

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 25- Overcoming the World

221 Overcoming the World- Part 5

WAOY Wednesday 07/16/08

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 all throughout Scripture the world is synonymous with sin. For example- when John tells us in **1John 2:15**:

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.

Now the Apostle John was not saying that the dirt or the mountains or the rivers of this earth are evil- because God made all of those things and in **Genesis 1**- God said that what He made was very good. No, John was saying here that the *system* of this fallen world that is *dominated* and *ruled* by unregenerate Man and sin is what is evil and what we should not love.

In fact, John was so serious about this- he said in verse 15:

... If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

So, to love God is to hate the present evil *system* of this fallen world and to love the present evil system is to hate God. There is absolutely no wiggle room here. There is no such thing as straddling the fence here. John says that to love this world automatically means that the Love of the Father is not in you at all.

So, when John tells us here in Chapter 5 that all saved people overcome the world- He is not telling us that Salvation brings immunity to the problems of life or that faith will always rescue you from trouble. That is not what John is teaching here at all.

John is saying to us here that since the system of this fallen world is not of God in the first place and never has been and never will be; and since we live in this world and since we are bombarded with the ways of the world on a constant and ongoing basis- we need to know that internally- God the Holy Spirit will give us the power to live here and yet stay *separate* from the world and to know that the power of sin that dominates this fallen world no longer dominate us.

So, our “overcoming” is the method or the vehicle that affords us the ability to live in a sinful, evil world and yet walk through this world in the holiness and righteousness and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

You see, dear friends, part and parcel to being saved is that we *persevere*. Ongoing and relentless perseverance is one of the main things that distinguishes genuinely saved people from those who just attend Church or those who may be intellectually curious about God.

Now that is not to say that saved people don’t get discouraged and sometimes want to quit- because we *do* get discouraged and we *do* want to quit sometimes. But the difference is that saved people have the third Person of the Godhead walking up and down inside them that is making intercession to God constantly with groanings that cannot be uttered and saved people believe God; and saved people trust that even if they don’t understand what God is doing- they know that God knows what He is doing and they know that God is Good and they trust God.

And saved people believe God’s Word and God has worked in them to provide them with both the will and the power to go on loving and to go on serving God. Let’s read **Philippians 2:13**:

for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

So even though we may get discouraged at times- saved people don't *stay* discouraged and even though we may want to quit at times- we *don't* quit because we don't have anywhere else to go. Jesus and Jesus alone has the Words of eternal life, and He has graciously washed our sins away and He has wondrously saved our wretched souls and we don't have a "Plan B"- we don't have any other options- and so- by God's Grace- we *persevere*.

You see, perseverance has a lot more to do with what God does *for* us and *in* us and *through* us than it does with us merely being courageous or brave. Saved people persevere and unsaved people do *not* persevere simply because saved people have the new divine nature in them and lost people do not; saved people have the Holy Spirit living inside them and lost people do not; and saved people have been given the gift of the love *of* God and the love *for* God and lost people have not- and *that* is why we persevere – even though the hard times- and that is why lost people give up and turn back.

So, overcoming the world is Blood washed saints persevering against the system of this present evil world and not being overcome with evil but overcoming evil with good. And John teaches here that saved people do this and lost people do not because lost people *cannot* do this.

Now I want to look at the issue of overcoming from another angle for a few minutes. Over the last several years- it has become increasingly popular to teach that even after we are saved- we have a whole host of problems or spirits that we need to be delivered from. Some people teach that people can go up front in the Church and have hands laid on them to cast out everything from so-called, "generational curses" to bad habits to overeating to irresponsible spending.

And this practice has successfully done several things. It has greatly *minimized* the glory and power of Salvation in many people's minds, and it has caused some people to believe that we can simply "cast out" whatever needs to be "overcome". And both of these things are very bad. And to illustrate how this practice is an *abuse* of deliverance and how this affects our ability to overcome- I want us to read **Galatians 5:22-24:**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Now this passage is talking about the fruit of being saved and the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us. And I want to emphasize something very important here. Since Salvation is a Sovereign Work of God alone- it is *impossible* to be saved unless and until the Holy Spirit Sovereignly goes inside the human body first and opens our blind eyes and unstops our deaf ears; and takes out of us a stony heart and gives us a heart to believe. Because lost Man is fallen and radically ruined and is dead in trespasses and sins- *nobody* can be saved until the Holy Spirit does all of that Work *in* us and *for* us- first. And that is why some people hear and others don't; that is why some people believe and others don't; and that is why some people repent and others don't.

So, all saved people *already have* the Holy Spirit dwelling inside them or they never would have gotten saved in the first place. So, when the Apostle Paul is talking here in **Galatians 5**- he is talking about every single saved person on earth.

And Paul says that saved people by virtue of the fact that God the Holy Spirit walks inside them bear no fruit or evidence that they are saved. And Paul says that all saved people bear all nine of these fruit- and it is the bearing of these nine fruit that is the undeniable confirmation of our Salvation or the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us- which is the same thing.

And in verse 23- Paul mentions a very important but mostly forgotten fruit called "self- control" which is the very opposite of "self-indulgence and which wars against things like "self-fulfillment" and "self-esteem."

So, Paul teaches here that being saved and being filled with God's Spirit- which is the same thing as saying they are saved- gives every single believer the God empowered ability to exercise "self- control" over himself and his actions.

Now just what does that mean? That means that we have the supernatural power and ability to control what we do and what we say and what we eat and how we conduct our lives and how we spend our

money and what we are motivated by and what we allow. And we have that ability because we are no longer dominated by sin or the god of this world- but we are now bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ and are filled and led by God's Spirit.

Self-control is the ability given by and through the miracle of the new birth to control the lusts and desires and cravings of our "self"- which is our unsaved and unconverted flesh that does not love God or desire to follow Him. Now just what are those lusts and desires and cravings of our unconverted flesh? Well, Paul lists them for us in **Galatians 5:19-21**:

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul also listed more lusts that feed the "self" of Man in **1Corinthians 6:9-10**, when he said:

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

So, by God's help as we are confronted with these lusts of the flesh- we are able to not buy what they are selling and we are able to resist the temptation to engage in these activities or apply these aspects to our lives because we exercise the spiritual fruit of self-control which allows us to *control* the "self" and which gives us the power to *refuse* to lend our ear to those things that promote or extol these horrible sins.

So just how does this work? Well, for example- overcoming the world here in America would be for us to exercise self- control and not buy into the lie that more stuff is better and that the person with the most toys at death- wins. Overcoming the world would also cause you to reject any teaching that promotes covetousness as being a virtue by revealing that it just isn't true that financial gain is always good and a sign of God's Favor.

So rather than always coming up front and asking for a spirit to be cast out of us every time we turn around in order to get instant solutions to our various struggles- saved people should exercise self- control and walk in the Spirit on a moment by moment; day by day basis and as we continually crucify our unsaved flesh- the Bible promises us that we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

So, the gradual, consistent, life long process of obedience and surrender and dying to self- will allow us to overcome. And by doing that- we will see the magnificence of Grace and we will see the value of crucifying our flesh and dying to self on a daily basis and God will be glorified and our joy will be full, and we will be able to do what John teaches here and we will 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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