

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:1-5**

Chapter 25- Overcoming the World

218 Overcoming the World- Part 2

WAOY Thursday 07/10/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John meant when he said "Whoever is born of God overcomes the world". So let's read **1John 5:1- 5** again together:

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Now John has been teaching us here for quite some time about what it means to really be saved. All of the characteristics and fruit and aspects that John has been teaching in this Epistle are to be like road signs for us to look at honestly to see if we are really in the true faith or not.

Saved people live and act and do and love as John teaches in this Epistle and lost people do not. And I beg you, dear friends, don't try to make the Bible fit your life. You bend; you be broken; you be submissive to the Word of God and let God's Word define for you who is and who is not saved. And if you do not measure up to what John teaches here- then instead of arguing about your own personal

experiences- repent- and do and be what John says here- and that will end the discussion.

I do not believe that John was hard when he wrote the words that we read in this Epistle. I believe that John was dripping with God's Love when he clearly defined for us what is real and what is false and what is a true believer and what constitutes a fraud.

And here in this passage- these five verses- John gives us even more clarity about what it means to truly be saved and born from above. John says that genuine believers overcome the world.

Now just what does that mean? Some would say that it means that genuine believers never have a bad day- that they are so filled with God's Glory that the issues of life just bounce off them like bullets off Superman's chest. But if that were true- then surely Paul and Peter and James would not be considered saved by John because these men suffered horribly at the hands of evil men and for the most part- God did *not* deliver them from their torment. So overcoming the world does *not* mean that you are never troubled or that the trials of life do not affect you.

So what does it mean to "overcome the world"? Well to begin with- to overcome the world is certainly not to "accept" the lost pagan system of this fallen world. It means that as saved people- we are not to abide by the teachings of the world or to follow the world or to acquiesce to what the world says and does. To *overcome* the world is to be separate from the world and to live counterintuitively to what the world says. And all of that is wrapped up in the word, "love". So let's go back to what John himself taught about this in **1John 2:15-17**:

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves 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 boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Now you may remember that I taught about this section of **1John** at great length several months ago and you might want to get a copy of that series so you can see just what John was talking about when he said that we must not love the world. But suffice it to say for *this*

broadcast and as it pertains to what we are studying now in **1John 5:1-5**- that if we love the world- we *cannot* and we *will not* overcome the world.

Now also notice here that John didn't say that believers will "try" to overcome the world- but that they will overcome the world- so this overcoming is not *optional* or something that *some* people do- while others- who are equally saved- don't do. No, John says that part and parcel of what it means to be saved is that we overcome the world.

Now there are many titles given to Christians throughout the New Testament. For example- **1Thessalonians 1:7; 2:10** and **1Timothy 6:2** calls them "believers". **The Acts 11:26; 26:28** and **1Peter 4:16** calls them "Christians". **Matthew 18:3** and **Ephesians 5:1** calls them "children". **John 1:12; Romans 8:16; Philippians 2:15;** and **1John 3:1** calls them "Children of God" And in other places saved people are called, children of Promise; sons of the day; sons of the Kingdom; friends of Jesus Christ; brethren; sheep; saints; soldiers; witnesses; stewards; fellow citizens; lights in the world; the elect; the chosen; the called; ambassadors of Christ; heirs; branches in the true Vine; members of the Body of Christ; living stones; the beloved of God; followers of Christ; sons of Abraham; disciples; epistles; servants or slaves; the godly; the people of God; strangers; pilgrims; a peculiar people; a royal priesthood; a holy nation; the light of the world; the salt of the earth; a city set on a hill; vessels of honor; the righteous; aliens; members of the household of God; and others.

And here in **1John 5:4**, John calls genuine believers by another name or title- "overcomers". So John is saying here that genuinely Blood bought saints of God are conquerors or victors. Now the Greek word that is used here is the word, *nikao*- which is used twice in verse 4 and once in verse 5 and is one of John's favorite terms to describe believers. This word is used 28 times in the New Testament of which 24 of them are in John's writings.

Nikao means: *to conquer; or to gain the victory; or to defeat the foe*. And it comes from a derivative of the Greek word, *Nike*- like the shoe company- who was the female goddess of victory who aided Zeus in his battle against the Titans. It is amazing to see that God the Holy Spirit use the very same word for believers as Greek pagans used for their false gods.

Now please turn with me to **John 16:33** and read what Jesus said about Himself:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Here Jesus said that He *nikao* the world- He has *overcome* the world or the system of satan that is on the earth. And it is this victory of our Lord and Savior here that is the foundation of our overcoming in **1John 5**. So our overcoming is not something that originates with us- but is something that automatically flows out of a life that is totally submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His Victory then becomes ours.

The Apostle Paul also used this word in **Romans 8:37** which says:

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

And it is this *overwhelming* conquering- not just conquering- but *overwhelming* conquering that show us that this is not a human manifestation of superior intellect or superior ability or superior attitude or superior will power; but this overwhelming conquering is the direct result of you being so hidden in Christ; of you being so surrendered to His Will; of you decreasing so much; of you dying to self so much; of you mortifying the deeds of the body so much; of you yielding so much that you get out of the way and allow Jesus to shine brightly.

This phrase, "overwhelmingly conquer" that Paul used here in **Romans 8:37** is what is called an "intensified compound" form of the verb- *nikao*- which is *hupernikao* which refers to being absolutely victorious. And then look at how Paul describes this absolute victory in **Romans 8:38&39**:

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now here is the mystery to all of this. Notice the first four words in verse 38:

For I am convinced ...

The word “convinced” comes from the Greek word, *peithoo*, and this is a very interesting word. *Peithoo* means: *to suffer until one is persuaded; to be induced to believe; to obey; to yield to what is being taught; and to trust in something that has been proven.*

Paul said that he had become *persuade* or *peithoo* to believe that all of verses 38 and 39 were true or in other words- Paul had been *induced to believe* ; *he had suffered so much that he was forced to acknowledge* that believers overwhelmingly conquer.

Now on the surface- that almost sounds like a contradiction. How can you suffer so much that you have become persuaded that we can overwhelmingly conquer? Doesn't the fact that we overwhelmingly conquer mean by default that we will not suffer? No, not at all. And any teaching that says that believers should not suffer is twisting what Paul taught. Paul did not overwhelming conquer so that he would not suffer- on the contrary- this great Apostle suffered so much that through his sufferings he learned what conquering was all about.

Now I realize that there is a very popular teaching out there that says that believers are not supposed to suffer at all; that by virtue of the fact that we are believers that we so overwhelmingly conquer everything that we escape from problems; trials; persecutions; disease; and even death. Many people base their entire walk with God on the false notion that says that great and strong faith causes you to get out of trouble while weak faith or no faith causes you to remain in them- which is not true at all.

The Bible does not teach that. For example- **Hebrews 11:32-25** teaches us that God does move in great supernatural acts of healing and miracles and glorious manifestations- there is no doubt at all about that. But the **Hebrews 11:35-38** clearly says that God doesn't always move that way. Sometimes it brings God glory for His people to be healed and to escape trouble. But the Bible is equally clear that sometimes it brings God just as much glory for His people to suffer and to go through trials and to be persecuted and not be delivered. And the difference has absolutely nothing to do with how strong or how weak our faith- it has to do with what God's Will is. And our job whether we are delivered or not is to graciously submit to God's Will with joy and to be faithful- trusting that God is working everything for good.

So this overwhelming conquering that Paul and Jesus and John were talking about is not the absence of troubles; it is not the freedom from

pain; and it is not that we always escape floods or hurricanes or persecution or even wars. This overcoming is a transcendent overcoming that supersedes this world and that is more important than temporary and earthly things but proves to us that God has saved us to the uttermost and the dominating power of sin has been broken forever.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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