

This Is The Victory That Has Overcome The World — Our Faith.

Text: 1 John 5:4-10

Suggested Hymns:

99, 765, 321, 284, 102

1) Consider The Nature Of Our World - Conquering Faith

2) Consider The Nature Of The Victory Which This Faith Attains

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 John 5:4–12, 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 he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

⁶ *This is He who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.* ⁷ *For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.* ⁸ *And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*

⁹ *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.* ¹⁰ *He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.*

¹¹ *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.* ¹² *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Songs of victory still resound in the sanctuary of our God. Hallelujah, Jesus lives! The empty grave sparkles in the bright glow of triumph. Sin, Satan, hell, death, and the grave lie vanquished at the risen Saviour's feet.

We Christians are to share our Saviour's victory. Linked by faith to our triumphant Master, we are to be more than conquerors. In the face of all enemies that oppose us on our heavenward march we are to fling out the challenging cry: *this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.* This is the theme for today. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Consider The Nature Of Our World - Conquering Faith

Not Faith in Man

The Apostle does not attribute world-conquering power to every and any kind of faith. Humanism is faith in humankind, in man's own ability to conquer self, sin, evil habits, social wrongs, and all the powers of nature.

Oh, how strong has been mankind's faith in itself! Through education, science, and ethical culture people had hoped to build a super-race of people and a world of peace and plenty. Confident of the inherent goodness of man and of his power, men planned in a short time to turn all swords into plough-shears and to bring freedom from want, and freedom from fear all over the world.

How disillusioned we are today! The gigantic problems of world peace, world justice, fair distribution of wealth on the earth are now seen to be essentially the problem of the inherited depravity of man.

Man by nature is corrupt, evil, and sinful. The progress of mankind onward and upward forever — again and again meets the stumbling block of man's innate greed, selfishness, and lust for power.

Christian Faith Is Faith in Jesus Christ

The Apostle attributes world-conquering power to Christian faith. "*This is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.*"

Briefly he shows the content of the Christian faith. "⁵ *Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*" Faith, Christian faith, is faith in Jesus as the eternal, only-begotten Son of God.

To Christian faith Jesus is more than an ideal man, or a prophet who has come from God, or an outstanding character in history, or the flower of Jewish spirituality. Christian faith regards and worships Jesus as Lord and God.

It confesses of Jesus, as written in Colossians 2:9, *‘For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.’* He is the Word of Life who *“came by water and blood — Jesus Christ.”*

On that day when the Son of God came to John the Baptist to be baptised with water, He placed Himself on the side of sinners and declared Himself ready to fulfil all righteousness in the sinners’ stead.

With the fullness of the Deity dwelling in His human body, He came also by blood. Only recently we have passed through the blessed season of Lent, in which we meditated upon the Passion of our Lord and followed Him from Gethsemane’s anguish out to the cross-crowned hill of Calvary.

We saw the Lamb of God shedding His precious blood upon the altar of sacrifice as a complete and eternally valid atonement for the sins of the world!

Faith clings to Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God and sinless Son of Man and in His blood alone seeks and finds pardon for sin, reconciliation with God, and the way to new spiritual life and world-conquering power.

Faith builds on Jesus and sings, *On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.*¹

Christian Faith Rests on Divine Testimony

Our faith concerning Jesus Christ is rooted in God’s Word and rests on divine testimony. For the Bible’s testimony is the witness of God, the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We receive the witness of men. If something is reported to us on the basis of reliable and trustworthy testimony, we give credence to the message. Now, reliable witnesses, the Prophets of old and the Apostles and Evangelists, give witness to the deity and sinless humanity, and the vicarious suffering and death, and triumphant resurrection of our blessed Saviour.

They agree with John in testifying, *“This (Jesus Christ) is the true God and eternal life.”*² They join him in the confession, *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*³ *“He (Jesus Christ the righteous) is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”*⁴

The testimony of these faithful witnesses won for them, not the glamour of worldly fame, but the hatred of the wise and the persecution of the mighty.

There is no reason that we can detect that they would have deliberately lied about the person and character, the message and works, of their Friend and Companion, Jesus Christ. Why then should we not believe their testimony?

But even reliable men can be mistaken in their judgement and deceived in their observation. To err is human. However, our faith does not rest upon mere human testimony. It has as its foundation the depths of divine, inerrant truth.

For Prophets and Apostles were but the agents in the hand of the blessed Holy Spirit, by whom He has given us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and blessed us with a true account of Christ's life and works, and the eternally true meaning of the purpose and blessing of Christ's coming into the world.

For *“holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”*⁵ *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”*⁶ In this God-breathed Volume we have the blessed Holy Spirit's testimony concerning Jesus as God's Son and the Atoner of the world's iniquity. This testimony of the Holy Spirit has one aim and one glorious purpose, the generation and confirmation of Christian, world-conquering faith.

And in God's Book we hear also the testimony of God the Father. For did He not proclaim from heaven, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”*? Did He not raise His own Son from the grave and thereby seal the claims of Jesus as true, and the work of Jesus as gloriously accomplished?

The resurrection of Jesus is God the Father's manifesto to the world: *“Jesus is My Son; His blood is the perfect atonement for sin. Believe His Word; accept His blood-wrought redemption; look up to Him and be saved!”*

Oh, friends, to reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit means a rejection of the truth! To spurn the testimony of God in unbelief is tantamount to making God a liar. Oh, sinful pride! Oh, blasphemous rebellion against God!

Our Faith, God's Work

Through the divine testimony of the Bible we have come to saving faith. We call Jesus Lord and God and worship Him as our Saviour and cherish the peace with God which is ours through faith in His blood. But our faith is not a product

of our ingenuity, our power of logic, or our wisdom and determination. It is not a gift of inheritance.

Our text says, “⁴ *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.*” What a mighty statement regarding the origin as well as the power of faith! Our faith did not originate from the powers of human persuasion. It is born of God.

The Word of God is the heavenly seed through which the Spirit of God has generated new spiritual life within us, has brought us to faith, and has given us the new birth. Faith is the gift of our gracious God.

It is the new birth of the Spirit. Scripture says *God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, ... has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*⁷ He has blessed us with the assurance, “*Truly, Jesus is the Son of God; He died for me; through His blood I am at peace with God, and heaven is my home.*”

The assurance of faith, born of God, is therefore not an imagination of a mortal mind; not a product of wishful thinking; nor a fantasy of human prejudice. It is a heaven-wrought conviction, sealed in our heart as the truth by God, who cannot lie.

O Lord, keep us in this saving faith. O Spirit of God, deepen, strengthen, and perfect this faith in our soul, and help us to experience the world-conquering power of faith.

2. Consider The Nature Of The Victory Which This Faith Attains

Faith is Power

To our faith St. John ascribes power, the power to conquer the world and all persons and things that oppose and antagonise and run counter to our Christian faith. What a bold claim!

But remember, the power of faith is God's power. For faith is born of God. It is God's life in us. And God is stronger than the world and can make those who believe in Him more than conquerors.

Did not Jesus promise under oath, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do*”?⁸

And Paul, the hero of faith, speaking from his own life's experience, makes the startling assertion: "***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***"⁹

The Battle of Faith Is Against Defeated Enemies

In faith we remember also the assurance of Jesus, "***In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***"¹⁰ Satan and his hellish hosts, the world and all things that oppose our Christian faith are defeated and vanquished enemies. Christ's death was not a dismal defeat but a glorious victory, and through His resurrection He has made His and our enemies a mockery and a scorn.

Linked by faith to the victorious, living, almighty Christ, we are world conquerors. The victories of faith over the world are more glorious and much more worth while than the victories of arms gained by Alexander the Great, Caesar, and other men of renown on the field of battle.

Faith Wins The Victory Over The World's Mockery And Scorn

The believers have the world against them. The world meets our faith with stinging scorn and biting sarcasm. For the world despises the Gospel of Jesus. It walks in darkness, in self-righteousness, and spiritual pride.

It regards the wisdom of God as nonsense and heaps with shame the blood-bought righteousness of the Cross. The Spirit of God and the spirit of the world, the judgement of God and the judgement of the world, the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world, are opposites.

No wonder that even the most highly educated and cultured children of the world laugh to scorn our faith in Jesus. No wonder that they call us who believe the so-called "blood-religion" fools. No wonder they attribute our faith to wishful thinking, and to childish fears, and to religious prejudices instilled in childhood.

But, friends, our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. We know whom we have believed. We know with a heaven-wrought conviction that what we believe is God's truth, God's wisdom, the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we will not permit the scorn and ridicule of the world to ruffle our faith or shake our conviction.

And though, at times, doubts would assail us and our faith weaken under the avalanche of worldly opposition, the Spirit of God helps our infirmities. Through the testimony of the Word He brings us back to the bedrock foundation of truth and helps us to defy the contradiction of the world, and to regard with sincere pity those who in sinful pride fight against the truth of God.

Faith, cemented in God's Word, overcomes all the forces of the world marshalled against the truth of the Most High.

Faith Wins The Victory Over The World's Opposition To The Gospel

The world picks out for special and most vicious attacks our faith in the sin-atoning Cross of Jesus. At heart the world is self-righteous and hugs to its soul human merit as a passport to heaven. It levels its shafts of ugly criticism at the atonement through the shed blood of the Son of God. The substitutionary life and death of Jesus is an offence to the proud children of unbelief.

But our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. The Spirit of God has led us to know the real and damning nature of sin. He has shown us the white light of the justice and holiness of God. He has convinced us of our utter unworthiness.

But he has also taught us to know the beauty of the Saviour and the value of the riches of God's grace in Christ. We have learned the melody of faith, *Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling.*¹¹

The fury of the world's hatred against the Cross cannot shake our faith. Accepting the Gospel of the vicarious atonement as God's sure and saving truth, we recognise the world's hatred against the Gospel as sinful pride and devilish blindness and its arguments against God's way of salvation as hell-born lies. Thus faith remains victorious in the battle of the ages, the battle of the world against Christ.

Faith Wins The Victory Over The World's Ungodliness

Finally, the conduct of the world is opposed to our faith. The principles of the world and the moral principles of God are opposites. The world is captivated by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is blinded by the glitter of gold and the bright lights of pleasure. It seeks its treasure on earth.

The world in its life and attitudes constitutes a serious temptation to the children of God. Our own evil flesh tempts and seduces us. The traitor in our bosom conspires with our enemies to bring about our destruction.

But also in this instance our faith, born of God, is the victory that overcomes the world. With Paul we say, *“the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”*¹² By faith we glory in the Cross of Jesus.

Through Christ we believers have been accepted into the family of God and been made heirs of eternal life. In our soul re-echoes the voice of God: *“You are my beloved children. Walk as the children of light, as pilgrims of God homeward bound.”*

As children of God and warriors of the Cross we give battle to all ungodliness and worldly lust and strive to walk in godliness and good works. God’s Spirit helps us onward to victory over the lusts of our flesh and the base principles of the world.

O Lord, through the testimony of Your Word keep us in the saving faith of Jesus. By Your Word strengthen mightily that faith, and by faith make us more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us and died for our sins and rose for our justification, even our victorious, living Christ. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Hymn 331

² 1 John 5:20

³ 1 John 1:7

⁴ 1 John 2:2

⁵ 2 Peter 1:21

⁶ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:6

⁸ John 14:12

⁹ Philippians 4:13

¹⁰ John 16:33

¹¹ Hymn 330

¹² Galatians 6:14