

# Becoming an Overcomer

## 1 John 5:1-5

Over the past 2000 years, followers of Jesus have been called by many different names. For instance...

- The most common word for those committed to Jesus was DISCIPLE... meaning a follower... a learner. Matthew 5.1 says... "Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and He began to teach them..."
- Sometimes followers were simply called BELIEVERS... More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.
- Several times in the book of Acts they were referred to as those of THE WAY. After all, Jesus did say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14.6) So, those who Learned of Him.. Believed in Him.. Followed Him were those of the Way.
- At Antioch, they were called CHRISTIANS... Meaning those belonging to Christ... His possession... Those purchased with a price... His blood.
- Paul referred to Christians as SAINTS... Those set apart... sanctified for God's use.
- We are known as Children of God
- The family of God... The household of God.
- Instruments of righteousness
- Living sacrifices
- A royal priesthood
- A holy nation
- A peculiar people

Each of these titles describe a different and distinctive characteristic of those who follow Jesus. In our reading, John suggested another name for us. Do you see it? OVERCOMERS. So, a Christian, a Disciple, a Child of God, is one who overcomes.

Now, we must know this morning that this is not the only place in scripture where Christians, Saints, Children of God are called Overcomers; or, where we're called to overcome... to be overcomers. Listen to these Scriptures:

Paul contends in Romans 12 that Christians are those who are not overcome by evil, but those who overcome evil with good. Listen to these Scriptures:

- *Jesus said, To him who overcomes... I will give the right to eat from the tree of life.* (Rev. 2.7)
- *He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.* Rev 2.11
- *To him who overcomes... I will give of the hidden manna... I will give him a white stone with a new name written on it.* (Rev 2.17)
- *To him who overcomes and does My will to the end... I will give authority over the nations.* (Rev 2.26)
- *To him who overcomes... I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne.* (Revelation 3.21)
- *He who overcomes will be dressed in white... I will never blot out his name from the book of life... but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels.* (Revelation 3.4)
- *He who overcomes will inherit all this... and I will be his God and he will be My son.* (Rev. 21.7)

When we hear these verses we all want to be OVERCOMERS, don't we?? Well... What is an OVERCOMER?

Webster says an overcomer is...

- One who gets better...
- One who excels...
- One who completes a task...
- One who accomplishes, wins, and conquers.

In other Bible verses, the Greek word translated '*overcome*' is also rendered conquer, prevail, and win the victory in the KJV.

Well, how can we do it? How can we become an OVERCOMER?

**FIRST... AN OVERCOMER IS ONE WHO ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM.**

The word overcome implies that there is something standing in our way. That there is something keeping us from being the people and person God wants us to be. An overcomer is one who understands that Satan is continually working to present us with...

- Another problem...
- Another barrier...
- Another obstacle...
- Another discouragement...
- Another sin opportunity...
- One more temptation.

Now, understand that overcoming has little to do with the circumstances we're in, but it has everything to do with the **commitment inside** us.

- Everyone has circumstances and situations... Bad things happen to all of us.
- The key to overcoming is what we do with these circumstances and situations.
- The key is what happens within us... What happens within us!
- Problems constantly confront us and will continue to so. This is the way life is!!
- Temptation and sin are always there right in our face...
- Discouragement and suffering are just around the corner...

These things must be met head-on and must be overcome if we are going to be victorious... conquerors... overcomers... If we are going to be God's person... daily!!

You see in the text that we are to overcome -- THE WORLD! Our problem is this world. What is the world? World here means:

- John is speaking of Satan and his plans... his schemes.
- The world is sin and its pleasures.
- The world is hurt, pain, and suffering.
- The world is sensuality, lust, and selfish pleasure.
- The world is anything and everything which stands in opposition to God and His will.

The world is anything that:

- Destroys our faith... Weakens our faith... Compromises our convictions.
- Anything that destroys or weakens our Christian influence and witness.
- Anything that distorts our God-given desires... turning them into lust.
- The world is anything that draws us away from God and His will for us.
- The world is anything that tries to confuse our value system.

We know this because we hear Jesus say in John 16.33... ***"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."***

As Christians we are surrounded by sin, temptation, and suffering. But we must not be discouraged because we can OVERCOME! It is God's promise, if we will live by faith. In fact, earlier in this book John says three times that the dear ones he is writing to have overcome... They have done what we strive to do daily. God is not asking us to do something impossible... However, there is a price to be paid.

## **THIS IS OUR SECOND POINT... AN OVERCOMER MUST BE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE.**

Satan would like for us to believe that the Christian life is easy and costs nothing. Truth is, Discipleship is pricey! It costs us plenty to become overcomers! One of the most serious problems in the church today is that people have been fooled into thinking that Christianity is easy and costs them little to nothing. Folks, this thinking is of the devil.

The first price is to, *"love not the world and the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world -- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eye and the pride in possession -- comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."* 1 John 2.15-17 Not loving the things of the world is tough in our culture RIGHT? As Overcomers, We Must Pay The Price Of Separation From The World.

Paul tells the Corinthians... AND US... *"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers... Come out from among them... Be you separate says the Lord.... Evil companionship corrupts good morals."* To the church at Rome he wrote, *"Do not allow the world to force you into its mold."* *Jesus said, "We are to be in the world... but not of the world."*

Here it is, we cannot be friends with the world, and be friends of Jesus. We must choose today... and everyday... whom we will serve. This world is a constant temptation for us. Overcoming... Costs Us The Pleasure Of Sin.

Moses was an overcomer. He refused to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Moses knew that the wages of sin is death. Overcomers must say NO to sin and its pleasures.

**Overcomers Must Deny Self.**

- Jesus taught... *"If any man comes after me, let him... (WHAT??)... deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."*
- We must be willing to surrender our will to the will of God in all things... not just in some things... but in ALL things.
- James contends that... *"We must become doers of the Word... not hearers only." DOERS!!*
- Paul said.. *"We must crucify the old man and be raised to walk a new... different... life."*
- We hear him say... "I die daily."

## **ARE WE WILLING TO DENY and DIE TO SELF?**

Make no mistake about it...

- The price of discipleship...
- The price of being an overcomer...
- The price of living by faith... is awesome.
- Are we willing to pay the price and become OVERCOMERS?

Are we willing to live out Romans 12.21? *"Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."*

- This is our life!!
- This is being like Jesus!!
- This is genuine discipleship... AMEN?

## **Third - AN OVERCOMER IS ONE WHO BELIEVES IN AND ACCEPTS GOD'S PROMISES.**

John indicates in verse four... that we can *"overcome the world."* Then, for emphasis, he repeats the possibility in verse five. John is saying that faith is trusting in the promises of God... All of them!! There is simply no way for us to be OVERCOMERS without trusting in His promises!!

Listen to some such promises from the Word:

- *To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” Jn 1.12*
- *In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare one for you. (John 14.2)*
- *There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8.1)*
- *In all things God works for the good of those who love Him. (Romans 8.28)*
- *We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Romans 8.37)*
- *Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8.39)*
- *Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15.55-57)*
- *In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins... (Ephesians 1.7)*
- *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. (1 John 5.4)*

Why is it that we seem to want to choose the promises we want to believe in?

- We believe that sins are forgiven in the act of New Testament baptism; but, do we believe that His blood continues to forgive as we acknowledge our sins, as we... like Paul... strive to forget the past and walk in the light?
- We believe Jesus went to heaven to prepare a place for us; but, do we believe that He is busy today... at this very moment and every moment... working all things out to our benefit, to our good, to our betterment?
- We believe in His presence in heaven at the right hand of the Father; but, do we believe He is present in our lives daily... and that He will never leave or forsake us?

You see, we tend to choose the verses and concepts... indeed... the promises that we believe in... RIGHT?

Overcomers... those who live by faith are not alone... God is with us... enabling and empowering us! Think about this...

- The task before Noah was overwhelming... but God enabled and empowered him.
- Abraham had no chance to become the father of a great nation... didn't have any children... Impossible!! But God saw to it.
- Joseph was in prison... but God worked his release.
- Israel was in Egyptian slavery... but God delivered them.
- David was out-gunned by Goliath... but God empowered him.
- Daniel was trapped in the lion's den... but God rescued him.
- Jonah was in the belly of the fish... but God retrieved him.
- The Prodigal Son was lost in the far country... but God welcomed him home.
- Jesus was in the tomb... but God raised him.
- Peter was in the grip of guilt and despair for denying Jesus... but Jesus forgave and reinstated him.
- The Pentecostians of Acts two were lost in their terrible sin of crucifying the Son of God!! But God forgave!!... Giving them the gift of the Holy Spirit and adding them to His family.

I want us to know that what God did for these people, He will do for us. OVERCOMERS are those who accept and trust in the promises of God. Are we an overcomer? Do we trust ALL his promises? I pray that we do.

**FOURTH... AN OVERCOMER IS ONE WHO APPLIES THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH.**

*"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."*

OVERCOMERS are those who live by FAITH. The Hebrews' writer tells us that's always been true.

- Faith is that which pleases God...

- It's faith that overcomes the world...
- Faith enables... makes us... OVERCOMERS!!

our overcoming is directly proportional to our faith! Little faith -- little overcoming. Strong... deep... active faith -- Great Overcoming! Life must be lived by this FAITH principle, not just our religion.

- We open a can of food and eat. We have faith that it will be nutritious... not poison.
- We board a plane on faith that the pilot knows what he is doing... faith that the plane will fly and not fall.
- We go to a doctor whose name we can't pronounce; he gives us a prescription we cannot read; we take it to a pharmacist we've never met -- yet we take the medicine in faith!

God asks us to apply the principle to LIVE BY FAITH... so that we can OVERCOME THE WORLD.

Why is it that we apply the principle in this world... But not in His world?

### **Overcomers Believe In God's Presence... Power... And Providence.**

Think about the verses we've already addressed:

- I am with you always... even to the very end of the age.
- Never will I leave you... never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper... I will not be afraid.
- I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.
- We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.
- You, dear children, are from God and have overcome because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Question... How many of us believe in... really... really... believe in the presence, power, and providence of God in our daily lives?

Overcomers Understand That Faith Demands Obedience For Salvation.

- Jesus said... "He that believes and is baptized will be saved."
- Jesus said... "If you love Me you will keep My commandments... You will obey Me!!"

It's crazy for us to think that we can be overcomers... that we can be saved without obedience... without submitting to the will of God.

Then... Overcomers Must Walk With Him Daily.

This same John tells us in 1 John 1.7-9 that if we as children of God will acknowledge our sins and walk in the light that God will faithfully forgive our sins by the blood of Jesus.

This is the kind of obedient faith John demands that Overcomers have.

QUESTION!!...How would you like to please God this morning... Right now!!

Would you like to be...

- An overcomer...
- A disciple...
- A child of God...
- A Christian?

You can be by using this faith principle. "You are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3.27)

Indeed... the invitation is for us to be overcomers by faith!

Overcome the world... as we stand and sing this invitation song together...

Come if you need to!!