the world, by our faith in Jesus Christ. But what does he mean that we achieve victory over the world, we triumph over the world?*

When John talks about **“overcoming the world,”** he’s talking about being delivered from it, in terms of being set free of its power, its control, its stronghold over our lives. What do you mean preacher? We live in a fallen world, a world under the dominion of the powers of darkness...one whose ruler is none other than God’s adversary, Satan himself. And as a result, all who are in the world, all born into **“this world,”** are in bondage, like slaves, held captive by these powers of darkness. It is freedom from this bondage and captivity that John is referring to here, when he speaks to us **“Overcoming the world.”**

Turn with me to Galatians...(Ga. 1) I want you to see something here... ¹*Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)* ²*And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:* ³*Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,(...now notice what he says here, speaking of Christ)...* ⁴***Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world ...according to the will of God and our Father:*** ⁵*To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Now don’t miss this...look at what he says, **“He gave Himself for our sins”**...that **“He might deliver us from this present evil world,”** ...*according to the will of, our Father.* Beloved, that is the gospel pure and simple. God sent His Son into the world, for the express purpose of delivering us from the powers of darkness, the powers of this world, from bondage to sin...by offering up Himself on the cross for our sin! ...*according to the will of God!* This is to say, this is the plan that God put in place before the foundation of the world, a plan to deliver men/women from the powers of darkness, by the offering up of His Son!

Now I want you to see something here, that is a crucial aspect of the gospel, you might say that it is the heart of the gospel, simply because it has to do with the hearts of men. Listen, the whole purpose of God sending His Son into the world, to die for sinners, is **to deliver them from this fallen, sinful world!** The best way to understand it, is to know that there are only two kinds of people in the world, those who are yet OF the world, those in bondage to sin, those who walk in darkness, those still held captive by the powers of darkness... And then, there’s those who are no longer OF the world, speaking of those who’ve been delivered from this world, those who have **“Overcome the world,”** through faith in Jesus Christ.

This is an aspect of the gospel that I'm terribly concerned, that many don't understand in our day. Given how "Worldly" the church has become, makes me question as to whether some understand the gospel at all. The most basic teaching of the gospel, is separation from this world. You cannot serve God and this world, it is impossible. That's what Jesus was saying in Matthews's gospel when He said you can't serve God and Mammon. There He described two masters, and the fact that all men are serving one of the two. One is the God of this world, which the natural, unregenerate man serves. And then there is the God of Scripture, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the born again, regenerate man serves. It's one of the two... a man will either love this world, the things of this world, living for the here and now, revealing he is a child of this world... or... by faith, he will turn from this world, to follow Christ, setting his sights on things above, living for the unseen things of God. That's pretty simple to understand, right. Based on where his treasure is, based on what he's living to, reveals where his heart is, right? That what Jesus meant in Matthew's gospel when He said, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" There Jesus exhorted His listeners to "*Lay up treasures in heaven... not here on earth...*" Teaching that whichever one it is, that a man is living to, determines who his master is. You cannot serve God and Mammon... which speaks of the riches of this world... the things of this world.

That's basically the same truth John declared back in chapter two of his epistle, where John makes it clear, that anyone who loves this world, has no part with God...

Turn there with me, I want you to see something here... ¹⁴*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you... (notice what he says) ...and ye have overcome the wicked one.* ¹⁵*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.* ¹⁷*And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.*"

Simply put, this world we live in, is a "fallen world"... everything this world is, and has to offer, caters to the "sinful flesh of fallen man"... Given that, John says that anybody who loves this world, does not know God... because everything this world has and represents, has no part with the Father. That's what John means there when he says, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* John says if any man loves this world, and the things of this world, it merely reveals that the Spirit of God, does not dwell in that man. It can't, it's impossible, for everything this world is, and has to offer, is the antithesis of what God is, and what He's about.

When you understand what John is saying, it truly does come down to a very simple truth... There are two kinds of people in this world. One, those who are "**Overcome by this world,**" in that they are yet *OF this world*... That doesn't mean that they are evil people, who are out here doing evil things. It simply means their heart is still in bondage to this world. They are still *dead in their sin*... they walk in darkness... they love this world, and the things of this world... they live for the here and now... And then there's those who have "**Overcome this world,**" through faith in Christ... manifested in that they are *no longer OF this world*. Those who have been *made alive in Christ*... those who walk in the light... those who love God, and the things of God... who live for the unseen. That's what it means to walk by faith, right? In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, "*we who are in Christ, we walk by faith, and not by sight.*" Which simply means, we no longer live for this world, and the things of this world... **the SEEN**... but rather, we walk by faith, *seeking and striving after the UNSEEN things of God*, the kingdom of God... **right?**

Well, that is what John means here when he says, that by faith, we have "*overcome the world*"... It simply means, that by faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son, we've been delivered from this world. We have overcome the wicked one, by faith... We who have been made alive "*In Christ,*" are no longer of this world, we no longer walk in darkness, but in the light, we no longer love this world or the things of this world... **but rather**, we love God, and the things of God. We are as strangers and pilgrims, we walk after the unseen things of God, seeking the kingdom of God.

Understood, this truth here becomes just one more of those confirmations, or validations that gives us the assurance that “*eternal life*” abides in us. Remember what John said was his purpose in writing this letter? Look at verse 13 here with me again...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.* John says I’m writing to encourage you in the faith, to strengthen you in the ways of Christ, to settle you, to give you resolve by knowing that Christ is the true way...that you may KNOW that you have eternal life! And what we just read here is another one of those truths. ***4For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world...***In chapter four, John declared that love for our brother, bears witness eternal life abides in us...and now here, it is ***the fact that we no longer love the world, or the things of the world...***but rather we love God, and the things of God...***is another one of those validations***, that gives us the assurance, that we have eternal life!

Beloved, in light of this truth, I can’t tell you how concerned I am *for many within our churches today...* Rather than being “*Overcomers of the world*”...***their lives reveal*** they are yet “*Overcome by the world.*” They have no real desire for the things of God, or the kingdom of God, or the work of God. They continue to live for the here and now, living to this world and the things of this world. The very thing Christ came to deliver us from...***4whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith...***⁵***Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?***

In closing...the key statement here is this...***4For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world...***

It is those, John says, that “*have overcome the world*”...that bear witness they have been born of God. In other words, a genuine love for God, and the things of God, seeking those things which are above, the unseen things of God...bears witness of the “*new birth.*” There’s a “*new man,*” a “*new creature*” living in that man. Simply put, it reveals a “*changed heart*”...

You see beloved, here’s the beauty of the gospel. I want to make sure you understand this. Men are delivered from this world by the love of God, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. Let me explain what I mean. When it speaks of our being delivered from this present evil world...***it’s speaking of our hearts be delivered from this world.*** You see, at the heart of God’s plan, was to win the hearts of fallen men, back to Himself, through the power of His great love for them. It is by hearing of the great love of God towards us, in the person of Jesus Christ, that men are delivered from this world, having their hearts captured by grace.

You could say, that men “*overcome the world,*” by being “*overcome by God’s love.*” When a man truly understands the gospel, having his eyes opened to his desperate, sinful, hopeless condition...and to the reality of what God did for us, by offering up His Son on the cross, for our sins... It’s when that great truth of God’s great love for us sinks in, that our hearts are delivered from this world, and all this world has to offer...and is given to God.

It’s only when you understand that, that you can fully understand John’s statement here in verse 3...

3For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. His commandments are not “*grievous,*” John says, they’re not “*burdensome.*” Which simply means, they are not something we see as burdensome, something we don’t want to do, or something too much for us. But rather, understood, what John is saying here is this, they’re not burdensome at all...matter of fact, keeping His commandments is the desire of my heart! It’s what brings me joy, it’s what I want to do more than anything! Do you see that? It merely affirms that the individual has truly been “*Re-born.*” He’s a new creature in Christ, he now loves what he used to hate, (God), and hates what he used to love...(this world)

It is then, and only then, that a man is truly reconciled back to God, having his heart turned away from this world and the things of this world, mammon, and turned back to a loving relationship with God, the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ***4For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.*** ⁵***Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***