

Sunday, November 13, 2022

“Whoever Has the Son Has Life”

(Series: Life, Light and Love; a series on 1 John)

(Message Nine)

(1 John 5:1-12)

1 John 5:1-12 – NIV

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4** for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6 This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7** For there are three that testify: **8** the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. **9** We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. **10** Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. **11** And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The Message

5 ¹⁻³ Every person who believes that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah, is God-born. If we love the One who conceives the child, we'll surely love the child who was conceived. The reality test on whether or not we love God's children is this: Do we love God? Do we keep his commands? The proof that we love God comes when we keep his commandments, and they are not at all troublesome.

⁴⁻⁵ Every God-born person conquers the world's ways. The conquering power that brings the world to its knees is our faith. The person who wins out over the world's ways is simply the one who believes Jesus is the Son of God.

⁶⁻⁸ Jesus—the Divine Christ! He experienced a life-giving birth and a death-killing death. Not only birth from the womb, but baptismal birth of his ministry and sacrificial death. And all the while the Spirit is confirming the truth, the reality of God's presence at Jesus' baptism and crucifixion, bringing those occasions alive for us. A triple testimony: the Spirit, the Baptism, the Crucifixion. And the three in perfect agreement.

⁹⁻¹⁰ If we take human testimony at face value, how much more should we be reassured when God gives testimony as he does here, testifying concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God inwardly confirms God's testimony. Whoever refuses to believe in effect calls God a liar, refusing to believe God's own testimony regarding his Son.

¹¹⁻¹² This is the testimony in essence: God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son. So, whoever has the Son, has life; whoever rejects the Son, rejects life.

People of God,

We are going to be turning our attention to 1 John 5 in a few moments. But, before we do, tell me...

“What are your “must have’s” in life?

For example, if you had to make a list of 5 things that you could not live without, what things would they be? What things would make your list?

Reflect with me for a moment about all the different things we have and use in life that seek to help improve our lives; things that make living our lives easier. Think about all the different things that are designed to help us overcome the difficulties, hardships, and challenges of living life.

Now, as you are reflecting, begin to make a top 5 list. If you could only choose 5 things; if you had to make a list of 5 things that you could not live without, what would they be?

Those of you who are on sitting on the main aisle will notice a stack of papers and pencils along the arm rest. Please pass them down the row to those sitting next to you. For the next few minutes, use this card and the pencils to make a list of your top 5 must haves. Take a few minutes and fill out your card.

What types of things would make your “MUST HAVE” list?

In our text in 1 John 5 for today, the apostle John writes to us about a “MUST HAVE.”

In fact, the thing that John writes about in these verses is so important that it's a matter of life and death. If we have it, John says, we have life. If we don't have it, John says, we do not have life.

Annika is going to read 1 John 5:1-12 for us this morning.

As she reads these verses for us, and as we listen to what John says to us this morning, pay attention to words and phrases in these verses that the Spirit of God brings to your heart and mind in this section of 1 John 5.

5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6 This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the[a] Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9 We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

10 Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:1-12

Friends, **what caught your attention** in these verses this morning as you listened to them being read and as you followed along?

One of the things that John said in verse 5 jumped out at me. John says:

⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? **Only the one who** believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

John makes an exclusive truth claim here.

What is that TRUTH claim = Only the one...; Only the person who believes in Jesus overcomes the world.

The word **overcome is this** verse is the Greek word... νικάω

3528 *nikáō* (from [3529](#) /*nikē*, "victory") – properly, *conquer* (overcome); " 'to carry off the victory, come off victorious.' The verb implies a battle"

The word ni-ka-o mean to conquer, to be victorious, to carry off the victory.

Consider the South Christian football team so far this season. Every time they played a game this season, they carried off the victory...they were victorious. So far, in each contest, they scored more points than their opponents.

John says, when it comes to overcoming the world, **ONLY the person** who believes in Jesus will overcome. Only the person who believes in Jesu will be able to conquer. Only the person who believes in Jesus is able to be victorious over the world. Not everyone will overcome the world. Only the ones who believes in Jesus will overcome.

When John talks about the world here, what is John referring to?

The word world John uses here is the word cosmos. This word cosmos/world is what my mom would call a multi meaning word. The word cosmos can mean a wide variety of different things depending on the context...

- Ornament, decoration; the arrangement of the stars, 'the heavenly hosts,' as the ornament of the heavens,
- The world / universe.
- The earth
- The earth with its inhabitants:
- The ungodly multitude: the whole mass of people alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ
- Worldly affairs; the aggregate (or collective) of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God, and are obstacles to the cause of Christ

This last meaning of the word “world” is what John is talking about here in 1 John 5.

In 1 John 5, when John is talking about the world, he is talking about “... the incentives to sin proceeding from worldly riches, advantages, and pleasures.”

John says if we want to be victorious over the hollow, frail, and fleeting and empty pleasures and riches and desires the world offers to us, desires that seduce us away from God and the cause of Christ, there is only one way that you and I can achieve this victory.

John says, “Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world.”

Some of us here this morning may be familiar with a fairly good size corporation whose name utilizes the same Greek word that John uses here in 1 John 5.

I bet if I put the corporation’s logo up on the screen some of you may recognize it.

Take a look. Anybody recognize this logo?

Does anyone here this morning know Nike’s tagline?

When it comes to your physical fitness, what does Nike want you to do? They want you to just do it.

And, there is some truth this. If you and I train and exercise consistently, if we eat right, if we get enough sleep, and last but not least, if we buy the right shoes...there are a lot of things that we can do to **get faster, jump higher, or run further**. There are a quite a few things that we can just do to improve our physical ability and performance.

But, when it comes to overcoming the world, when it comes to overcoming the sin within and around us, John reminds us, this not something that you or I can just do. In fact, it is something that we can't do on our own. We need help in overcoming the sin within and around us. And us trying harder is not going to just do it. We cannot achieve victory over world by just doing it.

John says, **Only the one who** believes that Jesus is the Son of God is able to overcome the world.

If we want to overcome the world, it is not something that we have to do, but rather, it is something that we need to believe and receive. Overcoming is not based on our efforts or skill or talent John says. No, overcoming is based on our ability and willingness to believe and receive what Jesus, the Son of God, has done for us.

So how do we know that Jesus able to overcome the world? What is it about Jesus that enable him to overcome? Why can he do for us what we can't do on our own? Why is Jesus the only one who can overcome the world?

John goes on to tell us more about why Jesus is the only one who is able to overcome. Listen again to what John says:

⁶This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the^[a] Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

According to the Old Testament and also rabbinic tradition, the truth of something was to be determined by 2 or 3 different witnesses. Listen to what Deuteronomy 19:15 says:

¹⁵ One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

For this reason, in these verses, John draws our attention to the three things that give supporting evidence why Jesus is able to overcome the world: the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

When you hear these three things about Jesus, these three pieces of supporting evidence...the Spirit, the water, and the blood...what comes to your heart and mind?

Gary Burge, the New Testament professor at Calvin Seminary, in his commentary on these verses reminds us that the majority of interpreters see "...water and blood as summing up the totality of Jesus incarnational ministry on earth. Jesus' baptism (water) and crucifixion (blood) frame Jesus' ministry: Jesus was declared the Son of God in the Jordan (John 1:34), and he obtained even more power and authority through his glorification at Golgotha (on the cross)."

Pastor Doug has reminded us throughout our journey through 1 John that John is writing this letter to the church in part, to refute heresies that have made their way into the church. Heresies that downplay the incarnation of Jesus and the salvation he came to bring. Some heresies were teaching the Jesus was just an ordinary man who became the "...heavenly Christ at his baptism, but then departed before his crucifixion." (Burge)

But John is saying to us here. No way. Jesus was always the Son of God. The whole time. Are any of you familiar with how John begins his gospel? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning." From conception, throughout his life and ministry, during his death, and his resurrection, Jesus has always been the Son of God. The Spirit, the water, and the blood all testify to this truth about who Jesus is, why he came, and what he offers to all who believe in him!

Water = Purification, cleansing, washing away our sin

Blood = Sacrifice, atonement, for our sin

Spirit = confirms, points back, again and again that Jesus is the Son of God

John says, Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is able to overcome the world.

So, what does this all mean for you and me? What does this mean as John Stott writes in his commentary for all of us who are affected by the world, "...the collective of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God, and are obstacles to the cause of Christ? What does this mean for finding and acquiring eternal life, that is, "...a life of fellowship with God through Christ?" (Stott)

Stott in his commentary on these verses reminds us that three things result from the truth that Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is able to overcome the world.

First, overcoming the world and receiving eternal life is not "...a prize which we have earned or could earn, but (rather) an undeserved gift."

So much of the world in which you and I live teaches us that victory and overcoming is up to us. It is dependent upon what we do or don't do. It's up to us. However, when it comes to eternal life, you and I can't "Just do it" and get eternal life. When it comes to overcoming sin, you and I can't "Just do it" and overcome the sin within and around us. We can't earn our way to eternal life, that is, a life of fellowship with God. To overcome the sin within and around us, in order to have a life of fellowship with God, we need to believe and receive Jesus, the Son of God, God's gift of himself for you and for me.

Second, eternal life and victory over sin is found in Christ...and Christ alone.

So many things in our world promise to make our lives easier, better, more fulfilling, with less turmoil and strife. There are all kinds of things that are making the claim that we must have them in order to have life to the full. This was true in John's day. And its true in our day as well.

John, however, wants to challenge the “must have” claims the world offers to us day in and day out. John reminds us that only the person who believes in Jesus is the Son of God can overcome the world. This means therefore that we better make believing and receiving who Jesus is and what Jesus has done our #1 must have in life.

If as John says in verse 11 that “¹¹ ...God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

If as John says in verse 12 that... “¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Then...this means that we better make for absolute certain that we have the Son of God. We better make sure that we believe and receive who Jesus, the Son of God, is and what Jesus has done for us because eternal life can be found nowhere else. Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son does not have life.

Finally, this gift of life in Christ, eternal life, is a present possession.

Overcoming the world and receiving eternal life is not some future thing that we have to wait for someday. It is available to us today, right here right now. Eternal life, a life of fellowship with God, is a gift from God that we can receive through Jesus Christ today. Just like the other things we put on our must have lists, eternal life, a life of fellowship with God is available to us right here right now!

Friends,

Do we believe who John says Jesus is? Have we received the washing of, the salvation from, the atonement for, and the grace and forgiveness from sin that Jesus offers to you and to me? Are you believing who Jesus says Jesus is?

If not, today is the day! Now is the time!

CONCLUSION

Throughout his letter, John stresses the centrality and the importance of Christ again and again and again.

When we examine our hearts and lives, do they also stress the centrality and importance of Christ again and again and again?

It is easy for us to look like we are prioritizing Jesus when we are not.

The costs of following Jesus are minimal in our society. So, how do we know when we are minimizing what Jesus has to offer and/or we are idolizing are turning to the things of this world instead?

Jesus came that we might have eternal life, a life of fellowship with and for God.

But in order for us to receive this life, in order to live this life, Jesus has to remain at the top of our “must have” list.

When it comes to our must have lists...

As Jesus goes down, other things go up. As Jesus goes up, other things go down.

John says, “Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is able to overcome the world.

¹¹God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Before we pray together, what is the Spirit of God is saying to you this morning through these verses? What are you taking away from these verses? How are these verses shaping and forming you as a disciple of Jesus today?

Spend a moment discerning what the Spirit of God is saying to you today. After awhile I will close in prayer.

Prayer:

Father in Heaven, in your word to us this week, we are reminded that you give us eternal life, and this life in your Son, Jesus. If we have Jesus, the Son of God, we have life. If we do not have Jesus, we do not have life. Spirit of God, help us to believe and receive the gift of eternal life the only Jesus offers. Help us to keep Jesus and his teaching and instruction and will for our lives at the top of our “must have” list. In Jesus’ name – our life, light, and love – we pray. Amen.

© Rev. Henry Schenkel
Covenant CRC
7171 Willard Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49548