

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 25- Overcoming the World

222 Overcoming the World- Part 6

WAOY Thursday 07/17/08

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 on the last broadcast- we were discussing what John meant here in verse 4 when he says:

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

And we were looking at the difference between overcoming and having things cast out of us. You see, dear friends, we live in a time when people are very, very weak. And we have become a very soft and worldly because of the great blessings and the prolonged safety and the unprecedented prosperity that we have experienced over the last 60 years or so.

We have an entire generation of people today who have been raised on television and who honestly believe that every problem of life can be solved in 30 minutes or less with three commercials. We have instant coffee and microwave lunches, and we talk about megabits and terabytes and we have begun to believe that we can always have instant solutions and immediate answers to everything that life brings to us and that is simply not realistic.

There is a great benefit to not always getting what you want when you want it and how you want it. Remember when we used to teach our children that truth? Remember when we used to say that sometimes learning a lesson from disappointments was far better than being blessed all the time? Remember when the development of godly character was more valuable than a new car and when honor and duty and faithfulness were promoted as being more valuable than gold or silver?

Many Marriages fall apart today because people don't want to expend the effort or take the time that a good and strong marriage requires. It is just easier to leave and start over than it is to struggle. Far too many marriages fail today because marriage itself is not viewed as being worth the fight; or worth the struggle; or worth risking everything to uphold and honor.

It is this same logic that causes scores of people who are the recipients of liberty and freedom to not care about their country and to not feel obligated in the least to support their nation during a time of war. They honestly do not feel that *anything* is worth fighting for or worth defending or worth dying for.

And I can't tell you how many times nice and good people have told me that we should never struggle over God's Word; that it really doesn't matter what God said; that it doesn't matter what we believe or how we live- as long as we love Jesus. People have told me that obedience to Scripture is optional and that me teaching what God's Word actually says is "legalistic" or that crying out against ungodly practices and teachings is "quenching the Spirit" or being judgmental.

But, you see, people struggle with things that are *worthy* of our struggle. We honor things that we deem to be *honorable*. We fight for things because we view them to be *worth* fighting over. And we die for things that are valuable and precious and costly.

And that struggle is not always quick- our problems are not always easily fixable. Sometimes the struggle involves a long, dedicated and consistent effort on our part. But the truth is that we simply will not commit to that kind of struggle unless we highly value what we are struggling over.

And this is exactly what the Apostle John is talking about here in verse 4 when he uses the word, “overcome” rather than the word, “deliverance”. John is not talking about something that is easily arrived at or that is quickly solved. John is talking about a lifelong struggle against the lusts of the flesh; the lusts of the eyes; and the pride of life- things that are promoted and displayed everyday by a corrupt and fallen world.

You do not quickly or easily overcome these kinds of things. You cannot simply have these things cast out of you- these things of the world are things that John says here must be overcome by the believer. So the first step that we must take in overcoming the lusts and cravings and desires of this present evil is to first understand that all the loves that this world promotes; all the affections that this fallen system dominated by unregenerate Man propagates are evil- they are all sin; they are altogether corrupt; they are never good; they cannot be converted so they will never be good; they are counterproductive to your walk with God; and they are your enemies in faithfully loving and serving Jesus Christ. So, let’s look again at how John himself put by reading **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.

So, if we are to obey John in what he teaches in **1John 5:4** and put for the effort and struggle to overcome the world- we must first understand what the “world” is and to understand *why* we need to overcome it.

Worldliness is loving and following and accepting the *system* of this evil corrupt world that operates in hostile opposition to God and the

things of God. Worldliness is having a view of life that is in accord with what the lost pagan world teaches as opposed to what Gods' Word teaches. Now some will say, "*But it really doesn't matter how we view the world and what we love as long as we love God, too*". But the Bible doesn't teach that. Read again the last part of **1John 2:15**:

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

So, we can see just how serious the issue of worldliness is because the Apostle John says here that everyone who loves this world or in other words- anyone who is worldly does not have the Love of the Father in him. And that is serious- because if you don't have the Love of the Father in you- then you're not saved.

So, the question that we need to ask ourselves is this:

Can anything that we *truly* love- be bad? Can anything that we *deeply* love- be wrong? Can anything that we *sincerely* love- be sinful?

I mean, the very fact that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, love something- doesn't that indicate that there is something *lovely* about it? In other words- if something were wrong or bad or sinful- wouldn't we, as believers, simply *not* love it?

And sadly, the answer to that question is, "No." Even saved people have the capacity to love things that are wrong and bad and even sinful. And many times, we love these things a lot and some people even love them deeply.

So, John cautions us here to examine our hearts to make sure that what we love is what God loves and that we guard our hearts and that we take heed to ourselves that we do not set our affections on things that God said He hated. And this struggle ; this effort to not love the world and to not love the things that are in the world is what John is taking about when he said that believers should overcome the world.

Now what does that mean for each of us today? Well, it means that God should have no effective rivals for your affections. It means that God alone should be chief. It means that nothing should compete with our love for God. And so there are some questions that we need to ask and answer honestly if we are to overcome the world:

What are those rivals for your affections? What things in your life are in competition for your love for God? Can you find them? Can you name them?

Christian brothers and sisters, if you look honestly, you *will* find things in your life that compete with your love for God. And I suggest to you that if it is *hard* for you to find those things that actively compete with God for your affections- it isn't because they are not there- but I suggest that it is hard for you to find those things that are in competition for your love because those things have already deceived you and blinded you so that you cannot see them easily. Beloved, when we look inwardly, we must remember the counsel of our Lord when He spoke to those lukewarm souls in **The Revelation 3:17**:

Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

So, if God would be merciful to us and open our eyes so that we can see and know and identify those things which *are* rivals in our lives for our affections which rightly belong only to God- we would be so blessed. So, I encourage all of us who sincerely desire to love and serve Jesus to earnestly pray that God will open our hearts and minds and eyes so that we may see and fix our eyes on that competition- that we may learn the name of that rival.

Because we must understand, brothers and sisters, that one of sin's main attributes is that it is sly; it is stealthy; it is hard to see- so that the one who sins does not see it as being sin. So, for a Christian to live his life never asking to see his own sin is to arrogantly walk through this life deceived and wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

I mean can any of us say that sin has ever walked up to us and presented his card to identify himself as sin, saying, "*I am sin, and I have come to deceive you and to get you to disobey God and to live in a terribly self-destructing way*"?

No, Satan didn't approach Eve like that in the Garden and he has continued to be more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. No, if we would be honest with ourselves, we usually

see our sin only through our mistakes and our agonies and our solitude and our pain and in our sufferings.

So, for believers to pray and ask God to open our eyes and to reveal our sin to us- *before* we fall into it- before our sorrow- that would be a great blessing and a great help in our walk with God. Now take heed as you pray this way because God may well answer that prayer- so make your mind up ahead of time that whatever God Sovereignly brings into your life to use to open your eyes- that you see that as a blessing and not a curse.

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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