

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 25- Overcoming the World

228 Overcoming the World- Part 12

WAOY Tuesday 08/05/08

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 over the last several broadcasts- we have been looking closely at just what John meant in verse 4, when he said:

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

Now we saw on our last broadcast that faith is our confidence that we have in the Promises of God to the point that we are then free from the evils of this world that a lack of faith produces. In other words- the reason that people continue on in ungodly lives is because they do not trust in the Promises of God and so by trusting in those Promises- we

are then free to live lives of “radical love” and “risk taking faith” that will bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

And here in **1John**- the Apostle is telling us that one of the biggest problems; one of the most egregious sins that we can commit in this life is to love this present evil world- to love that which is passing away- to be caught up in the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the boastful pride of life. So, for us to love money; or for us to engage ourselves in covetousness; or for us to ever *not* be content with what God has already provided for us- is to sin *horribly* against God and His Holiness. And so, we should fear that we might engage in those sins a whole lot more than we should ever fear about our own safety or about not having enough possessions or about whether our bodies are always healed.

And faith- true faith- Biblical faith- the kind of faith that has as its object- Jesus Christ and not more of this world’s goods- will bring us into full and complete confidence in what God has Promised so that by this faith we will *not* be entangled in the affairs of this life. And *this* is the way that we overcome the world.

Now there is much teaching about faith today, dear friends. But much that is being taught is a terrible perversion of what true faith really is. Faith is not a “tool” that we can use to manipulate God into giving us what we want. You simply can’t get more off base than to think that is what faith is. We have to realize dear friends, that for the most part, those of us who have been born and raised here in America really are blinded to just how sinful the love of the world and the love of money and covetousness really is to God- because this nation is so blessed and so prosperous and we are taught from children to go out and fulfill our dreams and to get as much as we can and that the man with the most toys at death wins.

But that spirit is not godly at all- it is *ungodly* as defined by God Himself. And so much about the American Dream is not godly- because it actually *promotes* covetousness and worldliness and materialism and the result is- that many people today are guilty of loving the world.

Now as soon as anyone preaches against these things the first thing that people begin to say is, “*Well what do you want me to do, Brother Blair- live in a tent?*” As though poverty would cure this problem. No, I am not promoting poverty and John wasn’t either. But what John *was* saying and what I am saying is that we need to know

when we cross the line between working to meet our needs and simply feeding our lust to have more stuff. And all that I am saying is that if you feed on a steady diet of worldly information and carnal and unbiblical preaching and teaching- that line between your needs being met and loving the world will either be very blurred or nonexistent in your life.

In fact, I am flabbergasted at how many people today actually believe that overcoming the world is accomplished by actually becoming *more* worldly; by accumulating *more* possessions; by praying prayers of covetousness. Listen, teaching people that God wants them to have everything they can dream of now is contrary to the infallible Word of the living God that teaches over and over and over again that to love this present world is to prove that the Love of the Father is not in us and that it is impossible to love God and love money at the same time. It isn't hard, dear friends, it is impossible!

People tell me all the time that they can do both- that they can walk that tightrope between having an abundance of things while somehow not loving them- and I find that so strange. Why in the world would you pray about getting something that you really don't want in the first place? Why would you seek to have God give you something that you in turn would cast away as being bad?

I mean either getting more stuff and loving money and being covetous and loving the world is the object of faith or it isn't. And if it is – then we need to just ignore what John teaches here and go out and get as much as we can while we are alive.

But if the world and all that it offers is *not* the object of faith; if faith is *not* a tool whereby we can twist God's Arm so He will give us whatever our hearts lust after; and if Jesus Christ is the object of faith and if one of the greatest joys that Man can know in this life is to attain to a place of godly contentment with that which God has already supplied- then what John teaches here is true. And so rather than *abandon* ourselves into loving the world- we need to abandon ourselves into loving Christ and doing His Will and trusting in His Promises to the end that we will *not* love the world- but we will *overcome* the world.

And this is why all this matters. John says here in **1John 5** and again in **1John 2** that loving the world means that the Love of the Father is not in you and then John said that there is an escape from

this wicked sin of world love and that escape is our faith. Faith in what? Faith in what God has said.

You see, dear friends, genuine Biblical faith always has as its object- Jesus Christ- and never anything that is temporary or that is passing away or that God defines as being sinful. That is not faith- that is covetousness. And let me give you a very clear example right here in the Bible about what I am talking about. Please turn with me and read a very powerful verse about this kind of radical love and trust and faith found in **Hebrews 10:34**:

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Now the reason that I consider this very obscure verse to be one of the most important passages in the entire New Testament is that this verse illustrates genuine Christianity in action. It shows us what real faith does and what real faith is.

Now most people would focus on the fact that in this verse- the people of the small little first century Church went to the prison and ministered to the needs of the prisoners and that is fine because they did do that. But I want to go just a little further into this verse. Look at the next part of verse 34:

... and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property...

Now the word that was translated here as “**seizure**” comes from the Greek word that means: *to confiscate or to take away*. So, we can see that great persecution was brought to these people as they had their property taken away from them or confiscated. But many people suffer loss- both saved and unsaved people suffer the loss of things during times of war or natural disasters- so what’s so special about this event?

What makes this even so special and what makes it unique and what makes this an example of Biblical Christianity is that these people didn’t just suffer the loss of their goods- but as they lost all that they owned- they lost it with joy!

These first century saints suffered the loss of all that they owned

at the hands of evil men and the Bible says that they went through this persecution with joy!

Now how does a person get to the place where he can lose all that he has and yet his joy *grows* rather than being overwhelmed with defeat and a sense of hopelessness? The *last* part of **Hebrews 10:34** gives us the key- so let's read that last part together:

... knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

The writer of **Hebrews** says that these first century believers were able to have everything that they owned in this life taken away from them and they were able to genuinely joy over that loss- precisely because they knew in themselves that they had in Heaven a far *better* substance than anything that they had down here, and they had in Heaven a more *enduring* substance than anything they had down here.

In other words, because their faith in the Promise of God that Heaven is infinitely better than the earth was strong and confident- because they really trusted that what God said about Heaven was true- these believers were able to escape the trap of loving this present world and they were able to escape the trap of loving money; and they were able to escape the trap of covetousness and therefore the loss of the temporary things that are passing away was not devastating to them but was in fact a means by which they could express godly joy!

Now this is faith in action. This is true genuine Biblical faith at work in the lives of real people who fully trusted in what God has promised about Heaven to the degree that the loss of the things of this earth only brought them joy. Truly this is a real life example of what John was talking about here in **1John 5:4**:

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

So contrary to what many of the popular television evangelists are teaching about faith today- real faith; true faith; genuine faith; Biblical faith is not a tool that we can use to get out of God whatever our lustful hearts crave after- but is a means of Grace whereby we can fully trust in the sure and certain Promises of God to the point where we no longer love the world; where we are no longer ensnared by the lie of

worldliness; where we are delivered from the prison of loving money; where we are set free from being driven by the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the boastful pride of life and trust that we have a home in Glory Land that outshines the Sun! And this powerful vibrant faith will then empower us to rejoice when we suffer loss; it will empower us to rejoice when we are persecuted; it will empower us to rejoice when we have everything that we own taken away from us because we know- we do not guess; we do not hope; we do not wish; we do not feel- but we know beyond any doubt- we have become persuaded- that what we have in Heaven; what God has promised us in Heaven is far better; and infinitely more lovely; and more enduring; and more lasting; and more satisfying; and more important and more valuable and more worthwhile than *anything* that we could ever hope to have down here. And that will enable us to join ourselves to what John taught here and by and through this confident faith in the Promises of God- we will be able to overcome the world!

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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