

I.N.I.

Confirmation: Jonathan Brandle
May 26, 2019
I John 5:1-6

In Christ Jesus, who has overcome the world and conquered all of our enemies by His resurrection from the dead, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

What better words can be chosen to be laid upon our hearts on this Confirmation morning, both upon your heart, our dear young confirmand, Jonathan, as well as upon our hearts; your parents, grandparents, other relatives and brothers and sisters in Christ. Our sermon text this morning specifically comforts us Christians with proof that we are members of God's family and as such have overcome the world through faith in the resurrected Christ. Our theme this morning is:

CHILDREN BORN OF GOD ARE VICTORIOUS IN BATTLE

1) YOU (we) BELIEVE IN THE ONE WHO CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD.

We read vs. 1 & 6. **WHOEVER BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST IS BORN OF GOD, AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES HIM WHO BEGOT ALSO LOVES HIM WHO IS BEGOTTEN OF HIM...THIS IS HE WHO CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD--JESUS CHRIST; NOT ONLY BY WATER, BUT BY WATER AND BLOOD. AND IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO BEARS WITNESS, BECAUSE THE SPIRIT IS TRUTH.**

The first main truth is that God the Father is the source and cause of our conversion. Membership in God's family is not awarded to us as a result of our deciding for Christ. Rather, faith and this new birth--being born again--occur in the same moment that our Heavenly Father draws us into His kingdom through the power of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts.

How do we know this? God's Word tells us. After Peter declared to Jesus, **YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD**, Jesus said to him; **BLESSED ARE YOU, SIMON BAR-JONAH, FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.** Paul writes in his Epistles: **AND YOU HE MADE ALIVE, WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS...AND YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HE HAS MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM...FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST...NO ONE CAN SAY THAT JESUS IS LORD EXCEPT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Even as we had no power to bring about our conception, we have no power to bring about our conversion, our spiritually being born again. This, the Holy Spirit worked in us through the Gospel. And once we have been brought to faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior we not only love God, but love His children, our brothers and sisters in Christ. **EVERYONE WHO LOVES HIM WHO BEGOT ALSO LOVES HIM WHO IS BEGOTTEN OF HIM.** In other words, everyone who loves the One who gives birth (that is the Father) also loves the one who has been born from him (that is His children). Again as we heard last week, the word for love here is **AGAPE**. It is that highest form of love that God has for us---loving the unlovable, unconditionally, selflessly, totally.

In vs. 6 John tells us that this is Jesus, who came by water and blood. What does he mean by that? "Water and blood" refer to two momentous events in Jesus life.

1) His baptism as He began His public ministry and the Father declared, **THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!** The Holy Spirit came down and rested on Jesus filling Him with power and every spiritual blessing.

2) Jesus' bloody sacrifice on the cross marked the fulfillment of His three years of ministry. His shed blood was accepted as full payment for the debt of the sins of the whole world.

Jesus came as the Christ, the Messiah by water--through His Baptism He was declared to be the Savior; and by blood--through His crucifixion He fulfilled His calling as Savior. This is proof of our salvation---Jesus' life and death, His call into His office and the fulfillment of His office. To these historical facts the Holy Spirit bears witness. And we can be sure of it because **THE SPIRIT IS TRUTH.**

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II: You (we) FAITHFULLY OBEY GOD'S COMMAND.

We read vs. 2-3: **BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE LOVE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, WHEN WE LOVE GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. AND HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDENSOME.**

Faith proves itself, not in words, but in actions, in love toward each other as children of God. How do we show that? **WHEN WE LOVE GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.** John is saying that our love to God is proof of brotherly love and that brotherly love shows itself in the keeping of the commandments. Last week we read from this Epistle, **AND THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT: THAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

The essence of true love for God is this: that we in thankfulness for all that Christ has done for us are moved to find our greatest delight in fulfilling His commandments, doing what pleases Him, loving our brothers in deed and in truth. It is doing for the other what Christ did for us; giving, sharing and doing as Jesus gave, shared and did for us. We recognize true Christian love by its obedience to the Law of God as it shows itself in outward works and service to others. And that is not burdensome. It is not a heavy weight of **HAVE TO'S** and **MUST DO'S**, but a light and easy joy of **WANT TO'S** and **I'D BE GLAD TO.** Through Christ's love and His powerful Word all of His commandments are not only easy and light, but pleasant and delightful. Jesus said **MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.** People who are "of the world" complain that God's commandments are too heavy for them; take all of the joy and fun out of their life. But John emphatically states that God's commands are not burdensome--that is, to those who are properly equipped to bear the load through faith in Jesus. True joy and happiness is in serving, in willing obedience to God's will. There is no real joy or fun for the believer in disobeying God's will, for that only leads to death and hell.

Here is the progression of thought so far in our text.

Everyone who believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior is born of God.

If you are born of God you will love your brothers and sisters in Christ, the children of God.

How do we love the children of God?

By being moved by the Spirit to love God.

How do we love God?

By willingly obeying His commandments.

Does that describe your life?

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III: YOU (we) OVERCOME THE WORLD BY FAITH.

We read vs. 4-5: **FOR WHATEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMES THE WORLD. 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?** Whoever is born of God has Christ dwelling in his heart. And God working in us is more powerful than the devil working in the world. John writes in 4:4: **YOU ARE OF GOD, LITTLE CHILDREN, AND HAVE OVERCOME THEM (THE WORLD), BECAUSE HE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD.** It is that Word of God that is our strength. In 2:14 John wrote: **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.** Our actions in Christ are inseparably connected to our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Faith and actions coexist. If they do not, there is no faith. Again we heard last week: **BY THIS WE KNOW LOVE, BECAUSE HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US. AND WE ALSO OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN. BUT WHOEVER HAS THIS WORLD'S GOODS, AND SEES HIS BROTHER IN NEED, AND SHUTS UP HIS HEART FROM HIM, HOW DOES THE LOVE OF GOD ABIDE IN HIM? MY LITTLE CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE IN WORD OR IN TONGUE, BUT IN DEED AND IN TRUTH.**

Only those who (as you did this morning, Jonathan) confess with their hearts, lips and lives that Jesus defeated sin, the world and Satan are declared victors over the world. Whether our faith is strong or weak is not the point. The object of our faith is the determining point in our being victors: Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He has earned for us. Jesus has already overcome the world. He told us that in John 16:33 when He said to His disciples, **IN THE WORLD YOU WILL HAVE**

TRIBULATION; BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD. Through faith Jesus dwells in us so that we have become **MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US.** Paul says, we **CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS US** and again Paul writes, **FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.**

Who is he who overcomes the world? **HE WHO BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD!** This passage certainly speaks against those who desire to overcome without Christ. Those who believe they can solve all of their ills by positive thinking, by only going to doctors and psychiatrists, by only taking medication and drugs, by only looking within themselves. Paul warns us in Colossians 2:8 **BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST. FOR IN HIM DWELLS ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY; AND YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HIM, WHO IS THE HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER.**

Yes, doctors are needed, medicine and certain drugs and therapy are necessary, but don't let the world fool you into thinking that Christ and His Word cannot really help emotional stress, depression, anxiety, marital problems, alcoholism, and a whole host of other problems. Without faith in the Son of God, there is no victory, only total failure and unending defeat. We are nothing without Christ. But with Christ we are more than conquerors and have overcome the world. He is our strength. We fight the enemy through Christ who lives in us.

This leads us to a very important conclusion. We cannot continue to have victory in our lives if we do not take the necessary nourishment. How do we overcome the world? ---**THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS.** How do we remain in faith? Paul tells us, **FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.** We cannot ignore Col. 3:16-17: **LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM, TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD. AND WHATEVER YOU DO IN WORD OR DEED, DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH HIM.**

Jonathan, this battle is a daily one, and the victory must also be daily. Satan is not happy with what is happening today. He will continue to bombard you with temptations, trials and troubles. You (we) must fight each day. Who is going to rule in our hearts and minds; in our lives---our sinful flesh or the new man? We need to constantly feed on God's Word every day.

In Psalm 1 we are told that the person who is constantly dwelling and meditating in God's Word is **LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATER, THAT BRINGS FORTH ITS FRUIT IN ITS SEASON, WHOSE LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER; AND WHATEVER HE DOES SHALL PROSPER.** People overcome because they study and read the Word of God. When we read, study, and meditate on this Word and are motivated by it, we will overcome!

One commentator, who also is a Bible counselor, wrote; **Once during a series of meetings, dozens of people spoke to me about their problems and difficulties. Each problem was different but in each case the first question I asked was, "Have you taken proper time each morning to meditate alone in the Word of God?" In every case the people admitted that they had not. That was the key to their difficulty. God will work for us, in us and through us when we read His Word. Most of us will never find time to meditate on the Word until we take the time, and take it we must if we want to prosper in the things of God.**

Jonathan, may all of your battles in life be fought in and with Christ and His Word, with faith in Jesus as your loving, forgiving Lord and Savior, so that on the last day you will stand redeemed and victorious in your risen and conquering Savior.

Amen.