

FIRST JOHN PART 10 "More Than Conquerors"

1 John 5:1 thru 12

We're nearing the end of our study in First John. This morning we'll be in Ch 5 looking at v 1-12. My goal is to finish up this study today and next week. That will take us thru February. Then in March we'll have one lesson in Second John, one lesson in Third John, Cindy will teach on March 20th , and then we'll have one lesson in Jude. That will take us thru March. Then we'll figure out what we will do in April.

So First John. The main purpose statement for this letter is given in v 13 of Ch 5. READ it and point out that John is writing to Christians.

John wants to provide his readers – that original audience and by extension us (this letter has been preserved by God and passed down to us today) – John wants to give us believers the assurance of our salvation. He wants those of us who have placed our faith in Jesus Christ to know for certain that we have eternal life. That's a good thing to have isn't it? There is so much uncertainty in life, but our salvation, our eternal destiny should not be one of them. We must have that nailed down! So that's John primary reason for writing this letter. It must have been an area that a lot of Christians even in John's day were struggling with. So John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, addresses it.

During our study we have noticed several sub-themes – that our joy may be complete; that we may not sin; and that we would know the truth and not be deceived by all those false voices out there. These sub-themes are important and we have talked about them before. They are very practical and they add to the richness of this letter.

In the first 4 chapters John has identified several traits, marks, evidences, characteristics of a true Christian. "This," John says "is what a true believer in Jesus Christ does." By contrast unbelievers don't do these things. John summarizes what these are again for us are at the beginning of Chapter 5. READ 1 John 5:1-3

The first question on your sheet asks you what these 3 characteristics are, given in v 1-3. Believes, Loves and Obeys

A true Christian BELIEVES... v 1 "that Jesus is the Christ" (the Messiah promised in the O.T., the One the Jews waited for all that time, Jesus is HIM); v 5 "that Jesus is the Son of God" (He's equal with God, He IS God, He's the second person of the Trinity). So while it is true that we need to believe in Jesus, we need to believe the right things about Him – that He IS the Messiah and He IS the Son of God. One of the tests of a false teacher is that they deny these two essential truths about Jesus.

A true Christian LOVES... v 1 "loves the Father" speaking of God the Father; v 1 "loves whoever has been born of Him," born of God, we love other Christians – our brothers and sisters in Christ; v 2 "loves the children of God," we love our fellow believers; we love each other.

A true Christian OBEYS... v 2 we "obey His commandments"; v 3 "we keep His commandments." V 3 adds, "His commandments are not burdensome." That is an interesting statement. What John means is that we believers obey God out of our love for Him. Jesus said "if you love Me you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). If I love someone deeply and they tell me that they want me to do something, I'll gladly and eagerly do it – not out of obligation, but out of love. It won't be a burden. It won't be drudgery. It will be something that I want to do. That's the idea.

So then, bottom line, belief, love and obedience go hand in hand. They are inter-related. You can't separate them. John makes it clear in this letter that we can't say we believe but then not love or obey.

Get class to give the answers they

We call ourselves "Christians." In the N.T. Christians are referred to by a lot of different names. There are many adjectives and analogies used for believers. Here I've shown just a few. They describe various wonderful aspects of our salvation, of our relationship with Christ. In v 4-5 John introduces another one for us.

READ 1 John 5:4-5

John says three times that a Christian, one who has been born of God – “overcomes the world.” Almost every translation states it this way. The NLT says defeats, wins. But all the other versions say overcomes. “Overcomes the world...” By “world” John means the evil world system that is opposed to God; that is full of pride, greed, self and places a priority on pleasure. He has defined it before (2:16) as “the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life.” Thru Christ, we believers have overcome ALL of that. So then, v 4 says we have victory over this evil world by our faith (in Christ).

As I prepared this lesson I was reminded of where I had heard the term “overcomes” before. It sounded familiar. It was in another of John’s writings, the Book of Revelation, in the letters to the 7 churches of Asia Minor. To each church Jesus gives a personal message. At end of each message Jesus gives encouraging words. “He that overcometh” (KJV), “He who overcomes” (NASB), “The one who conquers” (ESV and NET), “He who conquers” (RSV), “The one who is victorious” (NIV) and “All who are victorious” (NLT). Jesus is telling those in each one of these churches who persevere to the end despite the persecution and hardships; those who demonstrate they have true saving faith, the overcomers, the conquerors, the victors; Jesus says, “Here is a promise for you...” And then He lays out a series of promises for them one by one.

Let me just summarize the promises that Jesus gave to these overcomers (this is really exciting stuff): eternal life, heaven, spiritual life, an unending relationship with Christ, a new personal name, a reward, authority to rule with Christ, white garments of righteousness, security, honor, no fear, a secured love. I’m like, “I’ll be happy just to be in heaven with Jesus and the saints!” But then to think, I get all of that also! That’s amazing! But wait there’s more...

The very last church mentioned in the letters to the 7 churches is the Church at Laodicea. It was the worst church of all. Jesus describes that

church as "lukewarm." They literally made God sick. But even in that awful church there were some overcomers, conquerors, some true believers. And the promise that Jesus made to them I think is the most incredible one of all: "The one who conquers (overcomes), I will grant him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also conquered and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev 3:21). That is a major Wow verse! As I reflected on these promises to the 7 churches, to us Christians, it humbled me. I was brought to tears just to think that My Lord, Jesus Himself, would do all that for me. I don't deserve any of it. And neither do you. But it makes v 4 and 5 here in our text especially meaningful. We have so much to look forward to in the future. We have a lot to get excited about. I believe that's at the heart of what John's saying. It is good that we remind ourselves of this!

Beginning in v 6 John shifts gears and turns his attention once again on Jesus. The verses we're getting ready to look at deal with God the Father's and God the Spirit's testimony about God the Son, Jesus Christ...

READ 1 John 5:6-9 This is the testimony about Jesus (v 6 and 9).

[a side note about v 7-8. In the KJV it says, "7 For there are three that bear record **in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.** 8 **And there are three that bear witness in earth,** the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. What is shown in red was not in the original Greek manuscript. Erasmus added it under outside pressure attempting to clarify the text.

"There are three that testify," v 7 says, about Jesus. [Show Q4 slide] Who are they? Water, Blood and Spirit.

V 8 lists them in a different order – "the Spirit and the water and the blood." It doesn't matter. They are all in agreement. Now before I get into the details about who these three witnesses of Jesus are, we need to point out WHY three witnesses are needed. There IS a reason for requiring multiple witnesses and this was brought out in last week's lesson.

READ Deuteronomy 19:15

The reason was to establish its validity. If you remember last week it was brought up that during Jesus' interrogation the Jews could not get any three witnesses to agree. So they made stuff up a bunch of stuff and produced false testimony, people claiming Jesus said or did things that He did not. The Jews basically violated their own law.

Here in our passage John is countering the false ideas out there (other religions and heresies) that Jesus was just a moral teacher, a mere prophet with good intentions but that His claims were misunderstood by His followers; that Jesus was just a man and nothing else. He wasn't really God. John had heard with his own ears what Jesus claimed concerning Himself. That's why he tells us in this letter that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. But besides Jesus' own claims we have these three very reliable witnesses. They validate Jesus' claims. All three are the witnesses of God regarding who Jesus is and all three are in agreement. Basically John's point is this: "what I'm presenting here about Jesus isn't just my personal opinion. It isn't just what Jesus claimed. It's far bigger than that!"

So who are these three who give testimony? First of all who are the water and the blood? What's John talking about?

The water refers to Jesus' baptism. This took place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. At His baptism Jesus identifies with us sinners defining why He came. His baptism is recorded in Matt 3:13-17. Show it. What was the testimony? It was a voice from heaven, God the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." So then, why should we believe Jesus is the Son of God? Because God the Father said so! In the Gospel of John, the testimony of John the Baptist is this: "And I have seen and have borne witness that this (speaking of Jesus) is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

The blood refers to Jesus' DEATH on the cross, at the end of His ministry. Jesus identified with us sinners by taking our punishment. Was there a voice from heaven at the cross like there was at His baptism? No, but there was a voice from heaven a few days before in the temple (John

12:27-36. Jesus had just finished talking about how His hour has come. He knows He is about to go to the cross. His soul is troubled and He prays out loud, "Father, glorify your name." And there is this crowd standing there listening to Jesus teaching in the temple when suddenly a voice thunders from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." God the Father was giving testimony that what Jesus is about to do on the cross will in fact glorify Him, the Father. Of course the people dismissed it and didn't believe Jesus. At the crucifixion itself, Matt 27:45-54 God offered testimony not in a voice but in a series of supernatural events: (1) darkness at noon; (2) veil of the temple torn in two from top to bottom; (3) an earthquake; (4) the rocks split; (5) tombs were opened; (6) saints were raised to life and entered into Jerusalem. Pretty amazing scene! A Roman centurion and his squad of soldiers when they saw all of this said, Truly, this was the Son of God!"

Finally there is the testimony of the Spirit, the H.S. in v 6 and 7. We could spend weeks studying all the ways the H.S. bears witness of Jesus. We see the Spirit in... (1) Jesus' conception (when the H.S. came upon Mary, Luke 1:31, 34); in the words of Jesus (John 3:34); in the miracles of Jesus (the H.S. empowered Jesus), in the inspiration of the N.T. scriptures which record the life of Jesus and interprets what it meant for us. The bottom line, v 9, the testimony of God concerning Jesus is greater than the testimony of men!

READ 1 John 5:10-12

There are three fundamental truths about Jesus that are NOT negotiable. If you don't believe these then you are NOT a Christian.

V 10, if you don't believe the testimony of God then you are calling God a liar. Pretty strong words! Fundamental doctrine #1 about Jesus: He is the Son of God.

V 11, "This is the testimony..." V 12, "Whoever has the Son has life." Another fundamental doctrine about Jesus: It is in Jesus that God gives us eternal life.

V 12 goes on to say that "whoever does not have the Son does not have life." Fundamental doctrine #3 about Jesus: He is the only one who gives eternal life. READ Acts 4:11-12

Do you believe these 3 fundamental truths about Jesus? Do you REALLY believe them? John says, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." There is your assurance. Good news, right?

I close with the words of the Apostle Paul. It is found in Romans Chapter 8. READ Romans 8:31, 35, 37-39. NASB v 37 "we overwhelmingly conquer."

We are overcomers. We are victors. We are conquerors. Satan, the world, illness, and even death are not a threat to us. The victory has already been won and someday you and I will enter into our eternal life and we will be receive our inheritance. The future is very bright!!