Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How to Recognize an Overcomer, Part 1
Scripture: 1 John 5:1-5
Code: 62-36

We come in our study of the Bible to 1 John chapter 5 tonight. We actually are entering the last chapter of 1 John. It was many, many years ago when I first went through 1 John. In fact, so many years ago that I wanted to do it again before I wrote the commentaries on 1 and 2 and 3 John. It's been a wonderful, enriching study for me and we will go on to the brief epistle of 2 John and then 3 John. And after that I will begin to write the commentary on these three epistles as well.

This is, as you know by now, if you've been in our study of 1 John, very foundational, very basic. This marvelous epistle has a very clear-cut purpose. It has the purpose of demonstrating the tests by which someone can know they're a Christian. Chapter 5 verse 13 is really the key verse to the whole epistle. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life." This is a letter written to provide assurance of salvation. And as I said, it's basic. In fact, there's a sense in which it's very basic and very simple. And as we've been saying all along, it cycles back through the same themes again and again and each time John cycles back through he broadens and widens our understanding of those themes.

As we come in to chapter 5, however, there's a special note here that appears only in this opening section of this chapter. And it is the issue of the overcomer. Let me read you the opening five verses, you follow along. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. And who is the one who overcomes the world? But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

Now these five verses obviously direct our attention to this issue of being an overcomer. And I want to talk about that a little bit. It's a wonderful word and it needs a definition in our minds and in our hearts. We need to view ourselves as overcomers. It has immense implications for us as we will see.

There are so many wonderful titles in the New Testament by which we describe ourselves. We are called Christians which originally a term used to describe believers in Jesus Christ in a somewhat derisive way. They were really called Christians by pagans, little Christs. But it's become the most

familiar of all terms to describe us. We are also in the Scripture called children, children of God, children of light, children of the day, and children of obedience. We are called believers, or the faithful. We are called friends of Jesus Christ. We are called brothers and sisters. We are called sheep. We're called saints, holy ones. We are called soldiers. We are called witnesses. We are called stewards. We are called fellow-citizens. We are called lights in the world. We're called the elect of God. We're called the chosen. We're called ambassadors of Christ. We're called ministers. We're called servants. We're called disciples. We're called heirs. We're called joint-heirs. We're called branches in the vine. We're called members of the body of Christ. We're called living stones by which the temple of God is built. We are called epistles, living letters. We're called temples. We're called beloved. We're called followers. And there are more.

And all of those terms and each of those terms give us the definition of who we are. And in a sense it takes all of those terms to express the fullness of what it means to belong to God through faith in Christ. I suppose we could say that the composite of the significance of all those terms sums up the total description and definition of those who are Christ's.

But there's one other title that isn't generally a part of the short list that most of us would refer to, and that is this term that is used a number of times in the text I just read. We are overcomers, twice in verse 4 it identifies us as those who have overcome the world, and then once again in verse 5. We are overcomers. This is a descriptive term. If you would like another term you could use the term victors. If you want yet another term that may be a little more contemporary, you could use the term winners. We are the winners. Very descriptive.

Let me give you a definition of this concept, to start with, and then we'll look at some of the characteristics of it. The word here for overcomes, *nikao*in the Greek, it means to conquer, it means to win, it means to defeat, it means to gain victory. The noun from *nikao*is *nike*from which we get the word Nike. The Greeks loved the word *nike*. They actually had a goddess by the name of *Nike*, and this was the goddess of victory, the goddess of triumph. And the Greeks actually believed that victory could not be achieved by mortals, but only by the gods. Only the gods were ultimately unconquerable. I mean, true and ultimate and final and permanent and lasting and sort of eternal victory only belonged to the gods. They were the only ones who could conquer and become unconquerable. For men, there might be a triumph here and a triumph there, but there would also be mingled in between defeat and failure. Only the gods could reach the level of being unconquerable.

Playing against the background of that kind of thinking in the ancient times, it was a pretty stunning thing to assign to Christians the kind of unconquerability that belonged only to the gods in that culture. We like that word even in English. The United States military forces have for many, many years called their missiles Nike Missiles. And then of course we have Nike shoes that are supposed to lead

you to triumph in whatever athletic endeavor you're engaged in.

The word is used by our Lord Jesus Himself in John 16:33, He uses the verb form when He says, "In this world you shall have tribulation, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." I have won out in conflict with the world. I have defeated the world. I have conquered the world. I am the victor over the world. And, of course, there is a form of that word used in one of our most favorite portions of Scripture, Romans chapter 8. At the close of that great eighth chapter where Paul is speaking about the unconquerable position of Christians in Christ, he says, verse 37, "In all these things we are more than conquerors," that's the Authorized. The NAS says, "We overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us." Paul says, "We're not just overcomers, we're not just *nike*, we are *huper nike*, and he compounds the word and adds huper which would be in English saying, "We're super-conquerors. We are the ultimate conquerors." We have through faith in Christ entered the condition of being unconquerable. We are super conquerors. We are, to put it another way, invincible, unconquerable. So much that, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, or any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is nothing that can conquer us, not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword. We are super-conquerors. We are the unconquerable. We are the overcomers.

Reading history many, many years ago when I was a student, Lord Nelson came back and reported to the British Admiralty, the great victory over the French in the Battle of the Nile. And he said this, it's a great quote, "Victory is not a large enough word to describe what took place." And I would venture to say that that is true of our salvation, victory is not a large enough word to describe what took place. And so, when Paul spoke of the victory, it wasn't just victory, it was super victory, it was *huper nike*. As we think about that, as we think about that concept in relationship to our Christian blessing, we can kind of break it down a little bit and let's look at what that actually meant.

First of all, at the point of our salvation and from then on we have become super conquerors of Satan...super conquerors of Satan. We have overcome the evil one. As it says in Revelation 12:11, "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb." They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. And that's not only true of Tribulation saints, that's true of all of us. In the fifteenth chapter of the book of Revelation, John sees a sign in heaven and in verse 2 he sees a sea of glass mixed with fire. He looks into heaven and he sees those who have come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name standing on the sea of glass holding harps of God and singing the song of the Lamb. As John gets a glimpse of heaven, he sees the redeemed there who are super-conquerors who have triumphed over the worst that Satan could possibly bring and they stand on the sea of glass in the presence of God.

In the view of heaven that comes in Revelation 21, verse 7 says, "He that overcomes shall inherit these things." Overcomes get not only triumph over Satan, but a triumph over Satan that results in an

eternal heaven. And all that heaven is becomes ours. We are the true victors.

John certainly affirmed this idea earlier in his epistle if you go back to chapter 2, for a moment. And verse 13, "I'm writing to you young men," and he's not talking about chronological age, but those who spiritually are growing up. "Because you have overcome the evil one." How so? Verse 14, end of the verse, "The Word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one." As soon as you believe the truth, you defeat his lies. As soon as you embrace the power of God, his power is neutralized.

And so, we are overcomers because we have overcome the evil one. He is, as Paul says to the Romans, under our feet. He is defeated foe. The Scripture says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." He is vanquished.

Not only have we become overcomes of Satan as powerful as he is, but we have become overcomers in the realm of life as well. That is, we have overcome death. I think the most notable portion of Scripture that speaks to that is 1 Corinthians 15 and just a reminder, it says at the end of verse 54 in this great fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O, death, where is your sting." The sting of death is sin, the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God that gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Victory over death because victory over sin, victory over law. That is to say we triumph over what sin wants to do to us. We triumph over what the law wants to do, the perfect, holy, righteous Law of God crushes us because we break it. It sentences us to damnation for our sins. But in Christ we triumph over the Law, over sin, over death which is the penalty the Law imposes.

And here, back to 1 John, having touched those other elements of overcoming, we come to verse 4 in chapter 5, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world." We overcome Satan, we overcome death, including sin and the Law, and here we overcome the world. Three times it says we overcome the world. This is also an echo of what John has said earlier. Back in chapter 2 verse 15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If you're still loving the world, if you're still attracted to the world, if you have not yet overcome the world, the love of the Father is not in you. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world and the world is passing away and all its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever." We have overcome the world. It no longer overwhelms us. It no longer is the object of our attraction.

In chapter 3, "See how great a love...verse 1...the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God and such we are. For this reason the world doesn't know us because it did not know Him." What that means is it has no ongoing relation to us. We're in the world no longer of the world. Its allurements don't pull our hearts. We are drawn by the Holy Spirit. We are drawn by the

love of Christ. We are drawn by righteousness. We are drawn by the Kingdom of God, not the kingdom of this world. We love not this world, but the kingdom of God. And so, in the very real sense we who are in Christ have overcome the world.

Verse 13 adds to our understanding of this. "Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you." You are so much not a part of the world that you have become its enemy. You do not love the world and it is so evident to the world how alienated you are from it, that you are perceived to be the enemy. Chapter 4 begins by reminding us, as you will remember, that many false prophets have gone out into the world but we don't listen to them. Verse 4, "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them."

You talk about being an overcomer, you have overcome Satan. You have overcome in defeating, triumphing permanently over Satan the whole of the kingdom of darkness. All the demons and all the demonic lies and falsehoods. You have overcome death and having overcome death also overcome the power of sin and the penalty of the Law. You have overcome the world, in the sense that you don't love it, in the sense that you are so alienated from it that it perceives you as its enemy. You have overcome the world also in the sense that you no longer are deceived by the false prophets who ply their lies and deception in the world. But being from God and having an anointing from God and knowing the truth, you have overcome false teachers.

Then this great statement of verse 4 and chapter 4, "Because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." We are from God. And he who knows God listens to us. This is an extensive identification of the believer. And we are not just sort of barely overcomers, we didn't just barely eke by. It is not a fragile victory that we enjoy. We didn't win by one point in overtime at the buzzer. We are super-conquerors. And there never will be another game where we lose our victory. We are the reigning champions and the championship which has been won for us in Christ is a forever championship.

When it says there in chapter 5 verse 4 that we have overcome the world, we're talking about the world...we'll go back, we've talked about it a lot in John, I'll just briefly identify it. But what it is really saying is that we have overcome the invisible spiritual system of evil. When we talk about the world in the New Testament, we're not talking about politics as such, we're not talking about education as such, we're not talking about culture as such, civilization, society. We're not talking about human structures of any kind formal or informal. What we're talking about is the spiritual system of evil that exists without God, opposed to God, dominated by Satan, ruled by him as the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this world. It is the system of Satan but it is also the system of man dominated by carnal ambition, dominated by pride, dominated greed, dominated by self, dominated by pleasure, by lust and desire, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. It is a system by definition

that is ignorant of God in open rebellion against God, run by Satan set up on earth.

And as a Christian we have overcome that. Literally the text says in verse 4, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world, is continually overcoming the world." Present tense...is continually overcoming the world. Very important that the Greek uses that tense. It is habitual, it is permanent, it is ongoing. We are permanently triumphant, permanently the conquerors. We can never lose. The victory can never be taken from us. We may fail along the way, we may fall victim to the enticements of the world here and there. We may lose some skirmishes but the great war has been won, the victory is ours. That is a settled fact forever, never to be altered. "We have been forever delivered," Colossians 1:13, "from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son." We're no longer of the world, though we are still in it. We do not love the world. The truest and purest part of us, the new nature, the expression of the power of the Spirit of God in us drives us toward God and toward the Kingdom of God and the love of God and the love of His Word and obedience. The world still assaults our fallen flesh and that's why we long for the day of resurrection.

Philippians 3:20 puts it this way. "Our citizenship is in heaven." That's where our hearts are. That's where our Father is. That's where our Savior is. That's where our name is written. That's where our room is being prepared. That's where we're headed.

We struggle though in the world. Paul struggled in Romans 7 against the power of his fallen flesh. He struggled under terrible persecution by the world, beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, whipped, assaulted, attacked, despised, hated, jailed, put in stocks, finally executed. But none of that took away his victory because the worst that you could ever do to a believer would be to kill a believer and to do that is to usher them into the full honors of their eternal triumph. It's really an astounding thing. The worst you could ever do to us is the best. If they take our lives, they free us from the debilitating flesh which clings to us. They can never take our salvation. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ. Nothing can ever break our faith. Nothing can ever cause a believer to stop believing. And even if they kill us, all they've done is freed us up to enter the glorious realities of spiritual perfection in the presence of Christ.

And so, we are overcomers. We are victors. We are conquerors, by definition. And that's why, in a sense, Satan, the world, illness and even death itself are somehow not a threat to us. You can't find yourself too overwhelmed by them, too distressed by them, too overwrought with anxiety and concern. They are temporary enemies, temporary annoyances. But the victory is won and some day we'll enter in to our eternal life and we will be given an inheritance, the Bible says, that is the very inheritance that Jesus receives because we will be joint heirs with Christ. Whatever failures come and go here, we conquer in Him.

So we see the definition of an overcomer. Now John wants to give us the description of an overcomer. How do you know you're one? This is important for us, especially if you got a grip on what I just said. I can't think of anything more wonderful than living my entire life knowing that Satan can never defeat me, the world can never defeat me, sin can never defeat me, the law can never defeat me, and death can never defeat me, right? I am invincible, not in myself, but in Christ. My sins have been paid for in Christ. The penalty of sin has been paid in full. I have been granted eternal life. I have been given a permanent faith and trust. I have had planted in my heart an affection for the things of God, a new nature which longs for those things that are holy and righteous and good and just. I am a new creation. Nothing will ever change that. I have been born again. I cannot be unborn. I possess the life of God. I don't love the world. I am not any longer vulnerable to lying damning deception because the truth is in me and the truth teacher has taken up residence in my life, the Holy Spirit. I am invincible. I am an overcomer.

It's nothing for me to be proud about, it's something for me to be humbled by because I do not deserve that. I didn't deserve it when Christ made me an overcomer and I don't deserve it now because I, with Paul, still look at myself and say, "O wretched man that I am."

Well then if you don't deserve it, and if there's still sin in your life, and if occasionally you still fall prey to the temptings of the world and the allurements of Satan and you still sin, how can it be said that you have conquered them? It can be said that I've conquered them because the Bible says that I've conquered them in Christ...in Christ. But if I'm not perfect, what is it then that signals that I am a conqueror? If I still sin and fail, how do I know that I am an overcomer? It's a very important question cause if you look at your life like I look at mine, you don't see on a day-to-day basis some kind of spiritual invincibility, do you? You wouldn't rise up and say, "I will tell you this, as far as sin goes I am unconquerable?" I don't think so. You wouldn't even come close to saying that. You would understand that if you are put into the category of a super-conqueror, it is by grace, right? It is because a righteousness not your own has been granted to you, put to your account, the righteousness of God in Christ. It is because God in mercy and grace has made you a super-conqueror in spite of what you are, not because of it.

But nonetheless there have to be some ways in which I can look at my life and say, "I either am or I am not an overcomer." And there are three, and you won't be surprised by these if you've been with us in our study. Overcomers are characterized by the same three things that John has been talking about since chapter 1. The three tests by which anybody's salvation can be evidenced. Number one, faith, faith in the truth. Number two, love, love to God and to others. And number three, obedience to the Word. And here we find John back in the same zone he's been in through this whole epistle. He weaves together these same three. We've been saying it again and again, there are moral tests, love and obedience, there are doctrinal tests, a right understanding of your sinfulness and faith in the only

one who is a provision for sin, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to know that you're a Christian you have to examine what you believe about Christ and you have to look at your life and see there the evidence of love and obedience. These have been themes woven through the whole epistle. Here we find them again.

Let's take the first one, faith. Go back to verse 1. Here is again the definition of somebody who is an overcomer, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." That's simple enough, isn't it? Overcomers are those born of God. That is to say the reason we are overcomers is because we have been given new life. We have been begotten by God. We now possess the life of God. And the only people who are born of God, the only people who received the new birth who are regenerate are those who believe that Jesus is the Christ. Overcomers then are those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God in human flesh. And, of course, that's an abbreviated statement. Jesus is Christ and you can fill it with the whole thing, all that's true about Jesus is implied there. Overcomers believe in Jesus. If you don't believe in Jesus, you're not an overcomer. Very, very basic.

"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God," *ek to theo ge genneti(???)*, literally in the Greek "out of God has been begotten," great statement. The emphasis on "out of God." Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ out of God has been begotten. Simply say, everybody who is an overcomer is begotten of God, everybody who is begotten of God believes that Jesus is the Christ. Conversely, if you do not believe that Jesus is the Christ, if you don't believe in Jesus, all He is as the Son of God, and Messiah and Savior, you haven't been begotten of God and if you haven't been begotten of God you are not an overcomer, you are still under the power of Satan, under the power of death, under the power of sin and the law, under the power of the world, and under the influence of the false teachers who move through the world.

In John chapter 1 verse 12 it says, "As many as received Him, as received Christ, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name." You believe in the name of Jesus Christ, God makes you His child. You are literally out of God, begotten when you believe in Jesus Christ.

The point is, overcomers are those who believe in Jesus Christ as God, Messiah, Savior. The combination here is important in the language, "Whoever is believing has been begotten," literally. Whoever is believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Greek says, has been begotten. Whoever is now believing is by that very believing giving evidence of having been begotten. That is to say, and this is so important, continual believing is the result not the cause of the new birth. Did you grab that? Arminian theology says that you can be born again as long as you keep believing. You will be born again as long as you keep believing. I don't know if you ever see Gene Scott on television. That's the heart and soul of his theology. If you keep believing, God keeps saving you. As soon as you stop

believing, he stops saving you. That's not what this says. What this says is whoever is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God. It is your believing that proves that you've been begotten. What you received at salvation was a permanent faith, not a temporary one. "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is...what?...the gift of God." God gave you a permanent faith.

You say, "Well what about people who stop believing?" Well John dealt with them, didn't he? Back in chapter 2 verse 17, "They went out from us because they were not of us, if they had been of us they would have continued with us, but they went out from us that it might be made manifest they never were of us." If you stop believing, it was never saving faith. Those who have been begotten of God are believing. Our present continuing faith is a result and therefore the evidence of our past having been begotten by God. If you have been born again, if you have been regenerated, if you have been given new life by God, it will manifest itself in an ongoing faith in Jesus Christ.

You may look at your life from time to time and you may see some failures in the category of moral test. You may say, "Well I don't see the love I should see at this point, I don't see the obedience I should see." Sometimes you're going to back yourself up to that one first great proof. But I still believe in Jesus Christ. And if I still believe that Jesus is the Christ with all that that means, then I have already been begotten by God and that's the evidence of it. It is a terrible deception and unbearable burden to say to someone, "As long as you keep believing, God will keep saving you." Who wants to live in that kind of fear and with the kind of God who rewards works making faith into some price if paid thus purchasing salvation?

Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the One who is the object of our faith. It's not enough to believe the Old Testament. It's not enough to be a faithful Jew. It's not enough to believe the best of the light that you have. People that are born of God were born of God because they believe Jesus is the Christ, that He is God incarnate, that He is the eternal second member of the Trinity, the Son manifest in flesh. This again is not new. Back in chapter 2 verse 22, "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Anybody who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar." This is the antichrist. So if somebody comes along, it might be a well-meaning Jew, might be a Jehovah's Witness or a well-intentioned morally acting Mormon who denies the deity of Jesus Christ, denies the Christ of Scripture, that's antichrist...that's antichrist. Sometimes you hear evangelicals, you know, they get on television and they say, "Well, you know, these people are going to get there even though they have a different view." NO, they're not going to get there if by there you mean heaven. This is antichrist to deny that Jesus is the Christ. Verse 23, "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father. The one who confesses the Son has the Father also."

Go over to chapter 4 verse 2...well, verse 1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Now how you going to know the difference? "By this you know the Spirit of God, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, this is the spirit of antichrist." They're not going to fool you, verse 4 again, because you're from God, little children...children of God...and you have overcome them.

Go down to verse 14 of chapter 4. "And we beheld...we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God." It's right back to the same thing again. As I said, John cycles back through these things. It is not just a mere intellectual knowledge of the fact of the incarnation, but a full-heart acceptance of all that Jesus Christ is. It is to believe that the man Jesus is God, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Savior, the Redeemer, the final sacrifice for sin and to commit one's life to Him as sovereign Lord and Savior. It is to recognize that there is no other Redeemer, there is no other Savior. All such are born of God. They are God's overcomers. Anybody who believes this way belongs to God.

And then you can jump down to verse 4, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world." And he picks up the same idea that we saw in verse 1. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Then verse 4, "And whatever, or whoever is born of God is the overcomer." And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith...our faith. In verse 5, "And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

Very clearly then what John is wrapping up here is that the first test to give evidence or proof that you're an overcomer is your faith...is your faith. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ and all the fullness of that, you're born of God. If you're born of God, you're overcoming the world. And what is it that makes you an overcomer? It's your faith. It's because you believe that Jesus is the Son of God. John just goes around and around that same great truth. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith...even our faith, *he pistos*, our faith, the faith of us...the faith of us, now in the Greek, the faith of us. What does that mean? Could mean our personal act of faith, it also could mean THE faith which is ours, the Christian faith. You say, "Which?" I think both. I think there's a purposeful ambiguity here. It is our faith in the true faith, isn't it? We talk about Christianity as the true faith, don't we? And we're not talking about a subjective faith, we're talking about an objective body of truth. Jude calls it "The faith once for all delivered to the saints, the Christian faith."

What is it that overcomes the world? It is that which makes us the children of God. What is it that makes us the children of God? It is believing that Jesus is the Christ. And what is that? That is believing in the revealed faith, a faith once for all delivered to the saints. So it is our faith in the

Christian faith, it is our faith in the true faith that makes us overcomers. Our victory then starts at the moment of our salvation and we are given a permanent faith that never ever runs out. Moments of questioning, moments of doubt...sure. And the Lord is gracious to us in our time of doubt. Doubt is a temptation. Doubt is a sin. But if you are a true Christian, doubt will always be a wrong response, a sinful response because if you are God's, your salvation is forever and so is the faith that He gave you. He has defeated every enemy. He has triumphed over Satan, demons, the kingdom of darkness, death, hell, sin, the Law, the world, false teaching and you are a super-conqueror cause you've been given a permanent faith. And that faith, the one who is believing, is because you have been begotten of God. And having been born of God, as verse 4 says, you are an overcomer and your victory was gained by our faith. And who is the one, verse 5, who has overcome the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, we don't have time to go there but what is the great commodity that is celebrated in Hebrews 11? Faith...by faith and then you have all the heroes, right? By faith Enoch and by faith Abraham and by faith Sarah and by faith Moses and on and on and on it goes, by faith, by faith, and you come in to chapter 12, "We're surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses," and what do they witness to? They witness to the power and validity and permanence and strength and endurance of faith. You could do whatever you wanted to those people, you could saw them in half, Hebrews 11 says, you could martyr them in any form by any means and their faith endured, their faith endured. They literally are the heroes of the faith. Their faith was unbreakable. Job summed it up, he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." You can't break my faith. And that was the great test, you know, Satan goes to God and say, "You know, You blessed Job and he...he worships You, but if You didn't bless him, he'd hate You." Well Satan doesn't understand enduring quality of saving faith which had been granted to Job. And so God said, "Go ahead, do whatever you want short of killing him, and you'll see that nothing can separate him from Me, and nothing can break his faith." And that's exactly what happened. Satan went after him, destroyed his family, everything he owned and possessed, inflicted him with these terrible illnesses. Though He slay me yet will I trust Him.

You can't destroy this faith. It endures. And that's the message of Hebrews 11, you can read it on your own. By faith they went through the sword and the fire and all the other horrors of persecution and hatred and animosity from the world and Satan. But their faith was firm to the end, even though the chapter says they hadn't received the full revelation of Christ that we've received. Nonetheless, enduring faith, unbreakable faith, unconquerable faith, overcoming faith is the evidence of regeneration and new life. So overcomers are characterized then by faith in the Son of God.

Now that's just the first point, but I don't want to go any further because I'll get involved in that and keep you too long. Next time, next Sunday night we're going to talk about the next two proofs or

evidences that you're an overcomer...love and obedience. Boy, the time does go rapidly as we heard in the baptistry tonight, it all goes so fast when you're studying the Word of God.

Father, thank You again for Your truth. I want to thank You for these dear people who are precious to You and to whom You are precious and to whom Your Word is precious who have come tonight to hear You speak, not to hear me speak, I have nothing to say, but to hear You speak because they love You, they love Your Word. They are the overcomers. They are the invincible, the unconquerable. They are the ones who are triumphant in Christ, who always triumph in Christ. They are the steadfast, they are the immovable. Not because of who they are or who we are, because rather You are gracious to us and You have saved us with an eternal salvation. You have loved us with an everlasting love. You have granted us an unceasing grace and mercy. You have given us an enduring faith, a persevering trust that cannot be broken. If it were up to us we would break it, but it isn't, You saved us when we were unworthy and incapable and you keep us though we are yet unworthy and incapable. We remember what our Lord said, that all that the Father gives to Me will come to Me and I will lose none of them. We are kept by Your power, Scripture says, not our own until that day when we see Jesus face to face. We thank You that we triumph in Christ and we are the super-conquerors because we have been given the privilege of participating in His great victory and we are unworthy. Fill our hearts with unceasing gratitude and longing for the perfections of heavenly glory and we thank You in Your Son's name. Amen.

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