

Christians as Overcomers I John 5:1-5

Introduction

John introduces the word “overcome” in this passage 3 times. He explains to us that we as Christians are overcomers, and it is a concept and a title that is not common in our vocabulary. Christians are known as children of God, believers, faithful, servants, stewards, saints, light of the world, etc. These are words that we know and love; however, I want to introduce another term that we need to hear and that is overcomers, victors, conquerors.

The word “overcome” in Greek is *nikeo* from which we have Nike (the shoe company). The word means to conquer. However, to the Greeks, that word belonged only to the gods, not humans. They believed that the gods were the only ones that had complete victory in struggles—in fact, they had a Greek goddess named Nike who was the goddess of victory. Imagine for a moment that you are in church when you received this letter, and you hear the reader use the word overcome (*nikeo*). This would be stunning to hear that John says that we humans overcome, conquer. In the Greek language, only the gods overcome. We are conquerors...overcomers.

Paul says in **Romans 8:37** that “we are more than conquerors.” The word is *hyper-nike*, or “super conquerors”. In other words, victory is not large enough word to explain what takes place in a believer’s life.

In this context, John wants us to know (as he has in the letter) about our status as Christians. He knew that the Christians in the church were confused and discouraged by some of the people leaving the church, and he wanted to encourage them and remind them that in Christ, they have overcome because we belong to Christ. We must understand that we overcome in Christ who is the Supreme Overcomer as He says in **John 16:33**

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And Paul says that God will see to it that we will have victory.

2 Corinthians 2:14a *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.*

I. Overcoming what?

Note: Before we get into the text, we need to know and understand what we are overcoming and what we have overcome.

- Satan

Revelation 12:11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*

1 John 2:13, 14 *I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. (14) I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.*

James 4:7 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

Note: We overcome Satan through Christ, through the Word and submitting to God. In all that, we resist the devil, and we have conquered him.

- Death, Sin, and Law

1 Corinthians 15:55-56 *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (56) The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*

- World

1 John 4:4 *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

Note: We have totally and completely conquered the enemies—Satan, death, sin, law, and the world. Only through Christ, we have conquered because He has totally conquered everything and subjected everything to His rule. We overcome only the false spiritual system of Satan. This does not mean that we conquer the world through politics, government intervention, or social justices.

Transition: However, how can we, as we look at our life marred by sinful moments, be called conquerors? The Bible tells us that we are in Christ, the Conqueror. We don't deserve this special honor that our Lord has given us, but we are like soldiers in battle fight under the general who gives us the victory. John answers the question how we are overcomers. 1) we believe in the truth, 2) we love God and others, and 3) we obey His words.

II. Believing in the truth (1a, 4-5)

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God
- For whatever is born of God overcomes the world

Note: The ultimate reason that we are overcomers is that we are born of God (or out of God, literal translation).

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*

Note: We must believe in the Person of Jesus and His Deity in order to be saved. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, Messiah, born of a virgin, sinless, died, buried, rose again on third day, and is our Lord and Savior. Believe all this and it is evident that you are born again. Not only that, faith remains because of your new birth.

- And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.
- Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Note: It is our faith, manifested at the moment of our new birth, that endures. What faith is that? It can be the personal faith we have in Christ, and it can also be the faith that has been passed down from the apostles (Jude 3). John is talking here that it is the faith that endures trials of the world and the snares of the enemy.

Hebrews 12:1 (in context of **Hebrews 11**) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

III. Loving God and others (1b-2a)

Note: How are you an overcomer? You love God and His children. You show that you love God. You come to church because you want to learn about Him and help His children. If you come because your spouse drags you to church and you come and avoid everyone here, hoping not to talk to anyone, then it is an indication that you do not love God. If you love God, then you also love His children. You want to show them honor and do good for them. John talks about it a lot in his letter: **2:10-11; 3:10, 14, 17, 23; 4:7-8, 12, 20-21**. When you love one another, you have overcome the evil one's attempt to destroy the fellowship. You also have overcome the law because loving God and loving others are fulfillments of the law.

IV. Obeying the Word (2b-3)

- Keep (observe) His commandments
 - To do—an action, active obedience
- that we keep His commandments.
 - To protect, guard His commandments in your life through the application of His word in your life
- And His commandments are not burdensome

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

Psalms 119:14 *I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

Psalms 119:16 *I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.*

Psalms 119:97 *Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.*

Psalms 119:103 *How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

Note: How is His law not burdensome? How is it that we can love His laws? We certainly do not like laws or rules. I have not heard our children tell us, "I love to obey my mom and clean my room." Obedience is against our nature. How is it we love to obey as the Psalmist say?

Romans 6:17 *But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*

Note: It is from the heart that we love God and want to serve Him. Scripture says that He writes on our hearts a new law that we obey. A person who obeys God is an overcomer just as a soldier obeys his general in battle. Again it is God who leads us in triumph through Christ Jesus.

Transition: John says here that if we believe the truth, we love God and others, and we obey His words, then we are overcomers. Through Jesus we have overcome the world and sin. Is that it? No, Jesus promises rewards for those who overcome.

Promises for the Overcomers (Conclusion)

In **Revelation chapters 2 and 3**, Jesus has John write letters to the 7 churches, and in each church, He promises different things for those who overcome. He promises us our reward. What is really exciting and humbling is that even though Jesus Himself is the Conqueror of everything, He still sees us as overcomers! His work has been imputed to us!

To he who overcomes:

1. Ephesus (2:7)

- **eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God**
- Eternal enjoyment of God's presence (Tree of Life is at the River of Life).

2. Smyrna (2:11)

- **Not hurt by the second death**
- Eternal life, never to die again

3. Pergamos (2:17)

- **I will give some of the hidden manna to eat.**
- Receive Christ in the fullest
- **And I will give him a white stone**
- Diamond—identification as a Christian.
- **on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.**
- Personal identification where Christ know you as an individual

4. Thyatira (2:28)

- **I will give power over the nations**
- He gives us authority
- **I will give him the morning star**

2 Peter 1:19 *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

- *Eternal relationship with Jesus as the Bright and Morning Star*

5. Sardis (3:5)

- **shall be clothed in white garments**
- We become worthy (when we were once unworthy)
- **and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life**
- Eternal security
- **but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**
- Jesus will acknowledge you as His own to Heaven

6. Philadelphia (3:12)

- **I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God**
- Our names will be etched on the pillars in His temple for all eternity
- **and he shall go out no more.**
- We receive our eternal home and no longer strangers and aliens
- **And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.**
- We shall be branded by God as His chosen possession

7. Laodecia (3:17)

- **I will grant to sit with Me on My throne**
- The pinnacle of His promises. We will sit with Him on His throne!