

# 1 John 5:1–12

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Let's pray. God, thank you. We thank you. We were reminded of your blessing, namely your Son.

Thank you for life. Would you please open our ears to your understanding, incline our hearts for what you have for us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to talk for a moment this morning on the circular life. The circular life, not to be confused with the circle of life.

1994 Academy Award winning song written by Elton John and Tim Rice for the movie The Lion King. And I do believe Disney is what they have always been, what we would call swaggerjackers, as they took the details of other ideologies and put it in this song.

But the song specifically, Disney describes that everything flows from one source and has its continuance in life.

[ 1 : 2 0 ]     Even after death, on this side of heaven, they come back again. They take that idea a step further as they describe how things continue to live on, thus introducing kids like myself to reincarnation at an early age, polytheism at an early age, and other philosophical heresies at an early age.

No, what I want to talk about is the circular life as seen in the epistle of 1 John, which has its expressions of life in a few different ways.

Now, we've been talking about gaining assurance in our walk with Christ. That's our theme for 1 John. If you have been here for any part of the sermons of 1 John, or you've discussed some of these details in your community groups, which I hope you are attending, you might have seen some of the arguments that the author puts forth over and over again.

You'll return to these ideas and phrases like, I'm writing these things to you, or little children, or last week we've seen love, love, love.

Right? So, all this in order that the person hearing you, hearing these words will be reassured in your faith. Your faith in Christ.

[ 2 : 5 1 ]     So, for those who are outside, when they hear this, they're discomforted or discouraged, and they run to the faith. The life of the believer is lived through faith in Christ Jesus.

This comes with various aspects needed for us to be revisited. As John keeps revisiting these details, we are supposed to be revisiting these images and these themes over and over again.

The things inscripturated, lest we fall short. The believer is to be re-reading and encouraging themselves for discipline, for training, for correction, or whatever is good for righteous living, the circular life.

Today's text, verse 1 through 12, and even in verse 13, is said to be a commentary of the fourth gospel, the gospel of John. These verses are said to find their crux back in John chapter 20, verse 31.

Let me just read that for you real quick. He says in John 20, verse 1, But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[ 4 : 07 ] Let's believe that chapter 5 is the commentary on verse 21 of John's gospel. Well, let's take a look at just how the text moves us to life and then back around in circular fashion.

Verse 1 through 3, love pointing to faith. Love points to faith. Look at verse 1 through 3 of chapter 5 again.

And everyone who believes in Jesus, believes that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever is born of him.

We start with verse 1, giving us a simple, profound statement of absolute truth. Both serve to bring out a familiar understanding of 1 John.

Belief that Jesus is the Christ and love for the Father are natural reactions for those who are born of God.

[ 5 : 17 ] In fact, the same love that the Father translates into love for his Son. That's not far from our thinking.

If you love the parents, you will love their kids. If you love the kids, you should love everybody else in the household, right? Well, belief in Jesus Christ, belief that Jesus Christ is the Christ and love for the Father are natural reactions.

But love for the Father translates to love for his Son and all those adopted into the family of Christ. Yeah, you love those who are also born of Christ if you say you love the Father.

And if you're born of God, it's proven by your love for those born of God. Okay? Love of God looks like keeping his commands. Look at verse 3. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

Also, loving God is the manner in which we love each other. So loving God is the nuance to how you love each other. Look at verse 2. By this, we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commands.

[ 6 : 39 ] If you're looking back, again, back at chapter 3, verse 23, he's already kind of stated some of these ideas. He says, and this is the commandment that we believe in the name of the Son of Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he has commanded us.

These first three verses serve to anticipate faith. They anticipate faith. The faith that it takes to love God. God. We are told that being born of God spurs on belief.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. As the word belief has the same root as the word for faith, both having to do with trust and reliance.

We come to see that this faith in Christ corresponds with the love we have. Jesus is the Father's expression of love.

Jesus is the Father's expression of love. And all that are born of God put their faith in who the Father has expressed his love primarily for, his Son.

[ 7 : 49 ] Do not be mistaken, ladies and gentlemen. Faith in Christ is how you get to love. Love points to your faith.

What do you love? Chapter 4, 7. Again, beloved, let us love one another because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God, and then he says, and knows God.

In order to live well under the command, understand that faith and belief in God actually takes the pressure off of us.

His commands are not burdensome, he says in verse 3b. He takes the pressure off. We don't have to worry about everything else around it.

We can love God freely and love his people freely. The distinct way in which we point the world to our faith is that we ourselves are found loving God.

[ 8 : 52 ] That's the way you point others to your faith. If we were to sum up evangelism, there it is. Are we found loving God?

Are we found loving what God loves and hating what God hates? How do you point this faith out? How do you point to this faith? You abide in love.

You abide in love. 1 John 4, 16. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

Or let me say it in the opposite direction. If you find yourself or anyone pointing to the faith, pointing to anywhere else but the faith, check what they love.

Check what you love. If you're not pointing to your faith, check what you love. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

[ 9 : 54 ] Not only is love pointing to faith, but in verse 4 through 5, faith is proven by victory. So love points to faith, but this faith finds its proof in the victory.

Look at verse 4. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Still speaking of those born of God again.

This faith relationship takes shape on ground, on the ground as we have seen in verse 1. Not every spirit, verse 1 of chapter 4, not every spirit is from God.

Not every teaching or instruction or confession is from God. But this faith finds its proof in the victorious life of those born of God.

You want to prove your faith? Show us the victory. Now, what is this victory that overcomes the world? What is he referring to here?

[ 10 : 56 ] Let me show you a few ways that this victory overcomes the world. One, overcoming a skewed view of Jesus. There's this overcoming a skewed view of Christ. It's understanding that this letter was also meant to refute some of the claims about Jesus that were being made at the time.

Verse 1, he is the Christ. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is what? Born of God. Chapter 2, verse 22 of the same book. Who is the liar?

If it's not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Or verse 5, skewed view of Jesus.

They deny that he's the Son of God. Chapter 4, verse 15. If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

One way we overcome this world is by having the correct view of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the way we overcome is by overcoming a false view of sin. As many opponents, as we preached about before, as many opponents took on a cavalier understanding of sin, the text lets us know that everyone, everyone born of God overcomes the world.

[ 12 : 13 ] That is the sin. That's the system of this world that's set against God. Everyone overcomes that. Born of God. You overcome the world. Check out what he says in chapter 4, verse 3 through 6.

And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

Little children, you are from God and overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world. Therefore, they speak from the world and the world listens to them.

Now, we are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us. That is the apostles and the teachings. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. But this we know, the spirit of truth.

By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. You see, you overcome sin, but it's not because of your own doing.

[ 13 : 12 ] Our text goes a little further. Even in chapter 2, from the jump, he says, Christ, he is the propitiation for our sins. And not for ours only, but also for sins of the whole world.

Now, the function of world switches there, but the concept is still the same. You don't fight sin on your own. You fight it through the one that has already overcome it. Jesus Christ. Third way we overcome, we overcome false teaching.

This is the point that is made in chapter 2, verse 19 about the Antichrist. This is the point made in chapter 4. But if you check out verse 4b, he says, we overcome by our faith.

This is to say that faith is happening. It's not just a singular event. It's not just something you put down and pick up. It is happening in those born of God.

It's continuing in the believer. It's ultimately to put an end to that which is against God. Faith wrought in those that are born of God is faith in Christ.

[ 14 : 18 ] This points to the heart of the believer. Therefore, everyone that believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone born of God overcomes the world. Therefore, everyone that believes Jesus is the Christ overcomes the world.

This type of living is what's supposed to fuel our victorious overcoming faith. Not only do we see love pointing to faith, and not only is faith proven by the victory in overcoming the world, but we see in verses 6 through 9 that victory, the victory we have been given, is promoted in the Son.

Victory promotes the Son. It's not meant to promote you and what your accomplishments are. It's meant to promote the one who has accomplished.

The promotion of victory found in our faith, verse 4, seen in the belief that Jesus is the Christ, verse 1, the Son of God, verse 5, which is laid out in the person of Christ, whose whole appearance represented this fact, that he is who he says he is.

These verses make it clear that our author is calling to the stand witnesses that prove the Son is indeed who he says he is. You'll see this by the repetition of the words testify, or testimony, all the way from 6 through 11.

[ 15 : 51 ] Witnesses. But what would need to be proven? I mean, don't we already know that Jesus is the Christ, and he is the Son of God?

But what would need to be proven? According to verse 6, look at it. This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not by water only, but by water and blood, and the Spirit is the one who testifies.

They testify that Jesus did not merely come by water. The claim that Jesus is the Christ, and that he is the Son of God, would need to be based on more than just water.

Answering false teachers that would speak against the Son's status, men merely satisfied with water, but wouldn't have the blood and the Spirit. That's what he's answering here.

Around this time, there was a man named Serenthus who would preach that Jesus wasn't the Christ until the time of his baptism. This man would only preach from the book of Matthew.

[ 17 : 04 ] He would say that Jesus was the natural son born of Joseph and Mary. He says that the Christ was bestowed upon him at his baptism, and then his Serenthian followers would also say that then the Christ, the Messiah, left him before his crucifixion, so it was a man that died.

They wouldn't have this blood mixed in with the Messiah. Well, the author also calls those who appeal to these traditions as Jesus, for Jesus as a man, and for him being a good person, see the Serenthians and others, and Gnostics around this time, they would also say, well, no, Jesus, he said some good stuff.

I mean, he was a cut above the rest. I mean, no atonement, but he is good. The author is pointing out that, yeah, yeah, he is.

But to deny his deity, to deny the apostolic teaching would make them anti-Christ. The verse, he came not by water alone, is seen to be an illusion of baptism.

We're seeing verse 6 here. Look back at verse 6 again. This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. But then he says, not by water alone, ladies and gentlemen, only, but by the water and the blood, and the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

[ 18 : 45 ] We're naturally reminded of the full person of Christ in the words, this is he who came by.

You get a piece of Christ, you can't, you gotta take all of Christ, water and blood testified by the Spirit. The illusion not only, is not only to baptism of Christ, but the full weight of the reason that this Christ had to be incarnated.

It had to be a virgin birth. This status of Messiah was seen in the very reason he stepped into the world. See, he wouldn't have just put on this Messiah at one point and then taken it off.

No, he had to be Messiah in order to complete the mission as Messiah. By the way, our lives hang in the balance if this is not true. 1 John 4, 2, by this you know the Spirit of God.

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God. There's tons of writing out there of people saying, well, he's also not really a man.

[ 19 : 53 ] When all he's saying, oh, he did come in the flesh fully, but the full weight of who he is is seen in the fact that he truly is the Messiah from birth all the way to ascension.

But we don't just stop at blood and water. We notice in verse 6, what? The Spirit is the one who testifies because the Spirit is the truth. I like that. Why is this important? That the Spirit testifies to Jesus?

Because the Spirit only tells the truth about Jesus. The Spirit will only tell the truth about Christ. Who would you want to defend you? Someone known for lying or someone who is known for truth?

Well, that's what we're pulling out here. The Spirit is truth. His whole DNA is truth. So he's going to testify that Jesus Christ is who he says he is. He makes the case for the testimony of Christ in verse 10b.

Look down at verse 10b. He says, whoever does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his son.

[ 21 : 03 ] In other words, if you don't believe in the one who is the truth, known for truth, you're basically saying that he is a liar and what he has said about his son is a lie.

It's a stretch to say, hey man, this dude who's known for truth, oh, he's lying about this major thing. It's a stretch. That's what he's pulling out there. And the answer to the rhetoric nature of the question is, that's absurd.

No, he's not a liar. God is true. The Spirit is truth. Everything else is lying. The Spirit testifies accurately. The Spirit testifies accurately about Jesus Christ.

Jesus says in John 15, 26 about the Spirit, but when the helper comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

Again, when promoting the son, verse seven, it lets us know even further, these three testify. Just in case you wanted to charge them with not having the proper representation of the law in Deuteronomy 17 or Deuteronomy 19, Jesus himself has three witnesses for himself.

- [ 22 : 22 ] The water, the blood, and the Spirit, these three testify on earth. These all agree, verse eight. Verse nine, is further proof that the testimony of God is greater, especially compared to man's testimony.

You guys will sit there and you will say that your testimony based on the things that you accurately bring to the court are real, but then you will sit there and question God. No, God's testimony is more true than yours.

So yes, Jesus' baptism is important and the Spirit did rest on him like a dove, but this isn't all what Christ's mission entailed. A Savior coming into the world, as was prophesied by Scripture.

This God who would wrap himself in human flesh, live fully as a man in the person of Christ, but also his earthly life, which there is much to say about, but in short, he fulfills the law, lives perfect righteousness out that no man has ever seen.

His blood is spilled on the cross for sin as the atoning sacrifice. There's the blood. That same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead affirms that the sacrifice is acceptable to God, that Christ is acceptable, that this sacrifice is pleasing to God.

- [ 23 : 39 ] This is the same Spirit that testifies to us today that Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, and we would do well to take note. In order for victory to be victory in the lives of those that believe, the testimony of Christ has to be true.

We can't brush this off. You have to know the testimony of Christ. To merely take Christ's good works and moral teachings, it isn't enough. This would undermine the pre-incarnate Christ.

It would distort the incarnation. It would unnecessarily prop up water baptism. It would dilute blood sacrifice on the cross, and it would dumb down the Spirit's promotion of the second of the Trinity.

You don't get victory outside the Son. A love that points to our Father. A love that points to faith. A faith that is proven in victory.

Victory that is promoted in the Son. In the last movement, verse 10 through 12, having the Son means you have the promise of eternal life.

- [ 24 : 49 ] This love points to our faith, and this faith proves this victory, and victory that is promoted in the Son means that when you have the Son, you have the promise of eternal life.

Look at verse 10. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God is born concerning his Son.

Now, when I say having the Son means you have the promise of eternal life, I'm primarily referring to verse 10a where he says, in himself, this testimony in himself.

Now, these three witnesses primarily make their testimony known with this inner conviction of the believer. The three testify within those who are born of God.

There is an inner conviction, a transformation of the lives of those that believe, for all that believe, as the text today gives us this all-inclusive language, everyone, whoever, who is he that overcomes the world?

- [ 26 : 03 ] The implication is that no one overcomes the world outside of faith. Everybody who has faith overcomes the world. The gospel takes on an internalized reality that is on display for the world.

What's happening inside of you? What are you putting on display? It points back to what's inside of you. Looking down at verse 11, what's the testimony?

That God gave us eternal life and that life is in the Son. What is being testified in the hearts of the believer is the Son.

What's being testified in your heart? Is it the Son? the Son? But what is being lived out by the believer is the life that testifies also to the Son.

Also, according to verse 11, what is being gained through the Son is eternal life. What we need to know is that your life is not, you know it, yours.

[ 27 : 10 ] it's not yours to simply live out as you please following your own passions, making up your own ideas as Serentis and others did, but it's meant to be a reflection of what's firm.

It's meant to be a reflection of what's rooted in your hearts, namely the character of the Son, Jesus Christ, a witness by the water, the blood, and the Spirit about the Son, a proof that you indeed have eternal life.

Look at verse 12. Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I like the way 1 John chapter 2 verse 23 says it.

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. But we don't even stop there.

If I can do what dare not be done and look ahead to verse 13 of Bing's passage, he says, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

[ 28 : 30 ] for those of us who question our belief, I would ask you a few things. Look at what you love.

Does it point to the faith? And I say the faith. Is that faith proven in your victory over sin, over the world?

And does your victory promote Jesus Christ, the Son of God? And do you have the Son?

If you have that promise of, if you have the Son, you have that promise of eternal life. well, if these define you, my encouragement will be to circle back and continuing to look at his love, his victory, his faith, and continuing to look forward to this eternal life.

Let's pray. God, we thank you that it was only through Christ that this life can be gained.

[ 29 : 47 ] We look to your sacrifice. We look to your status. We look to the person who is Jesus Christ as our primary motivation for living in this world.

Pray that our love points to our faith. Our faith proves in victory. Our victory promotes the Son in that we look forward to the promise eternal life.

In Jesus' name. Would you please stand and sing in Christ alone with us? Amen. Thank you.