**IN JESUS WE OVERCOME THE WORLD**

November 4, 2012

1 John 5:1-21

Key Verse: 5:5 “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

I hope you enjoyed 1 John Bible study. As a conclusion, in 1 John 5, St. John teaches us how to overcome the world. Those who live with a sense of defeat are most sorrowful, whether they are noble or ordinary. But in Jesus we overcome the world and have a sense of victory. May God bless you to learn how to overcome the world. May God richly bless you and help you remember all the life-giving words from this chapter. I pray that God may grant you faith that overcomes the world this fall semester.

I. In Jesus we overcome the world (1-12)

Look at verse 1. “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.” To believe in Jesus as “the Christ” means to trust him as God’s Messiah, his unique Anointed One, and have faith in him. It means believing that Jesus is our King. To believe means more than an intellectual exercise; it involves action. Belief is not just saying you believe, it is acting on what you believe. If we believe, we should do what he commands such as loving God and loving others. Your belief or faith should lead you to change; it should motivate you to serve! When we believe in Jesus as Christ, we are spiritually born again, and our eyes will be open to see the spiritual world. Then we will know God, and then eventually we will come to love God as well as his children.

Look at verse 3. “This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.” How are love and obedience related? They are inseparable. Without love, we cannot obey, and without obedience, we cannot love. There is one common misunderstanding among us about love. People might think that love comes first from emotion or feeling. Therefore, we think that without the feeling of love, we can’t love others. Many young people believe that they need the feeling of love before they get married. Then, they never get married because feelings do not come easily. Also feelings change like the weather. However, we can obey God’s command if we love God. Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” Jesus gave his disciples a new command. It was for them to love one another (John 13:34). By our strength, we cannot love our brothers. However, if we obey his commands first, he gives us the heart to love our brothers. True love (agape) is not just about emotional feelings but it requires action. Obedience is a key to express our love to God. Abraham obeyed God’s command to offer his son Isaac because he loved God. Jesus showed example of true love by obeying the will of God though it meant his death on the cross. If we truly love God, we should obey his command even though we may not understand the reason. Through obedience we can demonstrate our love for God and his children.

In verse 3b, Apostle John tells us that his commands are not burdensome. It does not mean that they are not difficult, but they are the very things which born again people love to do. When we tell a mother to take good care of her baby, we are only telling her what she loves to do. Jesus’ command, “love your brother,” is what the children of God love to do. If we do something for others without love, we will feel burdened; but when we love them, we will not feel too burdened. When Jacob saw Rachel, it was love at first sight. Jacob worked hard seven years for his uncle to marry Rachel. But they seemed like only a few days to him because he loved Rachel so much (Gen 29:20). When we love God, obedience is no longer burdensome but it is a great joy. When we obey God’s command as our expression of love, God gives us faith that overcomes the world. Not only so, God empowers us through his Spirit to obey his commands.

Look at verses 4,5. “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God!” What does it mean to overcome the world? Verse 19 says that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. The world without God is materialistic, individualistic, pleasure-seeking, greedy, and lustful, which invites the wrath of God. The people who belong to the world cannot overcome the world because they are enslaved by their sinful desires. Eventually, they lose everything at the end of their lives because to them death is the end of everything. In the competitive world everybody is a loser. Money, fame, or power cannot save them. The world is controlled by the law of the jungle; the stronger prey on the weaker. To survive this world, people cannot help but become selfish and greedy. Then, how can we overcome such a tough world? By faith in Jesus Christ we can be victors. In the sinful world there are only losers but in Jesus we all are victors. Paul shouted in Romans 8:37, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

The world controlled by the devil always tempts us, is always trying to drag us away from God and from what is eternal, and seeking to occupy us with what is temporary and sensual. When we do not believe in Jesus Christ, we will be swept away by the current. Only the man who is born of God really overcomes the world. He can go against the current because by faith he is able to rise above the perishable things of the world and to see things from God’s point of view. God enables them to realize that the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God stands forever. The one who really overcomes the world is not the great scientist or philosopher or psychologist, but the simple believer who realizes that the things which are seen are temporary and that the things which are not seen are eternal. They are true victors in life.

Jesus showed us the way to overcome the world. The night before Jesus offered his life on the cross, his heart was heavy. Under those circumstances, who wouldn’t be overwhelmed by sorrow and fear. But Jesus encouraged his disciples. He told them in John 16:33b, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Jesus did not look at the painful crucifixion. He had his eyes fixed on the glory when he will sit at the right hand of God. That is why Jesus overcame the world. When St. Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he was very old, and he was about to be executed. But he did not say, “Dear Timothy, I’m tired and miserable. I lost everything.” Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8a, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day.” Paul testified with confidence that he won the victory over the world. He did not see that he lost all his worldly honor and money. He saw the glory when he will sit with Jesus on the throne with a crown of righteousness. Thus he overcame the world.

In verses 6-12, Apostle John testifies to evidence that Jesus is the Son of God who has life in him. There are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood. The water indicates the baptism of Jesus and the blood indicates the death of Jesus. Gnostics claim that historical Jesus was not the Christ, but a human, in that the Christ came down on Jesus when he got baptized, and later the Christ left Jesus right before his crucifixion. But Apostle John demonstrates that the historical Jesus is the Christ himself. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the God placed his seal on Jesus as his Son, proclaiming, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt 3: 17). Also when Jesus was nailed and died on the cross, there were many miraculous signs like the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. These things indicate that the death of Jesus is not that of ordinary people, but the death of the Son of God. Watching over these, the centurion who was in charge of the executing Jesus on the cross could not help but confess, “Surely he was the Son of God!” (Matt 27: 50-54). In John 15:26, Jesus says, “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.” All three, the Spirit, water and blood testify that Jesus is the Son of God.

II. We have confidence in approaching God (13-21)

Verses 13-21 are the epilogue of 1 John. Verses 13 is written about the confidence we have in Jesus. This confidence has an extreme effect on our life and personality. We have the confidence of eternal life (13). Look at verse 13. The reason why Apostle John writes it to the believers is to plant confidence that there is eternal life. Eternal life is not simply to live endlessly. This is the life from God. He who believes in God has to believe that he has already had eternal life. Why is it so important that you have the confidence of eternal life? It’s because only when you have the confidence of eternal life, you will not be deceived by the heresy and you can keep your faith firm. Also, you can live a sacrificial and devoted life; overcoming selfishness in your heart. In

addition to that, you can also live a peaceful life releasing yourself from the worries of this life. Overcoming emptiness and despair, you can live a meaningful and hopeful life!

Look at verses 14,15. “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.” Till now, John claims that only by faith in Jesus, we can overcome the world. And then he assures that we can sustain our victorious life of faith through prayer. It’s because prayer is a concrete expression of faith. Without faith, we cannot pray. When we pray, our faith becomes more consolidated and we can grow up. Spiritual power comes from unceasing prayer. Spiritual power means prayer power. Faith is like the engine of the car and prayer is like fuel to run the engine. Believing that you have faith, if you do not pray, actually, it means that you do not have faith. The confidence of prayer is to believe that, whatever we ask according to his will, he answers our prayers.

Nowadays, we live in a world in which everything is uncertain. Wherever you go, the competition is very high; nothing can guarantee your life in this world because the future is always uncertain. In this vague world, how can we live with confidence? There is one way; which is to learn how to pray. Prayer is one of the strongest weapons to live a victorious life. Prayer has wonderful power to transform failure into success, impossibility into possibility, and despair into hope. Edgar Hoover, a former FBI director, talks about prayer like this, “The power of praying persons and nations is stronger than explosion of the nuclear bomb. It’s because prayer is the greatest means of humans to be connected to the infinite power of God. Through earnest prayer, we can protect our lives in the best way from the evil power that we cannot resist and the evildoers who harass us.” Satan is mostly scared when he sees a praying Christian. Therefore, Satan tries to bother Christians not to pray by any means and make them to become busybodies. So, to live a victorious life, we need to learn how to kneel down before God. Anyone, who kneels down before God, has never shown a case of a failed life. To live a victorious life, we need many things such as wisdom, courage, and so on. Through prayer, all those treasures can be given lavishly to us from God when we kneel down before Him. The most valuable secret of our living a powerful life is in the prayer in that we can overcome weakness, sense of despair, sense of failure, sense of helplessness. Prayer builds confidence. How grateful we are to have the privilege of praying to God as his children. Even though God gives this great privilege to His children, if you don’t use it, then how foolish are you? God requires only one condition to answer your prayer; whatever you ask, you have to ask “according to his will.” God may not answer your prayer to win a million dollar lottery ticket. But God may answer your prayer to find one new Bible student.

In verses 16-17, John encourages all believers to have intercessory prayers for others with the exception of sins that lead to death. We do not know exactly what sin leads to death. But the emphasis is on prayer. John lists six things we know as his conclusion; We know that he hears us-whatever we ask. We know that we have what we asked for. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. We know that we are children of God. We know also that the Son of God has come. We know him who is true. Amen. I pray that we all may love God as he first loved us and gave us his One and Only Son.

Let’s believe that Jesus is the Son of God. In him we have eternal life and the crown of righteousness. In Jesus we overcome the world. May God bless you to live victorious lives. Let’s have confidence in our prayers so that we can pray continuously.