

"Born To Overcome"

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 February 2021

Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles to 1 John chapter 5, we're going to be in the first five verses. We are in the last push of 1 John.

We'll be wrapping up in the third Sunday of March, just in time for Passion Week. But let me read to you 1 John 5, 1 through 5.

This is the very words of God. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

And everyone who loves the Father, literally loves the begetter, loves whoever has been born of Him, who's been begotten of Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome.

[1:03] For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

May God bless the reading of His Word and the hearing of His Word. Are you overcoming the world or is the world overcoming you?

Have you heard of the word worldliness before? Worldliness gets used in some Christian circles in a variety of different ways.

Basically, it means when a Christian becomes like the world. It doesn't, she doesn't stand out from the world but blends into the world. And oftentimes, depending on Christian circles, worldliness gets talked about in terms of the TV shows you watch or the movies you watch or the kinds of clothes that you wear or the kinds of clothes you don't wear or the music you listen to or where you come down on drinking alcohol.

Now, we've got to be wise, faith-filled in discerning with all these issues. We don't want to blend in. We want to stand out for Jesus. We don't want to kind of deny what we're free to enjoy.

[2:20] We've got to exercise discretion. But in 1 John, worldliness isn't so much a matter of whether you watch this show or not.

Worldliness is what you think about Jesus. Do you have a diminished view of Him? Do you deny Him? In 1 John, worldliness is not loving the brothers.

In 1 John, worldliness is thinking that God's commandments are burdensome. That's worldliness. Bruce Springsteen, who's been in the press recently, he sang a song, Baby, we were born to run. You know what I'm talking about? This morning, I want to convince you, Christian, baby, you were born to overcome. So here's the main claim of 1 John 5, 1 through 5.

God birthed you, Christian. God birthed you to live for Him, not for the world. God birthed you. He brought spiritual life to you as an act of His sovereign grace.

[3:39] God birthed you to live for Him, not for the world. Baby, you were born to overcome. So these five verses is actually an argument that John is making, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to convince you that you, birth of God, live for Him, not for the world.

And so John makes this argument in two moves, verses 1 through 3 and verses 4 through 5. So I've got two points. And so I'm going to walk you through these two points.

Now, I am so glad many of our middle school students are in this room right now. I want to help you keep track of this sermon. So there are two points.

I've just given you the claim right here. If you want to jot that down, you'll be able to track with me. I'm going to tell you what the first point is in just a second. And about 15, 16 minutes in, I'm going to give you the second point.

Underneath the first point, I'm going to help you see a couple things. And the same with the second point as well. So now, the first point. You were born by God to live for God.

[4:48] We see this in verses 1 through 3. We were born by God to live for God. And what you see in verses 1 through 3 is a cause and effect relationship. So if you're taking notes, here's what you do right now.

You write cause under that first main point. And then you write down halfway in that space, effect. And now I'm going to explain those to you. Cause and effect.

There is this phrase repeated in 1 John 5, 1 through 5. It's the phrase, has been born of God. We see it in 5.1.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, has been begotten by God. And it continues. And everyone who loves the Father, loves whoever has been born of Him, has been begotten of God.

And then look at verse 4. For everyone who's been born of God overcomes the world. And so this phrase, has been born of God, is getting at the cause of our spiritual life.

[5:53] Our spiritual birth. Every human being gets born once. And for those of us who've come to believe in Jesus, we're born twice. The second is a spiritual birth.

God is the one who gives spiritual life. He is the cause of our second birth.

Now, if you looked at 1 John, you will see this theme of having been born of God woven through the book. You see it in 2.29. It shows up twice in 3.9.

It shows up again in 4.7. It shows up three times in our passage for today. And it wraps up in 5.18. And what it is, is that language, that verb has been born of God.

It's called a divine passive. This is God's act. It's God who has given us spiritual life. And the theological word for that is to regenerate.

[6:56] Regeneration. That's the second birth. God is the one who gives us spiritual life. Now, if you flip back to the Gospel of John, the same guy that wrote 1 John wrote the Gospel of John.

In John 1, verse 12 and 13, we read this. But to all who did receive Him, Jesus, who believe in His name, He, God the Father, gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And so what we see John saying is, those who believe in Jesus were actually born of God beforehand. God gave them spiritual birth in order to believe.

So when we read that phrase, have been born of God, you need to realize that the cause of our spiritual life is God alone. We don't cause our own spiritual birth.

God alone does. But I also told you there's an effect. There's a cause, and then there's an effect. And the effect of being born of God is to live out the spiritual life that He has started.

[8:18] Now, we are experiencing in our church right now a mini baby boom. We saw a little bit last week. We dedicated Hattie Hitzman and Naomi Wertz.

Marnie Valentine came on the scene a few months ago, and we got another Nye baby on the way. When these children are born, that's not the final move.

That's just the start. When babies are born, they are born to live. And babies show signs of life. They eat, they sleep, they cry, repeat.

They eat, they sleep, they cry, repeat. Signs of life. It's similar to what God does in our lives. See, God, the Father, He births us in this miraculous work of the Holy Spirit called regeneration.

And then there are these signs of Christian life that soon follow, that evidence what God has done in us. In 1 John 5, 1 through 3, we see all three of them.

[9:26] And what you need to understand is the signs of life, they're a package deal. It's not just one of the three, it's all three. John shows us the evidence of being born of God, and it shows up in a life that is being transformed.

So these are three essential transforming effects of being born of God. It's going to happen. The first one is this.

If you've been born of God, you will believe in Jesus. Look at verse 1. Everyone who believes, that's a present tense verb, that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God.

That's a perfect tense. It's happened in the past with present effects. So the idea here is you're born of God, and one of the results is that you believe in Jesus. And so the belief isn't just a general belief.

Yeah, I believe. It's a belief in Jesus, who is the Christ, verse 1, and verse 5, who's also the Son of God, who, chapter 4, verse 2, came into flesh.

[10:40] This past week, I dropped into King's Place on Wednesday. I wanted to see our intern deliver the goods to the volunteers and children at King's Place.

And I got there just in time for Jasmine Aldrich to lead this wonderful group of people in the singing of Totally God, Totally Man, a song by Bob Coughlin.

And what it's talking about is this beautiful doctrine of who Jesus is. Listen to this. The song starts off, Jesus, he's fully God and fully man.

That's really hard to understand, so let me explain. Verse 1, Jesus, his word upholds the galaxies, but he babbled like a baby in his mother's arms.

Totally God, totally man. Jesus understands the universe, but he had to go to school to learn how to write his name. Totally God, totally man. Verse 2, Jesus walked upon the ocean blue, but his feet got tired and dirty too on the dusty roads.

[11:42] Jesus cried when his friend Lazarus died, but his power brought him back to life when he called his name. Chorus. He's totally God and totally man.

Both in one, he's the great I am. To save the world, fulfill God's plan, he had to be totally God, totally man. When the Spirit of God births you, you will believe Jesus is totally God, totally man. It's a lovely, lovely truth essential to salvation. And so if you're hearing me right, you're hearing me say, we are so sinful that God had to do an initial work of giving us spiritual life so that we would believe in Jesus.

That's how sinful we were. What mercy and grace, what love of our great God, that he would do that for us. That's the first sign. That's the first sign that we've been born of God.

The second sign is love. The word love shows up five times in verses 1 through 3. Those who have been spiritually born by God, the result is a transformed life of love.

[13:01] Love for God. See that in verses 1, 2, and 3. And love for one another. We see that in verse 1 and verse 2. Love, of course, is a major theme throughout 1 John. It's not an option.

It's essential. God's love for us puts the must in our love for one another. Remember the sequence of 4:19. We love because God first loved us.

He took the initiative. This is an essential transformative effect of being born of God. Not only will you believe in Jesus, you will love like Jesus.

Now look at verse 2, because verse 2 strikes me a little curious. Did it do that to you? By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

Does that, anybody else think that's kind of like, kind of sounds kind of backwards. Like, I would think he would have said, by this we know that we love God and obey his commandments when we love the children of God.

[14:04] Hmm. What's going on here? Well, the answer is simple. This is a package deal. It's not sequential. God loves us.

He births us by the Spirit. And as a result, we will obey Jesus or believe in Jesus. We will love like Jesus and we will obey all of his commands.

It's a package deal. No one is born of God and just believes in Jesus and doesn't love and obey his commandments. Okay. Anyone who's born of God will believe in who Jesus is, love those who belong to Jesus, and obey his commandments.

It's a package deal. And this is no kind of like, rub your back kind of love all the time. Look at 3:16. By this we know love, that Jesus laid down his life for us and we ought to lay our lives down for the brothers.

Ours is a gritty, sacrificial love. So we are called here to love any blood-bought believer of Jesus. [15:15] But especially those gathering together and calling Christ the King Church their home. We love one another. We must love one another.

Regardless of one another. Regardless of one's mental health. Regardless of one's race or age or gender or marital status. The spiritual condition of your children. Your personality type. Your social maturity. Regardless of any of that. If you're blood-bought and you're in this building, we must love one another sacrificially. Period. Period. That's the result of the birth of God in us. Being born of him. Or in the words of verse 1. If we love the begetter, we will love those whom he's begotten. The third sign of spiritual life.

The third essential transforming effect is obedience. Look at verses 2 and 3. You're going to see a repeated word. It's the word commandment.

[16:18] By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. Now what's interesting is in verse 2 when you read it.

When we love God and obey his commandments. It sounds like loving God and obeying commandments are two different things. But then when you look at verse 3. John clarifies what he means by that.

For this is the love of God. That we keep his commandments. They're not two different things. They're one and the same. For me to love God is to obey him.

Has anybody heard of Gary Chapman and the five love languages? He wrote this book. And the five love languages that he unpacks are physical touch, works of service, gift giving, quality time, and words of affirmation.

And the idea here is for you to love someone else is to know how they receive love most meaningfully. One of these languages. And so a wise person learns and communicates love in ways most meaningful to the people in their life.

[17:30] And so for example, I've come to learn what Jenny's love language is. And Jenny's love language is different than my love language. I can't love her in the way that I am loved in her sense that I'm meaningfully committed to her for life.

I've learned her love language. She's learning mine. But what about God? Does God have a love language?

If he does, it's in verse 3. For this is the love of God. This is how we express our love for God. How we communicate our love for our God who begot us. That we keep his commandments. We express our love to our Father by obeying him and all that he commands.

Loving God and obeying God are not two different things. They're one and the same. We express our love. Or do you find his commandments burdensome? That word burdensome means heavy.

[18:47] Oppressive. Distasteful. Inconvenient. Not worth it. In the way. No thank you. But if you've been born of God.

You don't see God's commandments as burdensome, as in the way, as oppressive. You see God's commands as life. You see God's commands as liberty.

You see God's commands as a way of joyfully expressing your devotion to him. Not to earn his love. But in response to his great love for you.

Did you ever see the movie Princess Bride? Farm boy Wesley expresses his love for Princess Buttercup.

She says, go do this. And he does it. And says, as you wish. Which turns out is code for I love you. Princess Buttercup, go do this.

[19:50] As you wish. I love you. He does it. When God commands us to do something. As you wish. You do it.

I love you. His commandments are not burdensome. These are the three essential transforming effects of spiritual life.

Of being born of God. You will believe in Jesus. You will love those whom God loves. And you will want to obey his commandments. Because they're not burdensome.

You were born by God in order to live for God. God birthed you to live for him and not the world.

That's the first move. You see it from the text? Next. Let's go to the second move. The second point. You were born by God to overcome the world.

[20:55] Now if you're taking notes. I'm going to have you write three words underneath that second main point. It's the word for. And the word world. And the word overcome.

And I'm going to unpack these things for you. So you understand the point he's making in verses 4 and 5. Here's what's coming into verses 4 and 5. Try to make the case that being born of God is going to show up in three essential life-giving, life-demonstrated ways.

We're going to believe in Jesus. Totally God. Totally man. We're going to love those whom God loves. And we are going to obey his commandments. And that is moving into verses 4 and 5.

So the first word for in verse 4, it's picking up where John just left off. For everyone who's been born of God. Everyone who is believing that Jesus is totally God, totally man.

Everyone who's seeking to love God's own. Everyone who is seeking to obey God's commands.

Everyone, for everyone who's been born of God, is overcoming the world.

[22:05] So what we're seeing here is another necessary result, an essential result of being born of God is that you will be overcoming the world. With your believing and your loving and your obeying.

What's happening now is our living out Christ, being born of God is now being cast in relationship to the world.

Baby, you were born to overcome. Now, let's talk about what the world is, what that means. We've encountered that word world before in 1 John and in clusters.

There's the first concentrated cluster is in 1 John 2, 15 through 17. We're told not to love the world because of the things of the world are not from God, but from the world. The world is passing away. Don't do it. It's not who you are. And then the second cluster of worlds shows up in 1 John 4, 1 through 6. And what John's telling us, hey, be careful, there are false prophets out there.

[23:12] They are from the world. They are using the material of the world. They are speaking to the world. And the world is loving it and patting them on the back. I think I picked up this definition from John Stott.

I think I did. I think I did. Here's a definition of the world. All of unregenerate humanity. Remember, regeneration, it is describing those people who have been born of God.

Unregenerate means those who have not been born of God. Non-Christians. All of unregenerate humanity and organized disobedience to God under the power of the devil.

That's the world. All of unregenerate humanity and organized disobedience to God under the power of the devil. John actually used a shorter phrase in 1 John 3, 10.

By this it is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God nor is the one who does not love his brother.

[24:17] So, I thought we could do this. What does the world think about Jesus, love, and obeying his commands?

The world, when it comes to Jesus, unregenerate humanity in organized disobedience to God, the world will deny who Jesus is.

Totally God, totally man. Savior of the world. They will diminish who Jesus is. He's just a teacher. He's a good guy. Follow his example. That's it. They will disdain him for what he taught.

I'll come back to that in a second. They disregard him. He's not that important. But what we know is Jesus is totally God, totally man, both in one, the great I am, to save the world and fulfill God's plan. That's who Jesus is. So, when Jesus makes this statement in John 14, 6, I'm the way, the truth, and life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

[25:18] He makes an exclusive claim like that. You know what the world thinks? That's ridiculous. It's distasteful. It's arrogant.

It's a burden. That's oppressive. The world will use nice words to disregard Jesus, typically. What about in terms of love?

Well, if you look at 1 John 3, 13, John says, Do not be surprised, brothers, regenerate of God, that the world hates you.

That's really strong language. Let me cast it in this light. The world is not eager to lay its life down for your greatest good, brothers and sisters. The world isn't sacrificially loving us who belong to

Jesus.

I mean, we see it in the secular academy where it seems like everybody's perspective is valid and accepted except a Bible-believing Christian. The world is saying, typically, love those who look like you.

[26:33] Love those who are in your tribe. Love those who are easy to love. But Jesus says to us, love those whom I have purchased with my blood, regardless of what they look like, regardless of what tribe they're in, regardless of how easy it is to love them.

You love them. Because I love you. What does the world have to say about obedience? In 3.10, I've already pointed to you there.

By this it is evident who are the children of God, those who are regenerated by God, and who are the children of the devil, those who are unregenerate. Whoever does not practice righteousness, who does not obey God's commands, is of the devil.

Nor is the one who doesn't love his brother. Those who do not practice righteousness walk in darkness.

They're not walking in the same way that Jesus walked. The world thinks God's commands are burdensome. The world thinks that God's commands are irrelevant.

[27:41] They're inconvenient. They're outdated. They're old-fashioned. They're uninformed. They're ignorant, chauvinistic, and oppressive. When in reality, God's command is life to us.

It's not burdensome. It's joy to obey him. It's liberating to live in God's good ways, in God's good design.

Let's just take the example of sexuality. Don't worry, parents. I'm not going to get into the nitty-gritties. Our world is saying, especially in our culture, is saying when it comes to sexuality, love is love.

You can love without limits. Anyone, anytime, anyway. So to speak of sexual lust as disobedience to God gets a snicker from the world.

To speak of sleeping with someone who is not your spouse as disobedience, the world rolls its eyes. To say that homosexuality and bisexuality is sinful in God's sight is to incur the wrath of the world.

[28:56] That's burdensome. That's putting a limit on love. How dare you? The world rejects God's good design of one chromosomal man married to one chromosomal woman exclusively for life under God.

That is the only place that God has designed for human sexuality to flourish. It's good. When the world hears obey His commandments, the world hears oppression, burden, one born of God hears, oh, I get to speak your love language.

Now before you get on your anti-world Facebook tour, don't forget, it was only by God's grace that He called you out of the world.

You were a card-carrying member of the world. You were. I was.

If you told me I was a child of the devil before I became a Christian, I would have been like, who are you? But it was true. Don't forget, brothers and sisters, don't forget where God birthed you out of, called you out of.

[30:38] God in His love sent Jesus as a propitiation for our sins in order to pull us out of the world, only to send us back to the world for the glory of Jesus. Our battle's not against flesh and blood.

Not against flesh and blood. Don't forget, don't forget you were numbered with them. You were called out from them by God's grace, by His love. And don't forget this.

You've been commissioned by Jesus Himself, the Christ, the Son of God, to call as many of your friends and family who are in darkness under the domain of the devil, to call as many of them through the gospel to come join us in following Jesus for life.

We've been commissioned to do that. We're not going to rally our dragons and hide from the world. We've been called to go to the world in wisdom and caution, but in love.

Brothers and sisters, you were born by God to be in the world. You're not of the world, but you've overcome the world. And that's the last word I want to focus you in on, the word overcome.

[31:51] In this passage, in verses 4 and 5, the word overcome shows up three times. It's a verb. It's the word in Greek that the shoe company Nike got its name from.

Nike means victory, to conquer, to overcome. But every time in verse 4 and 5, you see the word overcome used, it's describing a Christian's relationship to the world.

For everyone who's been born of God is overcoming the world. The second sentence of verse 4. And this is the victory that has overcome the world or faith. And who is it that is overcoming the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

If you look at that second sentence in verse 4, and this is the victory that has overcome the world, that verb overcome is in the past tense. In other words, it's happened.

The victory's been won. The world has been overcome. How so, you say? Well, it's summed up in that word by our faith, your faith.

[33:02] What's John talking about? Well, you look back in verse 1 and verse 5, and the object of our faith is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, who God sent as a propitiation for our sin.

Who overcame the world in His death and His resurrection. So when we're looking at this past victory that has overcome the world, our faith in the finished work of Jesus.

I mean, this is the same Jesus who said this. I love this. Steve Bickle is going to close the service in this. Listen to this. This is John 16, 33.

This is your risen King speaking on earth. I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.

But take heart. I have overcome the world. Same phrase. Jesus has overcome the world by His death and resurrection.

[34:01] Now, on either side of that word overcome, there are two other verbs overcoming. Present tense. For everyone who has been born of God is overcoming the world.

Verse 4 and 5. Who is it that is overcoming the world? Here's what is going on here. The finished work of Jesus that won the victory.

We get to live out through our believing in Jesus. Through our loving one another. Through our obeying all of His commands. We live out the victory day by day over the world.

That's what He's getting at. By believing in Jesus. The world is telling lies about Jesus. By when we believe the truth about Jesus, we are living victoriously in Jesus.

When it comes to loving. We overcome the world day in and day out when we are living out the victory of Jesus in the way we love one another.

[35:10] We love beyond what our likenesses are. We love beyond tribes. We love beyond appearances. We love beyond mental health.

We love beyond social awkwardness and spiritual immaturity. We love beyond these things. And we win the victory over the world.

And we live out the victory in our obeying of all that He's commanded. It first says, I am not, I choose not to believe God's commandments are burdensome.

I choose not to believe that. I have a good, loving God. And His ways are life. And then secondly, what that means is, in our obeying, we're going to do what He says.

We're going to pull a Wesley. As you wish. Of course. Yes, I will do that. I love you. It's not burdensome. But it also means we're going to have to disagree with people.

[36:11] We're going to have to take stands graciously, faithfully, firmly. So when the world says something like, love, let love be love. We can say things like, I can see why you would believe that.

But my loving God has actually put good limits on sexuality on earth. And it's not burdensome. It's joy. We overcome the world by living out the life God has planted in us by His grace.

And we live it out by believing in Jesus, totally God, totally man. By loving one another regardless of what appearances may be.

And by obeying all that He has commanded. Baby, you were born to overcome. Jesus won the victory and we live that victory out together.

In believing in Jesus, together. In our loving one another, together. In our obeying all that He commanded, together. Together. Did you notice the full circle of this passage?

[37:30] 1 John 5, 1. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. 1 John 5, 5. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

It's all about Jesus. It always comes back to Jesus. Who He is and what He's done. Transforms the way we live our lives. Brothers and sisters, God birthed you to live for God.

Not the world. You were born by God to live for God. And you were born by God to overcome the world. So, are you overcoming the world or is the world overcoming you?

Baby, we were born to overcome. Let's pray. God, thank you so much for the victory that you've won in Jesus on our behalf.

Great God, we are humbled by your gracious act of grace in us to birth us. We're awed by it.

[38:42] We are so grateful. Help us, God. Help us. Give us spirit strength to believe in all that Jesus is. To love as Jesus loved.

And to obey all that He has commanded. It's our joy. Convince us. It's our joy. It's in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.