

Victory

I John 5:5—"Who is he that gets the victory over the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

How many of us in this room believe that Jesus is the Son of God? "Who is he that gets the victory over the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God." That is the one.

I John 5:12—"He that has the Son has life: He that has not the Son of God has not life."

Let's pray together:

Lord, we come to You, we worship You, we thank You for drawing us away from our own despair and bringing us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Lord, we praise Your name and declare that Christ Jesus is our Lord and that You have overcome and You are ascended and on the throne. All of Your enemies are becoming Your footstool, and You are coming back to rule and to reign and bring Your reign upon this earth. Lord, we worship You together. Bless this time in the Word and enlighten us as we read Your Scriptures. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We have been in I John which has been a series, but even if you missed everything of what has been shared, the Word of God is always for today. So we are going to be talking on this subject of victory as we go through this last chapter of I John, which is the conclusion. There is a kind of wrapping up of all things that we have shared about or a bringing to a climax or a stance as we get into the victory that we have by the eternal life that we have received inside of us.

Victory is in the Eternal Life

To begin with there is a phrase at the end of verse 3 that I want to include here. At the end of the last section in I John which is talking about love and loving one another, he gave the command to love one another in verse 21. And he ends up with this transitional thought in verse 3: He says, "His commands are not grievous." They are not too burdensome. They are not too much, and why? It begins in verse 4 by saying that we have this victory in the eternal life. So even though he is commanding us to do these seemingly impossible things or difficult things for us, they are not too much. It is not a heavy load on the believers because we have the victory in Christ. By faith, we have overcome the world, we have overcome ourselves, and we have overcome the evil one, and this is our section for this time.

This word 'victory' in chapter 5 in my translation says victory. Some other translations will be different, but in the Bible the word 'victory' is sometimes translated as 'overcome.' So if you see a verse with overcome or overcoming or overcomer, often it is this same word. Actually, it is the word where we get the brand Niki for shoes. It just means victory; it means that you have conquered, you have overcome.

One time Jesus said in the gospel of John, "I have overcome." Then in I John he says, "You have overcome." There he is talking to the young men that have matured just a little bit, and they have overcome the evil one. One of the thresholds of getting out of the baby stage of a believer and coming through is to discover that you have the overcoming life inside of you. And that is a lot of what we are talking about today.

So when he says to the young men, “You have overcome,” He tells them that they are strong in the Word and other things, but they have overcome the evil one. It is not that they are very mature, nor is it that they are never making mistakes, but they have discovered something. And this is based off of what Jesus said, “I have overcome.” So here is a case where in the Gospel of John that which is foundational of the Lord Jesus, who is the overcomer, is actually brought into our experience through fellowship in I John. So these things need to go together, and the way we experience this is by believing.

The Believer has been Given Overcoming Life

Who is he that overcomes the world? It is the one who is a believer, the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. We believers have been given this overcoming life. We have received eternal life when we believed, and so all of our overcomingness is based on believing. The reason it works like that is because Christ has overcome. Don’t fear the world, don’t fear the enemy because, “I have overcome.” So we will see this as a repeating stance when it comes to overcoming in the Bible; it is always based on the victory of Christ. It is always based on Him being the Overcomer, and anytime that we are brought into being an overcomer it is because we are brought into it by faith, the life of Christ living through us.

Christ is *the* Overcomer

So Christ is the Overcomer, and actually the way this works is that He gets the glory even when we overcome because it is the life of Christ in us that overcomes. It is just beautiful, so we can always fall down in worship even when you gain some victory in a minor experience and say, “That was Christ. He overcame. He is the Victor.” Even though the Lord could say, “You have overcome, you are the victor, you are overcoming.” Who is it that overcomes the world? It is the one who believes on the Lord Jesus, and that is how it works. So I just want to show this with a few verses.

In I John 4:4 notice this concept where the Lord is the Overcomer and we are brought into this by faith. “You are of God, children, and have overcome them.” Why? It is because “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.”

So all the basis of us overcoming is He who is actually saying, “You are of God and you have overcome them.” That is a stance of victory. You may feel that you overcame them because you did well last week and you fixed all those bad habits. No, because “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” That is why you have overcome them. That is the only reason. All of our victory stance is based on that foundation.

“All that has been begotten of God (that is us who are born of God) gets the victory over the world” (v. 4a) Remember that it says ‘all.’ Every believer in this room has the victory over the world. All that has been begotten of God gets the victory over the world. This is the victory which has gotten the victory over the world; it is our faith. So just kind of erase your history for a moment when we are thinking of victory.

What is the victory that has gotten the victory over the world? It is your faith. Where does your faith take you? It takes you to believing on Christ because all the victory is bound up in Christ.

Who is he that gets the victory over the world? It is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Again just notice here that it is he that believes; it is faith. All who have believed have gotten the victory.

In Revelation, which is also written by John the apostle, at the end of the letters to the seven churches in chapter 3:21 he is talking to those who overcome: "He that overcomes, (and remember this word overcome is the same as victory, so he that has gained the victory, he who has done victory, who has experienced this victory) to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome." As I also did the victory thing. Christ overcame and has sat down with His Father in His throne.

This victory here that is talked about is that you have been living in the reality of the victory that you have. "You have overcome, you sit on the throne with Me; it is because I overcame and have sat down on my Father's throne." This is just to show the correlation that every bit of victory, whether it is a victory by faith in your stance, your position, or it is a victory that you have actually done. Those in the church in Laodicea did not do what those others were doing who were falling away, who were lukewarm, who were acting as if they had everything. Instead they were needy of the Lord, and they came to the Lord, and they got eye salve for their eyes and they saw the reality of what was going on. That is how they overcame. They repented. Those ones experienced the victory, but it was the victory of Christ; because He overcame, they overcame also.

The Lamb's Victory on the Cross

In Revelation 5:5, and this is an amazing victory: "Do not weep. Behold, the lion which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals (This is a scroll that needs to be unrolled or the seals taken off, and no one can do it.) which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book, and its seven seals." This is the same word here, He has gained the victory, and we would know that this is the victory of the cross. This is the experience of victory where He conquered death on the cross and rose from the dead, and this is the vision in Revelation 5 of Him ascending all the way to the throne of God and comes as a lamb that is newly slain, and He has overcome to open the book and its seven seals. All of that victory is at the cross. He gained the victory right there. He has overcome so He can do God's will.

The Overcomer's Victory

This is connected with us as well. In Revelation 12:11 we find these overcomers. They have overcome the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, the great red dragon that is trying to devour them and devour the woman who is in travail. But as this manchild is birthed, the description of this package of people, these overcomers come out and they have overcome him. This is something currently happening, but it is based on the lion of Judah that has gained the victory already. The overcomers are overcoming now by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and not loving their lives, denying themselves, following Christ and even willing to be

martyrs. All of that overcoming, all of that victory is based on this: there is a Man in the glory who has gained the victory, the Lion of Judah, and He is unrolling the scrolls. He is praying for these overcomers. He is in travail and they are in travail. It is all extremely connected.

But we have a part to play in the experience of victory, and this is the part. These have overcome the enemy. So what God does is to first overcome through the Son of God defeating the enemy at the cross. He has overcome. He defeated all enemies at the cross, and He is in His stance at the throne. Then, today God is working in the same way. Based on that, He is working through us to overcome the world and Satan in experience. We have already overcome by faith in Christ, and then we bring it down to earth because that is what faith does. Faith brings what is in heaven down to earth. It brings things from the throne of God that are invisible to be actually what is visible in our experience. That is what happens when we lean on Christ. He starts to translate things from His throne to us. That is what happened when we got saved. He has saved us and brought salvation. It is all imbedded in Christ. We leaned on Him, we believed on Him, we turned to Him, and He brought that salvation down to our experience, and we were born again. It is the same with victory. We believe on Him, we receive from Him and He brings that victory that we already have by believing on Him first. We are believers, and He brings it down to our experience. So they are overcomers.

The Future Victory of the Lamb

In Revelation 17 he is talking about the battle of Armageddon, and the antichrist, the false prophet, their armies and other kings that are with them. And he says, "These shall make war with the Lamb, (there is a battle coming) and the Lamb shall overcome them."

This is the same victory word: "The Lamb shall overcome them." Has he already overcome? He overcame everything at the cross, but the Lord Jesus has a future experience to bring His victory into. He shall overcome them. "He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, and those that are with Him are the called, the chosen and faithful." So in the future when the Lord Jesus comes back, one of the things that He is going to do is bring His victory down to the earth and conquer all that are against God. There is the battle with mankind and all that would rebel against God. And He opens His mouth and they are slain with the Word, the sword that comes out of His mouth. So that is a victory in experience. But what is all of that based on, Him coming in that way as Lord of lords and King of kings, with an army behind Him, the called, chosen, and faithful also on their white horses? As He comes in that way, it says that His garment has been dipped in blood. He is not only the righteous One, but He is the One who died for the sins of mankind, and He brings the victory that happened at the cross down to the earth, and He sets it in time and in place.

The Footstool

That is actually what He is doing through us right now before that time. Now is the time of the footstool. God is making the enemies of Jesus the footstool of His feet. Once the footstool is in place He comes and takes His stance on the mountains, and the mountain splits in half and this battle of Armageddon happens. He is waiting for the footstool to be completed through us, the body of Christ. We are probably right at the toes right now. So the conquering that we get to

experience has something to do with the bringing in of the Lord's victory to this earth. All of our prayers and all of our complex questions about God and why He allows this problem to happen and the sorrows of the world, there is a need for victory on this earth. There is a need for God to bring in the victory to the earth and stop all of this mess. And it is waiting on the enemies of God to be brought under the feet of the Lord Jesus. "Sit here at my right hand while I make your enemies the footstool of Your feet." As The Psalmist says to Melchizedek, the one that is coming as the Melchizedek King and Priest which is our Lord Jesus. So He is sitting and waiting, bringing His victory through us right now.

At the end of Revelation there is this final call in 21:7: "He that overcomes shall inherit these things. I will be to him God and he shall be to me son."

I bring up some of these kind of scattered verses to show that there is a connection between our victory and the victory of Christ. There is a victory of stance once it is done like the stance of the cross or the stance that we have from believing in the cross. Then there is a victory that is by experience. You bring the fact into your experience, and that also is overcoming; that is also an experience of victory. We are not called to look for the experience; we are called to look away by faith to the Christ, to the stance. So we fix our eyes on Jesus, but then He is bringing that to us to actually experience. It is the same with the Lord. He has an experience coming in the future. He has an experience to work through us today, and all of us are called to overcome because we are overcomers. You are an overcomer; you have the victory because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world, because you have believed on the Son of God's love. You have believed on the Lord Jesus; you have the victory. That is what the Word of God shows us.

At the beginning of I John which we have already read in this verse: "His commandments are not grievous," they are not burdensome. And all these verses that we have been reading talk about victory and victory in the Son of God. Everyone begotten of God has the victory. "Who is he that gets the victory over the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (I John 5:4)? If we can just take these verses, these beginning verses of this last section as a stance, then we will be in the right spot. As we go along with all the rest of the things, this is our place, this is where we come from as believers. We have the victory, and this is who we are in Christ. The next parts that will come out are to reveal that to us. Actually everything in I John has been leading up to this experience, that we are in fellowship with the Lord.

Have you discovered that you have eternal life? Every time you have had your sins forgiven, when you have experienced afresh the cleansing of the blood of the Lamb, when we break bread, just getting your heart right with the Lord or if you experienced afresh the enjoyment of the life of God in the fellowship of the saints as you are worshipping or as we were hearing the prayers of others—all these things are showing us that we have eternal life also. All of this is bringing us into this fellowship experience. So right after taking this stance, he goes on to talk about the Lord Jesus and this witness of it.

Jesus the Christ Came by Water and the Blood

It says in verse 6, and this is talking about Jesus the Son of God. “This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus the Christ; not by water only but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that bears witness for the Spirit is the truth.”

Now right away if you read this in I John, it is probably confusing. It is random and it is a question always. He came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood And it is the Spirit who testifies of this.” What is this talking about? Here is a case where it is actually helpful to compare I John with the gospel of John because this same exact experience comes up in the gospel of John. So the same writer writes it with the same phrases to actually give us a key to unlock this. So in the gospel of John in chapter 19 as Jesus is on the cross, this same witness happened of the water and the blood coming out of His side.

When the soldiers came to Jesus, they were trying to make sure that He was dead before the Sabbath. They broke the legs of the other two men who were crucified next to him, and they died quickly. When they saw that Jesus was already dead, they did not break His legs. One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately, there came out blood and water. He who saw it bears witness, and his witness is true. It is the Spirit who bears witness, and his witness is true. John the apostle literally saw physical blood and physical water come out of the side of the physical Lord Jesus on the cross. This was not a spiritual witness; this was an eye witness. But he knew there was something spiritual about it, so he made a big point about it: “I saw it; I saw it with my own eyes. It is true!” The one giving you the witness is true, and he knows what he says is true so that way you would believe. Thus there is something here to notice of the Lord Jesus as He is on the cross and something is coming out of His side—blood and the water.

They that bear witness are three, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and the three agree in one. Spiritually speaking, something is testifying inside of us to do with the blood, the water and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is bringing this witness to us. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, there is a physical aspect to this. With a broken heart there is the sac that fills up with fluid next to it, and the spear would have gone through it and out would come some watery type of liquid and real blood. So we are told by the medical doctors that this is a condition that happens if your heart breaks when you die in that way. But John’s testimony is not because this is how He died. His testimony is that there is something here that would enable you to believe. He has seen something coming out of the Son of God that matters for us believers.

What you are seeing in the gospel of John is very comparable to Genesis with what happened with Adam and Eve when Adam had something taken out of his side to build Eve. The big deal with the blood and the water is not just what they do, but it is also what they are for. What comes out of the side of Christ is to build the body of Christ or the bride of Christ which was like with Adam. Something came out of the side of him, and Eve was built from it. So out of the side of Christ came the blood and the water. Spiritually speaking, the meaning of these two are what He uses to build the church, to shape the bride to be the glorious Church.

In Zechariah 13:1 it says there is a fountain flowing for all of our sins. And in Psalm 36:8-9 there is the fountain of water of life: “With You is the fountain of life.” It is almost like there is

this fountain coming out of the side of Christ being poured out to build the church, to work with us. We know about the meaning of the blood of Christ for all throughout the Scriptures, even in I John 1:7 it says, "The blood of God's Son cleanses us from every sin." We know that the meaning of the blood coming out has to do with the cleansing of sins. He has blood because He died for our sins, so when we see blood in the Scriptures it has to do with His dying for our sins; the blood washes our sins away. That is the picture with blood, just like we see every Sunday when we break bread and we take the cup representing the blood of Christ, and this is for our sins. If He is going to build the church the sins have to be removed, all of the unrighteousness has to be washed away. This is what happened at the cross. The water also comes out. There are a lot of verses in the Bible to do with water being like the water of life, and this water is to do the actual building work. The life of Christ is growing in us and building in us.

It is like Ephesians 5 where it says there is this glorious church without spot or wrinkle, but it is because He has loved the church, He gave Himself for the church, and He washes her with the water of the Word. He is taking away all of the pimples and wrinkles, everything that is a blemish, everything that is not a glorious matching of Christ. So that has more to do with just taking away our sins; He is taking away the immaturity or the lack of life. We have not actually grown into something yet. So the building of the church at the beginning is almost like what you see with what was taken out from Adam to build Eve at the beginning. Whatever He took out of the side of Adam was not very big, but it grew into a woman about Adam's size. Likewise, He is doing that with the water that is coming out of Jesus with which He is growing us.

John testified at the cross, but today the Spirit bears witness with us and He is right. What he is telling us is that God is cleansing us; He is working with us. You know why he needs to witness this to us? Because we keep feeling as if we do not have the victory. We walk and we stumble and we fall down into a pit, and then we have this feeling of all of our sins surrounding us. You remember your sins from the past, but the Holy Spirit stops you and says, "No! I am here to testify that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed you from your sins." We confess our sins, and our sins are cleansed. You know how you get the witness of that, the confirmation or the Amen inside of you? The Holy Spirit says, "Amen! The Word of God says it is so." If you confess your sins God is faithful. Amen! You have that happen to you inside when you confess your sins. The witness is within saying, "Yes! That is the blood." God has forgiven you, and He has cleansed you. It is not a make-believe thing. Right now there is an eye witness, the Holy Spirit, who is connected to Christ and the Father on the throne. He knows for sure of a certainty that you have been forgiven, and He brings that forgiveness-witness into our hearts. The Holy Spirit is with us. We have been discovering this all along the way. Every bit of fellowship we have had with the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is there, testifying to us that we have been cleansed by the blood. If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation, the old has passed away. You have been washed, you have been cleansed. Some of you were these things, but now you have been washed. This is the witness of the Holy Spirit. These three are testifying, and we are experiencing victory also by the blood.

Remember in Revelation 12:11 that it says, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." This is the way that it happens. You overcome because you did mess up, but you confessed your sins. Or maybe you did mess up in the past and the accuser is trying to remind you of it:

“Remember how horrible you were that time two years ago?” And you just took your stance in the victory of Christ and said, “The blood of God’s Son has cleansed me from all of my sins.” And there is like a wall of blood that stops all the accusations of the enemy. And the angel of death passes right over your heart. It is no longer there because you just overcame by the blood, and the Holy Spirit within witnessed of it.

It is the same with the water. Every step of the way in which we find Christ, He strengthens us within. We find more of Christ, and the water washes us. This living water gives us life, and we begin to grow in life. Every step of the way in which you find more of Christ, maybe when you are in the Word and it seems to wash away the dullness that has been living within, and you find more of Christ. The Holy Spirit is witnessing all of these things within us that God is preparing His bride and is bringing you into all of the victory that is there in the cross. So this is the testimony, and the testimony is true.

We could at least say that the Holy Spirit is never wrong. And if He is inside of you, and if you sense sometimes in fellowship with God that He is saying, “Yes, I am bringing you somewhere better. He keeps doing this with us if you have noticed it. You finally get that time in the Word of God, you hear the Word, and it is like an Amen inside of you saying, “Yes, this is the washing that I need. Yes, this answers to the life of God inside of me, the eternal life.” This answers to that. There is a witness within that God is doing something with us; He has not left us alone; there are three bearing witness. Every time you get cleansed, you get the witness that He has not left you alone. Every time you find Christ in some way, in fellowship or in the Word or whatever it is, He has not left you alone. And the Holy Spirit is Amen-ing us all the way.

The Witness of God

Verse 9: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is so much greater.”

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, like Paul said to the Corinthians. “Don’t you know that? Don’t you realize your body actually holds inside of it the Holy Spirit?” He is witnessing, and He is never wrong. Listen to what the eye-witnesses are saying, listen to the eye-witness of the Holy Spirit. He knows what is actually going on, and if He is confirming it in your heart that God has not left you alone, that God is bringing you into the victory and you are a born-again believer, you are of the faith and that you do have the victory because of faith, then He is true, and let every man be false, even ourselves. Whatever our unbelief is telling us, trying to make God a liar, we just have to set that aside and say, “God is true. The witness of the Holy Spirit is right. The Word of God is correct.” You have overcome because greater is He that in you than he that is in the world. Someone is in you; the life of Christ is in you. This is the witness of God which He has witnessed concerning His Son.

Again, remember this: all that the Holy spirit is testifying to us is not bound up in how well you did yesterday. Everything is testifying about the Son of God. Everything that does overcome in us testifies about the Son of God. It is the life of the Son of God that just did that. So whenever the Holy Spirit is witnessing, the Son not only gets glory, but we get the discovery that it was Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. I have to live physically in the flesh (Galatians 2:20), but I live by faith. I am just hanging onto Christ Himself. I have lived by faith in

the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. It all lies right there. So His life is there. It is all bound up there, and the Holy Spirit keeps reminding us of that. We will notice that all along the way. Everything we end up discovering has to do with Christ Himself.

Making God a Liar

Verse 10: "He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself; he that does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son."

This is what I was just talking about. Making God a liar is for us believers. This is not talking about unbelievers that have not believed on the Son of God and they make God a liar. It is talking about us when we take our place without faith. In experience, when you look away from Jesus, and you look to yourself, to your failures, this makes God a liar. This especially happens when you are about to fail or when you just failed. You look to your failures, you look to whatever you are looking at, and you make God a liar.

So we believe on the Son of God, we look away to the Lord Jesus, then this witness is true. But when you do not believe God, in a sense, it is not that you are calling God a liar. This is the same thing it says in I John 1, "If you say that you have not sinned, you call God a liar," because He just convicted you of your sin. If you are just taking a different place than God is taking, if He is telling you right now, "This is who you are. You are a new creature in Christ. The old is passed away," and you say, "No, but it is just not true. I have not been doing that." Then in experience it is like you are saying, "God, you are not right; Your Word is not true." Of course, none of us want to do that. That is why He says it this way.

Have you ever prayed this prayer of apology to the Lord? "Lord, I am sorry that I have been calling You a liar." Or have you ever told the Lord that He is a liar? I do not recommend telling Him that He is a liar, but if you are doing that, go ahead and say it. As you say it, I am sure that you have the apology of tears on your lips and in your eyes as well. As the words come out of your mouth, "God You are a liar, Your Word is not true," right away the witness inside of you says, "No, that is just not true." God is true, the witness of God is true, my experience is the lie. I have been living by looking at myself, and I have not been looking at Christ. That is the false stance that I have been in. Who am I? It is who I am in Christ, so let me fix my eyes on Jesus. Now I find who I am in Christ. That is the reality; it is actually true. Someday we will all notice this a hundred percent. Someday your new body shows up. However, it happens in the very end that you are who you are in Christ someday, and you will never sin again. This is who you actually are. That victory which is coming in the future in absolute one hundred experience is already there in Christ. Faith just takes you there ahead of time. So let God be true; let the rest of us stop our lying and just look away to the Lord Jesus in this witness.

He that has the Son has Life

Verse 11: "This is the witness, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life: and he that has not the Son of God has not life."

Again, everything is bound up in this moment. Do you have Christ? Are you believing on Him right now? Do you have the Son? You could take a step back and say, "Positionally," which I think is actually good to do. We need to do this in both ways because fellowship is based on a fact of eternal life, a fact of a past faith; our current faith matches our past faith. So in my past faith I received the Son of God. In your past believing on Him you have believed, and you have the Son. So we could say, "He that has the Son has life." And it is 100 percent true. If you have believed and you have received the Son of God, you have eternal life. So let the assurance sink in. I do have eternal life; eternal life cannot run away from me. The Holy Spirit is there as a seal set in my spirit to make sure eternal life never leaves, and God is always there forever for eternity. So you have life, but today in fellowship he that has the Son has life.

So you will notice that whatever we do as Christians it is going to be dead, even if it is good, if you do not have the Son of God. We noticed this when we talked about works of lawlessness and the section on righteousness, practicing righteousness. Without the Son it is not life. In our worship you can pray the same prayers as last week, but if Christ is missing there is no life. I think we know about this. You can hear someone pray a good prayer, but they forgot to look away to Jesus. All of us have probably done this accidentally. You are just praying, but you are thinking about others in the room or you are thinking about the words you are going to say. But when you turn and fix your eyes on Jesus and start to pray, even though you fumble in your words you have life; your prayer has life. So the reality is if you have the Son you have life.

When you are missing the Son in fellowship experience or the experience of today believing or leaning on Him, calling out to Him, yoking with Him, holding His hand, whatever is going on as you are together with the Son of God, you are missing the experience of eternal life. That is why we keep failing. That is why we are not experiencing the victory. If you write a journal about all of your mistakes, (burn that thing if you have one) but if you were to take notes every time you do not experience victory and you are conquered, the main lesson learned is that you were missing Christ. If you got out of abiding in Him, you get out of walking with Him. And for a lot of us it is that we missed the morning prayer and Bible time that we so enjoy, and because of that we got into the busyness of life. The next thing you know I am yelling when I normally wouldn't or whatever it is I may be doing, but I am distracted into worldly things. It is because I did not take that spot of calling on the Lord and believing on Him. So this is just a reality, a teaching, an understanding, an explanation of how it works when you have the Son; you have life. We have to understand how this works because we just cannot make-believe victory. It actually does work, but it is always bound up with Christ. It is just glorious the way this works like that.

My favorite verse in I John is this verse 13. This was the verse that helped me to be sure that I actually had eternal life. After I was saved I was told I could lose my salvation, and I kept trying to keep it, and I kept getting unsaved it seemed like. But I never really thought that. The Spirit inside of me witnessed, "No, you are a son of God, but you totally failed." Then this verse came:

To Know that We have Eternal Life

"These things have I written to you that you would know that you have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God."

Now what I was talking about with my experience of assurance was a fact stance which I think this verse is very useful for. There are verses that are more useful in the gospel of John, but the fact that I have believed on the name of the Son of God I have eternal life.

Now there is a second layer to the meaning of this because in I John the emphasis is on the experience of fellowship. It should be known by this point that you have eternal life. If you do not know this, know it. If you believed, you have it, and you cannot get rid of eternal life.

Here is a Scripture verse just to put in your pocket. I believed and I have eternal life. But all of this help through I John of how to walk in the light, how to practice righteousness, how to love one another, is foundational on receiving eternal life. These were written so you would know or basically so you would come into the experience this moment of eternal life. You have eternal life. Let's do this. Let's eternal life this moment. Let's experience eternal life; let's walk in it. That is the victory stance. You have it, and then you are brought into the experience of it, and it is all to do with believing on the name of the Son of God.

So we want to look at the next phase or the next part. We have over emphasized or we have super discovered that all of our victory is bound up in Christ. It is all there, and now between us and the Lord we have kind of conceived the way. If you have experienced one minute of overcoming by the life of Christ, you have been brought into this victory, and all that is needed now is to keep going in that direction. It is not a matter of gaining victory, but we are to keep looking to the Lord Jesus that will enable us to walk through the victory. Once you have found it then you have it. You have the victory, and you know the way of experience. Even before you found it, you have the victory because you have Christ. I see it now; I have Christ so I have the victory. So once that first light bulb happens, then most of our lessons of maturing and growing, dealing with our own sins and our own flesh are a relearning of that same one lesson. Christ lives in me; everything is okay. If I live by myself, it does not work. That is the main big lesson in many different ways, but that is the victory.

So that is why the young men are in the young men's stage when they enter that threshold. It does not mean that they are doing that all the time, but once they discovered: "I have overcome by the life of Christ; I have the Holy Spirit inside of me. The Word of God has divided my soul from spirit a little bit, and I can tell there is something different inside of me." Once that discovery has been made, we are in this experience of victory. So do not look at your history, just look at Christ and keep going forward in that way. The maturing has to do with adding more and more experiences of living by the life of Christ. It is like John the Baptist said, "He must increase and I must decrease." As we mature we can see that we have done a little bit more of Christ living through us today than we did a year ago. This is just more of my norm, and that is kind of how the Lord is maturing us.

A Corporate Victory

This next section is bringing us or revealing to us that we are not doing this all by ourselves. The victory that we have is a corporate victory also. It is very personal, but it is also very much like we are in this with the church. Even in Revelation 12:11 we find that the overcomers are part

of a package, a manchild package of overcomers. There is a group of them, and we are always helping each other into victory.

Verse 14: "And this is the boldness which we have towards him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us, and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.

Verse 16: "If anyone see his brother sinning a sin unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life."

This verse here is talking about prayer. So now we have this boldness because we have eternal life inside of us. We have the victory because we have believed on Christ. We have this boldness of assurance in the presence of God. We can ask according to His will because by the life of God He is leading us. We are discovering how to walk in the light, how to be led by Him intuitively, how to not do things that are against our conscience, how to not do dead works. We are learning how to do things out of love. We are learning from Him to do God's will. So the prayer that we ask just matches God's heart.

If you see someone stumbling, pray for them. Ask; and what kind of asking is this? It is bold asking; it is assured asking. We know that we are asking according to God's will. This is one thing for sure you know is God's will that your brethren would overcome, that they would gain the victory in their lives as well. So one thing you can ask according to God's will is for your brother or sister to have more life, an increase of life, to have some of that washing of the water to bring life to them. A lot of this is because of immaturity. They do even know that they are sinning. It is almost like that prayer: "Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." You are praying for them. Now you may be sinning according to what you know, but you are walking in a greater light in that area. Therefore, if you see someone sinning and you pray for them, the Lord gives them life. There is a boldness in asking in this way. This is part of our victory which is helping others to gain victory.

Many of us that enter into the threshold of victory fall back out of it because we do not look around to help others. This is a weird aspect of the Christian life. However, if you go so low in your race, you will end up getting slower and more sluggish, and then something goes wrong with you. Your muscles get cramped up, and something is off. It is in that spot we find Christ and we are also able to notice our brothers and sisters and pray for them that they would also have life. Actually it ends up being that others are praying for you, and you are overcoming often, not only because Christ is praying for you but because someone else is praying for you.

Probably you know of times where you feel like there is no way I would have overcome that situation except this grandma in the church was praying for me or one of the young people was praying for me. Whoever it is, somebody is praying for you that you would receive life. So this is a bold victory type way of walking. If we ask Him anything according to His will, He does hear us. He is praying the same thing. What He wants is someone on earth to agree with Him in heaven. You are agreeing with Him for victory on the earth, and He is going to make it happen. He is waiting a lot of times for some to join in with Him in prayer to bring your brethren through.

I was recently in an obstacle race, believe it or not. The obstacles in this race were high walls, monkey bars, mud, and swimming through muddy waters. I was almost one of the oldest guys in the race, and one of the less-shaped ones. So in this obstacle race, there was victory sometimes, but failing many times. One thing that I did though was to help everybody I could. You are allowed to help somebody over the wall or something like that, maybe give them a foothold. There was one wall that I was helping somebody over. He was a big old man, and I was pushing on his bottom helping him, and we became good buddies from this experience. Then I came to this eight or ten foot wall, and I did not think at that moment I could get over that wall. Then somebody had mercy on me and came around and said, "Let me help you." I overcame, but only because I had some help. Then we came to another wall and beneath us was water up to our chest, watery mud and cold. Nobody wanted to go forward. We were all lined up on this blow-up wall that was like three feet thick, and we had to swim under it through muddy water, which covered us. All of those young guys were just sitting there saying, "No; man I am going to get out; it is too much." So that was one case where I could help them, even though I am not that victorious with some things. I could not do the monkey bars well; I had to do burpees or push-ups or something like that. But when it came to the wall I could do it. "By my God I have leaped over walls." Actually, I swam under it. So I told them all to follow me, and we counted on three, and all these guys went down with me and came out.

While this was happening I just thought of all my brothers and sisters. There are some things that some of us are good at and other things that we need the brothers and sisters to help us with. We are all just a little bit different. Some of the things on that course I could do better than some of the others, but pretty rare. Most of the things I needed some help.

In this race with the Lord we are meant to pray for each other. If you stop that part, you will notice your victory leaking out. The Lord has brought you into a victory in the house of God; He has brought the church into victory. The footstool under the feet of Christ is meant to be the church not an individual. So to put His enemies under His feet it has to be a corporate victory. We get a victory through corporate prayer, or through the victory that we have at the breaking of bread. That is a victory stance because we are proclaiming His death until He returns. It is almost like the whole room is flooded with victory. All of us remember Christ, and we are brought out of our past history. We remember Him, and we forget ourselves. It is victory, but we do it together. When you fellowship in a Bible study, suddenly you are brought into victory. "Yes, I do love the Lord."

I was at somebody's house the other day, and when we all walked in, we knew we wanted to fellowship. And somebody said, "It is so good to be in the house of the Lord," because there were grins everywhere and victory was there. We all remembered how much we love the brothers and sisters, how much we love to do these things, and we love to be in His Word. So that is the thing with praying for each other.

The Sin Unto Death

It gets a little weird here in I John where he goes on to talk about a sin to death. He prayed for them but not if they have a sin unto death. "And there is a sin to death: I do not say you should pray about that; do not make a request for that. Every unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin

that is not unto death" (5:16-17). So there is a type of sin that we pray for. If somebody is sinning a sin, we pray for them, and the Lord gives them life.

Now what about this weird "sin unto death?" Sometimes the Lord may say, "No, do not pray." There is some discernment there. Actually, if you read in the prophets such as in Jeremiah, sometimes God would say, "Stop praying for that. I am done with that. I am actually not going to hear that prayer." The sins have piled up enough that they will have to go through some discipline, some judgment. At one point, they stopped praying that the Lord would rescue them from the Babylonians because the Lord said, "Stop praying that way. I am going to use the Babylonians to discipline my people." But the principle of it was a sin unto death. At least in that area life was not going to come.

Now there is a literal sin unto death experience in the Bible. In the book of Acts, we find Ananias and Sapphira who sinned, and they actually physically died. Ananias and Sapphira sinned by lying to the Holy Spirit, and they died as soon as they were exposed in front of Peter; it was a sin unto death.

In I Corinthians 11 Paul is talking about the way that they were breaking bread, that it was the wrong way. He said, "Because some of you are not remembering or discerning the body the right way, some of you have been sick and some have even died. That is pretty solid. That is a sin unto death, the sin at the Lord's table. Actually, some of the Corinthians physically died. It is a real thing.

There are some principals of it that may be more applicable such as with Moses and the Israelites. One time, he got very mad on the second time that water came out of the rock. He was supposed to speak to it instead of striking it, but he struck it and yelled at them, and he misrepresented God. God said, "You are not going to be able to physically go into the Promised Land. You are going to die." That was a sin unto death. It does not mean he died immediately, but it meant that he lost the privilege. He would die before that privilege would happen. So he could have kept begging the Lord, saying, "Please just let me go into the Promised Land because I have spent and worked my whole life for this." And God said, "No, you are going to see it, but you will not enter in."

You do not pray for those types of things. After the Israelites had rebelled against the Lord ten times, the Lord said, "That's it! That's the tenth time, and your sins have piled up enough. You are going to wander in the wilderness now, and the first generation is going to die." But they tried to pray the sin to death. They said, "Okay, never mind. We will do this, we will go into the Promised Land. We will forget about the giants; it's okay." So some small portion of the army started to charge against the enemies in the land of Canaan, and God was not with them. He said, "Do not pray if it is a sin to death. Do not even try if I have said, 'no.'" They ended up not winning at all in that battle, and they all realized, "Okay, we are going to go through the wilderness and die."

Sometimes there is this discernment that this is not something to pray for right now. Maybe God is doing something different. Sometimes in your life you have felt the Lord was leading one way, but because of some mistakes it seems like I am in a new life circumstance; that

circumstance has changed, and I am not going to be used that way. It does not mean that you are not going to gain the crown in the end at all. How much regret do we have in our past? How many things like that? It also does not mean that we all know who has sinned a sin to death. I think none of us can be so solid with that. But what I think we can take from this as John is instructing us to pray for each other is pray as the Lord connects you in prayer, but feel free to stop praying for something if you sense from the Holy Spirit, "Okay, maybe I should not pray anymore."

Somebody asked me recently: "I am scared to put people on my prayer list because, "is this forever? Is it that I can never take them off." So I said, "No, I have taken many people off my prayer list, not because I did not like them anymore. Maybe circumstances changed or maybe I am in a new place or the more I pray for them the more I feel like someone else is going to pray for them. So we need to let the Lord give us some discernment. As we are praying for each other, if you keep feeling every time you pray for somebody or for something in their life, and you sense that you do not feel life in that prayer, then try praying a new way or praying for some other people. The Lord will raise up other people to pray for them, and we can be guaranteed that God Himself is praying for them. So do not feel bad about taking someone off your prayer list. However, when you do find life in praying for somebody, pray for them.

So I hope I did not get too weird with this sin to death, but it is just kind of weird in the Scriptures as if everyone knew what he is talking about. Don't pray if it is sin to death. I think what he is getting at is in this boldness in the presence of God, you have been experiencing eternal life, you have boldness because you are praying according to His will. Then as you are praying and you sense something is not right there, then do not pray. Just be sensitive when we are praying for something. "Okay, I have been praying for this to happen, but now I think I should pray differently. The main point with all of this is that we are praying with some discernment for the Lord to give life to our brothers and sisters. The victory aspect of this is the Lord's work in victory. Sometimes He needs to work judgment on someone, so He will take them around the corner for a while, and He may not have you pray for that immediate change, but He is working with them. So pray as the Lord leads, and we are praying for victory.

At the very end in these last verses, there is this assurance stance, which all believers today have to take. There are three times where He says, "We know. We are assured. This is us; this is who we are" And you are either in agreement with the Word of God or you make God a liar. Either we can say this together with the apostle that we know this or we can look back at ourselves. We begin to trust our feelings instead of our faith. We feel something else, and we say, "I am not so sure."

Those Begotten of God do not Sin

In verse 18 he says: "We know that everyone begotten of God does not sin, (I know this sounds crazy.) but he that has been begotten of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."

Do you know that everyone begotten of God does not sin? Obviously, in our minds we are reasoning through this, and we are thinking, "No, that is not right. Everyone that I have met that

is begotten of God has sinned after they have been begotten of God.” Where do we know this? Where is our assurance? Let’s get back to that beginning of the reality of victory. How do we know that everyone begotten of God does not sin? We know it by faith in Christ. Or if we get technical with it, here is how it works. That which is begotten inside of you, the eternal life does not sin. I think our minds can handle that. Christ in me never sins. I know this. Now just change your viewpoint to God’s viewpoint. Stop looking at yourself as you are mixed up with you and the life of Christ in your body of sin. Just take your position in Christ and look down and see who you are in Christ. It is not just the eternal life inside of you; it is that whole one that is begotten of God. As God sees it, he that is begotten does not sin. I am absolutely not trying to say that we do not sin as Christians in our experience right now. What I am trying to say is that our stance of victory is in the heavenlies in Christ. In reality we all do know even in our reasoning that Christ in me never sins. But can we take our stance together with Him and say, “He that is begotten of God does not sin. He keeps himself from the world”? Do you know how this is helpful? This is a declaration of faith. It is not a declaration that this has been my history or something like that, and it is not make believe. In the moment when sinning is happening or about to happen, if you take your two feet and take your stance on the Christ, the solid Rock, and say, “No, I know that He that is begotten of God does not sin.” You lift yourself up to who you are in Christ, and suddenly in your experience you do not sin; you just kept yourself from the world. It is because you are assured in Christ. Now to get back to our reasoning and our mind so we do not get crazy, we are not sure outside of Christ. The only place where we can say, “We know!” is when we look off to Christ and then we say, “Oh, yes, I know this. He that is begotten of God does not sin.” This is the stance.

The Whole World lies in the Wicked One

Verse 19 is the second stance: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked one.”

The emphasis here is that you are not of the world; you are of God. The whole world is in the hands of the wicked one, but you are of a different kingdom. You know by fact that you have been brought out of that darkness and into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love, but you know it right now that you are of God. You know it when you fix your eyes on Christ where the victory is. He that believes has the victory. He that has the Son has the life. We know this. We know that we are of God. The whole world, whatever you see going on in the world, that is of the wicked one. This is also a helpful stance to take. When the temptations of the world comes at us, you realize all of that is of the wicked one, and I am of God. If any man is in Christ there is a new creation. That is where I am at. I know I am of God. You take your stance by faith and you stand with your two feet in the victory. Just like Christ is going to come and He is going to put His two feet on Mount Olives, and it is going to split in half. That is what happens in every one of our experiences when we take our stance of victory in Christ. His victory is meant to be stood on. It is meant for our two feet to be down, and the mountain is going to split in every mountain temptation in our lives. When the Lord said, “By faith you can move a mountain,” He is talking about standing on the Mount of Olives with your two feet in the victory of Christ, and it actually moves. There is going to be a time when that physically happens in Jerusalem. The mountain is going to split in half, and it is a real thing that is going to happen, and today it is meant to happen

spiritually, really. You stand on the mountain of the impossible, but by faith in the victory of Christ, it splits into two, and you say, "We know that we are of God. We know that we do not sin. He that is born of God does not sin. The life that He has given me does not sin. I know this." And as you take your stance, you praise Christ, and you are brought out of that mountain, and it splits in two, just as all Israel will be saved to walk right through. The salvation of the Lord can come that way. You look on Him who has been pierced for you, and you just rejoice because He died for you. His victory is there.

This is another one that we know. We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true. We are in Him who is true, and this is His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Do you notice the word 'true' here? It is constant here. These are things that we know; we know that the Son of God has come; He has given us an understanding; we should know Him that is true, who is the reality. We know that He has brought to us reality. We are in Him that is real. This is where we are; this is where we really are. This is the battle stance of assurance in dealing with looking at our lives versus looking at Him who is true. He has come and we are in Him who is true, His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Remember that we have been born again. We have eternal life within us. We have been brought into Him that is true, and He has brought the truth to us. So this is our place to take.

Idols will Take You Away from God

Verse 21: "Children, keep yourselves from idols."

I think this verse could actually be a whole message for all of us. It is wonderful how it is just the last verse. After all of these things, it is not out of context, it is not some added verse or something like that. Some people will connect it to what we just read. He is true and all these false idols are other things. Some people would just connect it that way. The contrast is keep yourselves away from all of those shadows, those things of the world, those things of the enemy, those false gods, all of those types of things. Remember, this whole letter is written to new believers, maturing believers and very mature believers; all of us. Whether it is a physical idol that would be tempting if you are in certain parts of the world or different cultures, or if it is an idol in your life. Whatever it is, an idol takes you away from Christ, takes you away from eternal life, takes you away from fellowship. That is the essence of idolatry. Have no other gods but Me. Whenever we have something else that we turn to first or we turn to for help or we turn to for pleasure or we turn to, to get our minds off of hard things; all of those are idolatry. Anything that we would turn to that would take the place of God, keep ourselves from these things, because all of our victory is bound up in Christ Himself. This is where the victory lies, and you have the victory because you have believed on Him, on the Son of God's love.

Let's pray together,

Oh Lord, we take our stance together with You. We just thank You that You have overcome, and we fear no longer. We look around at our lives and all that we would run into and the mountains surrounding us. It is as if we are in the pits surrounded by mountains, but Lord, we sense that Rock of Christ is rising up out of the pit, and we are on mount Zion and You have

proclaimed Your victory. We stand together with You that Jesus is our Lord, and Christ has the victory. Lord, by faith we just come into this victory believing on You. We pray for all of our brothers and sisters that You would give life. All of these mountains that are going on that have seemed impossible, Lord, give life. Cleanse with the precious blood and give life where there is need for new knowledge of the Scriptures, where there is need for new help for something to change, where an idol needs to be exposed for what it really is, Lord give life. We pray for each other. Give us life, Lord. Bring us all afresh into this experience of Your victory. In Jesus' name. Amen.