

Love First: 1 John

Aug 5: “The Victory that Overcomes the World” I John 5:1-12

Intro: You can overcome that problem or difficulty, but you have to trust God to do it.

Watching the Olympians reminds us that life is full of obstacles and challenges. Out there on the track and in the water those obstacles are very clear. Victory or defeat is experienced in just a few seconds. The answers are easy. That is why we love sports so much and they teach us so much. They are life illustrated and simplified for easy learning.

You are in a contest that is far more difficult than the swimming or gymnastic competition. Those Olympians may prevail on the bars or the track and yet fail in a contest much more challenging. It is the race of life to which I refer, and in this race the world is filled with winners and losers.

You can have victory over the forces that oppose you. You can be a winner in this race of life. And today John will describe for us the key ingredient that makes you an Overcomer.

I. Overcome the World: *Everyone born of God overcomes the world* (I John 5:4). The world: Is the world getting you down? Is it wearing on you, weighing on your heart?

A. John uses the word “world” more than any other writer in the New Testament—a lot more: 17 times in this letter, 7 times in the Book of Revelation, and 59 times in the Gospel of John. His most famous use of the word is probably John 3:16. Say it with me: **(Put KJV of John 3:16 on screens).**

B. The nuances of this word may be observed in a sentence in the Gospel of John: ***He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not (John 1:10).***

1. “In the world” we understand because the world is a place that you can be in.

2. “the world was made by him” we understand as the creation spoken into being by God.

3. “the world knew him not” throws us a little. Earth as a planet does not know anything. Earth as a place does not know people. So the words “world knew him not” clue us in to a usage of this term that is common with John as well as the other New Testament writers. “World” sometimes refers to the “fallen world system” or the “lost population of the world.” John expands upon this agnosticism of the world in 1 John 3:1 by telling us that the world does not know us as Christians because it did not know Christ himself when he came.

C. One Greek lexicon lists eight different definitions of the word *kosmos*. Some commentators claim there are 10 distinct ways that this word is used in the Bible.

D. Probably the clearest description of the “world” in this letter is in **I John 2:14-17:** *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

1. The world is about sinful men and their cravings—all kinds of wicked appetites.

2. The world is about lust—the excessive desire for what is forbidden.

3. The world is about boasting. Do you know this world?

4. The world and its desires pass away—are temporary. If you were to get caught up in the world, you would be wasting your life because it’s all going to be over very soon.

E. There is a world of difference between the various uses of the word “world.” But they usually become clear in their context. We know here that John is talking about the fallen, sinful world that is under the control of the Evil One and must be OVERCOME. You know this world, do you not? It is external to you—out there in society and out there in the temptations of the devil. And it is internal to you—right there in your mind and heart in the “desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Ephesians 2:3).

II. Believe in Jesus: *everyone who loves the father loves his child as well* (1 John 5:1).

A. John connects love and faith continually. Both are to be directed toward Jesus as the Son of God.

B. John also connects love and obedience: *This is love for God: to obey his commands* (1 John 5:2).

1. We have made an artificial disconnect between believing and doing. When we discount either faith or obedience we do violence to the truth of God’s word.

2. Loving God means obeying him because obedience recognizes God for who he is—Lord over all. Disobedience is disrespecting God and refusing to give him the honor he deserves. God is not another human

being. He is alone in Majesty, Power, and Love. If we say we love God but live a life of disobedience, whatever love we may have is being directed toward a false god, a god of our own imagination, an idol, rather than the Creator God. To love him is to trust and obey. God must be loved as he is and for whom he is: the Almighty and All-Loving One.

C. Faith in Jesus is our victory: *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith* (I John 5:4).

1. Lust and pride (boasting) are evidence of a SELF-CENTERED life. That life is sinful from the start because it does not acknowledge God as God.

2. Faith in Christ means becoming a Jesus-centered person. You change the focus of your life from who you are to who he is, from what you want to what he wants. You love him and trust him and obey him as the highest authority and greatest good in this life and the next.

III. Believe God's Testimony: *Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son* (I John 5:11).

A. God has taken the stand. He has given his testimony (*marturia* from the noun *martys*, "a witness"). The testimony is three-pronged: Spirit, water, and blood.

1. The Incarnation is God's testimony. It is attested by the water and blood that poured from the side of the Savior when he was pierced on the cross, as John alone records.

a. The human body is 90 percent water as was the body of Jesus. He was carried in the amniotic fluid of the Virgin Mary. He was born into this world in a rush of water.

b. The blood that poured from the wounds of Jesus attest to his true humanity, his real presence among us. We remember the humanity of Jesus each time we come to the Lord's Table.

2. The Cleansing from Sin is God's testimony. John declares that Jesus died "for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

a. Water is a cleansing agent. The OT priests purified themselves with water. Jesus washed the disciples' feet. And Jesus instituted baptism by water as a symbol and sign of true faith.

b. Blood is also a cleansing agent. The instruments of the altar in the OT were cleansed with blood. In fact the writer of the Book of Hebrews said, *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (Hebrews 9:22).

c. Humans have no greater need than the cleansing from sin. Our SIN PROBLEM is so enormous that it overshadows everything else in our lives. God bears witness that he has acted to rescue us from our sin through his Son. There is no other way.

3. The Holy Spirit is God's Testimony. He is now bearing witness in the world and among us that Jesus is God's Son. In fact, he is bearing witness to that fact this very moment in this very place. I am a witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. I am God's ambassador for the truth which is in Jesus. Every time I stand on this platform with my bible in my hand I am praying that the Spirit will bear witness again as I speak.

B. Jesus Christ called people to faith in himself.

1. Jesus said, "You believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1). He was seeking to TRANSFER and EXTEND their trust in God Almighty to trust and belief in him as God's Son.

2. Why was he seeking their faith? Because: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the only way to the Father. There is no other.

3. This is not a human condition or decision but a divine one. God decided that Jesus his One and Only Son would be the way, the truth and the life. No human can change that.

4. God has reached out to humanity through his Son whom he sent to die as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Loving God means loving Jesus. Trusting God means trusting Jesus. That is why *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life* (I John 5:12).

Conclusion: Do you have the Son?