

## THE VICTORY OF FAITH

1 John 5:1-5

**Intro:** This morning I am bringing you my twentieth message in this present series on 1 John. Although I haven't yet gotten to the verse in which the Apostle John stated his purpose in writing this epistle, yet I have referred to it many times: 1 John 5:13. Just from reading through the epistle, as I have encouraged you to do, we can see that the Apostle John has been telling how we can know that we have eternal life because he has told us once, and then he repeated the evidence a second time, and then a third time, as we read our way through the epistle. There evidently were many people in those early days toward the close of the first century who claimed to be Christians, but whose lives did not support their claims.

One of the most wonderful truths in the first epistle of John, a truth which is mentioned in other books of the Bible, is that God is referred to as the Father of those who are saved. You have this in chapter 1, but it is emphasized in the first verses of chapter 3.

The Apostle John, writing under the direction and authority of the Holy Spirit, made it clear that if a person is saved, they are not going to be able to continue living a life of sin. A Christian can still sin, but he can't live in sin.

Furthermore, a true Christian is going to be interested in learning from the Bible how to live a life that is pleasing to God. He pays attention to what he is supposed to do, and what he is not supposed to do. The instructions are given in the Bible in the form of commandments. We can't save ourselves by obeying the commandments of Scripture, but we obey them because we are saved and want to live a life that is pleasing to God.

And then a point which the Apostle John hits over and over again in this brief epistle is that a true Christian is one who loves other Christians. He loves to be with them. That is why Christians go to church so that they can be with other Christians, sit under the teaching of the Word, pray for each other, and encourage each other to live to please God.

But the Apostle John did not get very far into his epistle before he sounded a warning for all of the people of God. And this had to do with what he called, "the world." I am speaking now of 2:15-17. When the Lord

was with His disciples for the last time before His arrest and crucifixion, He spoke to them about the world and their relationship with the world, and how they got out of the world. You have this in John 15:18-19. Let me read those verses to you:

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

The world we live in is a fallen world, a sinful world. All of us are sinful by birth. A Christian has been saved out of the world, and his life is to be different from the world. A Christian is one who is to be concerned about pleasing God. A Christian can still sin, but he can't live in sin. A person who claims to be a Christian, but who lives just people live in the world, is a person who is making a false claim.

Now we need to keep all of these points in mind as we seek to live in this world because the world put us continually under pressure to live, not for God, to please Him, but to fit into the world's sinful lifestyle.

Now keep all of this in mind as we come to chapter 5.

In chapter 4 the Apostle John has been emphasizing the love of God and how that love is to affect our lives as believers. This is basic to our fellowship with the Lord and each other. Two weeks ago I spoke to you from chapter 4 on being made perfect in love, and I emphasized four points that the Apostle John has made in this epistle with respect to love. Let me give them to you again.

1) The first fact is a doctrinal point that we are to be continually learning more and more about, that it is that "God is love." This is His nature, and having come to know Him, this truth is going to have a transforming effect upon our lives.

2) The second, third, and fourth points about the teaching of love in the Bible are:

- a) That God loves us.
- b) God wants us to love Him.
- c) We are to love each other.

These are basic truths, and are life-long matters for all of us to be concerned about. We learn about the love of God from Genesis to Revelation. It is in the OT as well as the NT. But the greatest evidence of

God's love for us is when God sent His Son to die for us sinners who did not ask Him to save us, nor did we deserve to be saved. But God, because of His love for us, sent His Son to secure our salvation. So we need to grow in our love for the Lord, and we need to grow in our love for each other. These are matters which we need to be concerned about every day of our lives.

But now as we come to chapter 5 of this wonderful epistle the Apostle John is beginning to draw everything together to prepare us for living to please God in this world which is exactly like it was when the Apostle John wrote this epistle toward the end of the first century over 2,000 years ago.

Now this first epistle of John is a family epistle. It is for the family of God. God is our Father. But how did we become His children? I think that most of you can answer that question. And the Apostle John tells us here in the first verse of chapter 5. We were "born of God."

Our lives here on earth began when we were born of our parents. And our parents were born of their parents. And our children were born of us who are their parents. One thing that this expression means is that we did not have anything to do with our births. And for us to be "born of God" means that we had nothing to do with it; it was all of God. He chose us in eternity past. He sought us, and called us, and gave us His life. We were "born of God," or "begotten of God" which is the same in the original text.

Notice the times that the Apostle John mentioned this:

- 1) 1 John 2:29.
- 2) 1 John 3:9 (2x).
- 3) 1 John 4:7.
- 4) 1 John 5:1 (2x).
- 5) 1 John 5:4.
- 6) 1 John 5:18 (2x). Eight times in all.

But now let us go back of 5:1. I want to point out a truth that is often overlooked.

The Apostle John is emphasizing faith in these verses. Faith is believing, and believing is faith. The two words have the same root in the original. But we don't have *a verb* for faith in English, and so the word believe is

used. But if you could see the two words in the Greek text, you would see their relationship.

But now the question I want to ask is this: Which comes first, the believing, or the new birth? I think you will see that the Apostle John is telling us here that when a person believes that Jesus is the Christ, it is evidence that he had to be born of God before he could believe. Faith is evidence that we have been born again. God gives us life, and then He gives us faith.

When the Lord Jesus stood outside of the tomb of Lazarus and said, "Lazarus, come forth," the Lord had to have raised Lazarus back to life in the tomb before Lazarus could hear Him, and come out of the tomb.

So it is not true that we believe, and then have life, but God gives us life and then we believe as evidence that we have life. Salvation is all of God. Our eternal life is a gift from God, and so is our faith. Cf. Eph. 2:8-9.

Now the second part of verse 1 here in chapter 5 is equally wonderful.

The Apostle John is tracing the other evidences of salvation to God as well. The words "every one that loveth him that begat" is a statement we know to be true even in a human birth. A child has a natural tie, a loving tie, with the one through whom he, or she, has been born. And that is true of those of us who have been born of God. We have a God-given love for God Himself. Perhaps this is the reason that it is so easy to talk to a little child about God, and that children are so acceptive of talk about God or the Lord Jesus Christ. Parents, you need to take advantage of this. Every little child born into this world, is born in sin, but we as parents can't begin too soon to tell them about the Lord, or read the Bible to them, or sing songs of the faith to them.

But it follows after the parent, that the child to child relationship comes in a close second. So in our relationship with God. When we are born again, we not only love our heavenly Father and our Savior, but we are born with a love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. You and I don't have to create it; it goes right along with the fact that we both call God our Father. Have you noticed how easy it is to get acquainted with another Christian?

Verse 2 follows from verse 1. We love God first and best, and we love

the children of God more when we love God “and keep His commandments.” And how does our love for God show itself. It is when we keep His commandments. So obedience to the commandments of Scripture shows our love for God and increases our love for our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Verse 3 continues the same thought with a word from a child of God in defense of the Father’s commandments. They are “not grievous.” I am sure that you have heard people say that the God of the OT was hard, oppressive, demanding, hard to please, but somehow he got more gentle as you get into the NT. But still they say that they don’t want anyone, even God, telling them what to do.

We live in a day that frowns upon discipline. Most of us who have had parents who disciplined us, know that we deserved all of the punishment that we got, and know that we should have gotten more.

Now as we come down to verses 4 and 5 we come to the main point that the Apostle John, directed by the Holy Spirit was making. And here we come again to his emphasis upon faith, upon believing. And this is where we as the children of God need help. We are all faced with the opposition of the world. Temptations of all kinds are set before us. There is one thing that is always true of sin and sinners, and it is that the people who are of the world are never content just to live the way they want to live, but they seem never to be satisfied unless they are getting others to live and do what they do.

Listen to these words of wisdom from Solomon found in Proverbs 4:14-18:

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Faith is trust. We are saved by faith, and we are to talk by faith. We have faith in God, and faith in His Word. We trust the promises of God. We

trust God to lead us, and to protect us, and to enable us to live in victory over the temptations that face us every day in the world. But you see from our passage today that faith is strengthened by God's love for us, and our love for God, manifested in our obedience to His commandments, and our love for each other.

We need to ask ourselves if the evidences of divine life are in our hearts and can be seen by others in the way we live. Are we conscious of how utterly dependent we are upon the Lord to protect us from temptation, to keep us from falling, to make us strong in our relationship with the Lord, and in our fellowship with each other as members of the family of God. No Christian is ever strong enough to "go it" alone. There is strength that we receive in our love for one another that is, in itself, a safeguard against temptation and sin. Let any child of God begin to neglect the fellowship of the saints, and they will find that trouble lies ahead.

On the other hand, let us be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.