

**THE VICTORY OF FAITH
OR
FAITH IS THE VICTORY
OR
THE VICTORIOUS LIFE**

1Jno.5:4,5

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Ch.4 closed with, and Ch.5 opened with, a statement of the two-foldness of love, declaring that love of our brethren in Christ, those begotten of God, must follow our love of God; and is, in fact, commanded; that claiming love of God while hating one's brother brands one as a liar.
2. Once again John identifies those who are true believers, true servants of God, truly separated from the world though living in the world, true over-comers of the world of Satan and false doctrines.
 - a. Of course, we realize that practically all people claim to be believers in God. Few people, by comparison, claim to be out-and-out atheistic or agnostic.
 - b. Perhaps most people claim to believe in God or in a being they call God or Deity or a Supreme Being, and claim to have some idea in their minds about what God is like.
3. But note how diverse or how widely people's beliefs and ideas about God are.
 - a. Quickly think across the world at the different beliefs and ideas of God; for instance: the beliefs and ideas of the Muslims; the Buddhists; the Hindus; the Jews; the Christians, and so on.
 - b. In reality, there are almost as many ideas about God or what people think of as the Supreme Being as there are people on earth; for every person has his own mind, and within his own mind his own idea of God and who and how one is acceptable to God.
 - c. There is even many diverse ideas among professed Bible believers!
4. This very fact raises a critical question: Who is right? Whose belief and idea of God is correct? Who is really acceptable to God? Who is really begotten of God and has the faith that overcomes the world?
5. One thing for sure: If God really exists, then it is of the utmost importance that we be correct in what we believe and think about him.

For the day is coming when we shall be called on the give account – the day of ultimate victory and or damnable defeat.

6. In contemplating victory, who doesn't like to be victorious? to be the victor? no one desires to be the loser!
7. The efforts one will put into the battle to gain the victory depend on how important that one deems the victory to be. This principle holds true whether it is a sporting event or the game of life itself.
8. But when one acknowledges there is a God, a God who sent his Son Jesus Christ that we might live, and that there is an evil one, known as Satan, or the Devil, who seeks to destroy us spiritually, against whom we must do battle to gain the victory, it becomes all-important to be successful in gaining that victory.
9. In fact, our text makes it clear that these are the only ones who can gain this spiritual victory and that they have only one means or one power by which to gain that victory.
10. Now let us consider who they are and how they gain that victory. With our attention drawn to the fact that John here has shifted his emphasis from love to faith – “our faith.”
11. Our text reveals to us who has the power to overcome, to win the victory, and what that power is. It presents the victorious life in three aspects:
 - a. In its origin.
 - b. In its conflict with the world.
 - c. In its conquest and victory by the power of faith.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE VICTORIOUS LIFE IS PRESENTED IN ITS ORIGIN, V.4: “For whatsoever is born (begotten) of God overcometh the world...”

1. The words of V.4 suggest a reason why keeping the commandments of God and thereby exercising love are not grievous as declared in V.3.
 - a. It is because the new life imparted to those begotten of God (2Cor.5:17,18) carries with it a new desire to do his will and the power to give effect to that desire.
 - b. It is because there is a sufficient motive and dynamic to obedience.
2. “Whatsoever” is neuter in gender, the comprehensive, categorical neuter, expressing the universality of the principle, and refers to person, those persons bon of God.” –Wuest’s Word Studies.

3. Here John might have emphasized love as this motive. He might have said that love longs to obey, which, of course, it does; he might have said that where love is, obedience is a delight rather than a burden; that also is true.
4. Instead of that, he comes back to faith and the new birth, or being begotten of God: "Everything that has been begotten of God overcometh the world."
 - a. By saying "whosoever" or "everything" he emphasized strongly the universality of the idea.
5. "'Born' or 'begotten of God' is again perfect in tense, referring to a past completed act or regeneration with the present result that that regenerated individual has been made a partaker of the divine nature and as such is a child of God, or he stands born again; he stands in that acceptable relationship with God." – Wuest's Word Studies
 - a. See Jno.3:3-6; Tit.3:4-7; 2Pet.1:4.
6. Therefore, it speaks of the true N.T. Christian, the one who has been "born anew", or "begotten of God," and by faith stands begotten of God. See Jas.1:18; 1Pet.1:22-25.
7. Moreover, the victorious life, as to its origin involves:
 - a. A continuous, acceptable participation in this holy relationship with God, this spiritual fellowship with God, as one of his children in Jesus Christ. Cf. 1Jno.1:6; 2:29; 3:8-10; 4:7; Gal.3:26,27.
 - b. As a consequence, the title to a glorious inheritance from God, and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom.8:16,17; Heb.1:1,2; 1Pet.1:3-5; 2Tim.4:6-8.
8. Since our text is speaking of those who are born or begotten of God, perhaps it would be in order to briefly examine N.T. teaching on the subject of the new birth and how one is born again or begotten of God. The N.T. teaches:
 - a. The necessity of being born again or anew, which, of course, is a spiritual birth, Jno.3:3-7.
 - b. That to be saved, to have one's soul purified, or to have remission of sins, is to be "born (or begotten again) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," "in obeying the truth through the Spirit," "and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you," 1Pet.1:22-25; Cf. Jas.1:18 which also teaches that God begets with the word of truth.

- c. That in order to have the remission of one's sins, or to be saved from past sins, the believer must both repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, Ac.2:36-38; Cf. Mk.16:15,16.
 - d. That when one by faith and repentance is baptized for the remission of sins he becomes a child of God, and is baptized into Christ, and into the body of Christ, which is his church, where he is said to be "a new creature," Gal.3:26,27; 2Cor.5:17; 1Cor.12:12,13; Eph.1:22,23; Ac.2:47; 1Tim.3:14,15.
9. Furthermore, the Epistle of 1Jno. offers the following as evidence or proof that one is begotten of God and stands begotten of God, acceptable to God, in that spiritual relationship.
- a. The believer in Jesus Christ that doeth (habitually practices) righteousness, 1Jno.2:29.
 - b. The believer in Jesus Christ who does not practice sin, 1Jno.3:9; 5:18.
 - c. The believer in Jesus Christ who loves both God and those begotten of God, or brethren in Christ, 1Jno.5:1; 4:7-11,20,21.
 - d. The believer in Jesus Christ who is continually overcoming the world by his faith, 1Jno.5:4,5.
 - e. The believer in Jesus Christ who keepeth himself so that the wicked one toucheth him not, 1Jno.5:18.

B. THE VICTORIOUS LIFE IS PRESENTED IN ITS CONFLICT WITH THE WORLD.

1. Our text speaks of victory in overcoming the world.
 - a. Overcoming is suggestive of struggle.
 - b. Victory implies combat.
2. "Overcometh" is NIKAO, meaning, "to carry off the victory, come off victorious."
 - a. This verb implies a battle.
 - b. Hence the forces of the world-system of evil, led by Satan, the god of this world, with which the saint is surrounded, are engaged in a battle against the saint, carrying on an incessant warfare from without and within, the purpose of which is to destroy our faith and rob us of our inheritance in Christ. Cf. Eph.6:10-18; Col.2:8.
 - c. Also, the verb is in the perfect tense, "is constantly overcoming the world," is the idea.

- (1) It is the habit of life with the one who stands begotten of God to constantly and continually gain the victory over the world.
 - (2) “He is overcoming the world,” or “is conquering,” because the fight, or the conflict, or the conquest, is in progress.
 - (3) There is a constant victory only because there is a continuous struggle.
 - (4) According to and in harmony with 1Jno.3:9, the one born of or begotten of God continues to overcome because “his seed” (the word of God, Lk.8:11), continues to abide in him.
3. “World,” of course, means anything and everything that is opposed to God and his righteousness.
 - a. This may be the world of current thought inimical, hostile, or adverse to the doctrine of Christ which was communicated by the apostles of Christ “from the beginning,” Ac.11:15; 1Jno.1:1-3; Lk.1:1-3.
 - b. It may be the world with its lustful attractiveness and pretentiousness against which John puts his readers on guard, 1Jno.2:15-17.
 - c. It may be the world in open hostility meting out to the disciples of Christ the same kind of treatment as was meted out to their Master Jesus Christ. Cf. Jno.16:13; 1Pet.4:12-16; Ac.14:21,22.
 4. There is conflict; but the conflict issues in the victory “for whatsoever is begotten of God.”
 - a. He is not overcome of evil, but overcometh evil.
 - b. He does not yield or “give place” to the devil, but resists the devil by continually submitting to and drawing nigh to God, Jas.4:7,8; 1Pet.5:6-9.
 - c. He is not overcome or led astray by the love of the world and the things that are in the world, but rises above them, always holding to the things that are of the Father, 1Jno.2:15-17; 2Tim.4:10.
 5. Our conflict also involves a continuous struggle between our flesh and spirit and with Satan who is “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph.2:2), and “the god of this world” (2Cor.4:4), Cf. Eph.6:10-18; Gal.5:16,17; Rom.8:4-6,12,13.
 6. John constantly teaches that the Christian’s work in this earthly state of his existence is to conquer “the world”; in other words, to strive to fight successfully against the view of life which ignores God and yields to Satan.

7. The world's force is seen especially in "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," 1Jno.2:16.
8. It is the battle of truth against error, of light against darkness, of love against hate, and of the obedience of faith against unbelief and disobedience.

C. THE VICTORIOUS LIFE IS PRESENTED IN ITS CONQUEST AND VICTORY BY THE POWER OF FAITH, Vv.4,5.

1. Both Vv.4,5 identify the power by which those begotten of God are successful in gaining the victory over the world.
 - a. It is "even our faith," V.4. That's the source of our victory. Cf. 1Pet.1:5.
 - b. It is faith "that Jesus is the Son of God," V.5 – "our faith" is embraced in the confession.
 - c. This tells us who the true believer is and what he believes that enables him to overcome and gain the victory.
 - d. Faith recognizes its dependence upon God and Christ.
 - e. Faith does not magnify self; it magnifies both God and Christ.
 - f. By faith the Christian submits to God but resists the devil, Jas.4:7.
 - g. The believer overcomes the world and the devil only by the power of God, by drawing nigh to God so that he can draw nigh to the believer.
2. Now take careful notice of the object of this faith: "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God," V.5. Cf. Jude 3; Gal.1:23; 2:16; 1Jno.1:3; 2:22-25; 3:23; 4:2-5,14,15; 5:1,10-13; 2Jno.7.
 - a. Not that Jesus is "a son of God" as are the "begotten ones" who are "born again"; but that he is "the Son of God," "the only begotten Son of God," Jno.1:18; 1Jno.4:9.
 - b. Here again, John emphasizes the absolute necessity of believing both the **humanity** (Jesus) and the **deity** (the Son of God, the Messiah).
 - (1) For he was truly human while on earth (Jno.7:46; Rom.1:3; Heb.2:14-17); and he was and is man (1Tim.2:5; 1Cor.15:47; Heb.7:24).
 - (2) Also, he is God or Deity; God in the flesh while on earth (Mt.1:21-23); he is God and man in a glorified body while in heaven at the right hand of God (Phil.3:20,21; 1Tim.2:5; 1Jno.3:2).

- c. The lying antichrists who denied that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and or a form of Modernism's Unitarianism, was clearly one of the most wide-spread heresies of the early church; for John over and over again in 1Jno. wrote against it.
3. But don't overlook the true nature of this faith.
- a. Once again, this faith is not the barren acceptance of fact; or mere mental assent or intellectual acceptance of some theological proposition; it's an obedient faith.
 - b. The faith that makes one a child of God and that maintains that relationship with God is never simply a belief of something about Jesus.
 - c. It's a faith that accepts all the truth about him, his pre-existence, his Incarnation, his personal ministry on earth, his death, burial and resurrection for our justification, his ascension to heaven, his present reign from the right hand of God in heaven, his word given to him by the Father, taught and bound on earth by his chosen apostles and by which we shall be judged; for he is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, Heb.5:8,9; Jno.12:48-50; Mt.7:21-23; Lk.6:46.
4. Notice also the exclusiveness of this faith as the means of victory over the world, Vv.4,5.
- a. All those, but only those, who accept and openly confess this proposition (with all it implies and includes) overcome the world, by refusing to participate in its sinful practices, by escaping its guilt, its pollution, its power, and its evil influence, and by habitually practicing righteousness, 1Jno.2:29.
 - b. Those who are not in Christ by reason of having been by faith baptized into him (Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26,27), are still in the world and of the world; hence they can't ever fight against it, much less overcome it.
 - c. Apart from the light of the truth of God's word, men's vision is blinded by things seen and temporal (Ac.26:15-18).
 - d. Apart from a life in Christ, their pursuits are entirely of the earth, earthly.
 - e. Apart from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, their aims are for self and this world – they turn “ever one to his own way,” Isa.53:6.
 - f. Hence, the world, with Satan as its god, making them first his tools, then his slaves, and finally his eternally doomed victims, is conquered by Satan through unbelief and disobedience.

5. Jesus as the Son of God has himself overcome the world. Jno.16:33 contains some of Jesus' last words to his chosen apostles: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
 - a. By his personal ministry of faith and obedience to his Father, he grappled with and put to shame its sinful elements – that of self-rule and opposition to God.
 - b. By his emptying himself and his obedience unto death, he overcame, Phil.2:5-11; Heb.2:9; Rom.8:3.
 - c. He overcame by his conflict with and conquest of the evil one, Heb.2:14.
 - d. By his atoning sacrificial death the god of this world was cast out, Jno.12:30,31.
 - e. By his intercession at the right hand of God in heaven he secures a like victory for all his faithful followers, Rom.8:31-39; 1Cor.15:57; 1Jno.5:4,7.
6. Contrast or compare the worldly idea of overcoming the world.
 - a. "We read in history of one in departed days who fancied that he had accomplished the hard task of 'overcoming the world.' We read how he carried his victorious arms over every region of the then known earth – how he subjugated king after king, and brought nation after nation beneath his sway, and then fancied that he had 'overcome the world.' We read how he felt it sad to think that his heroic task was done, and how he wept that there were no more worlds to conquer. Oh, far astray, for mistaken! There was one world to conquer yet, to which that conqueror was a slave – a world to overcome for which the arms of Alexander were of no avail. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'" – A.K.H.B., Preacher's Homiletic Commentary: 1John, 332.
7. Also, in the book of Revelation every kind of incentive is held forth to the hard-pressed disciples to maintain their faith and thereby prove themselves "overcomers."
 - a. Thus, they are promised victory through faith in Jesus Christ, Rev.2:7; 2:11; 2:25,26; 3:21.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Outline summary of faith and its effects, 1Jno.5:1-5.
 - A. In regard to fellow-believers, Vv.1-3.

1. The subject of this faith – Jesus as the Christ, 1a.
 2. This faith is the evidence of the existence of the new birth, 1b.
 3. The effect of this faith – love, Vv.1c-3.
 - a. Love to God, 1c.
 - b. Love to God’s children, 1d.
 - c. The assurance of loving the brethren, 2.
 - d. The ground of the assurance that we love God, 3a.
 - (1) One’s love to God is assured by obedience to his commandments.
 - e. The character of his commandments, 3b.
- 4a.
- B. In regard to the world, Vv.4,5.
 1. The person who overcomes identified; the one begotten of God,
 2. What he overcomes – the world, 4b.
 3. The person who overcomes further identified; the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, v.5.
2. Three matters are suggested here for pungent, piercing, biting and powerful application, which should arrest our attention and secure our submission.
 - a. 1st, These things being so, then whoever goes “out from us” (1Jno.2:18-23) or casts away the doctrine that Jesus is the Son of God, and all that that includes of the believer, leaves himself helpless in life’s struggle with the world and the devil as its god.
 - b. 2nd, It is only by a living, obedient faith, and spiritual service, in Jesus Christ that we have the power to carry on the struggle and gain the victory.
 - (1) A mere mental adhesion to the doctrine only will not suffice.
 - c. 3rd, We see the purpose intended to be secured by the faith of Christ, and by our faith in him as the Son of God, Viz., the victory over all that is false and wrong, which results in eternal destruction in a devil’s hell.
 3. In the next part of the chapter John expands the subject of the basis upon which faith rests; namely, some of the great truths relating to the Person of Christ and the witnesses given concerning him.