

SERMON: We Know We Are Victorious

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5. We're coming into the last chapter in the book of 1 John. We've spent the entire fall going through this book, and I'm thinking next week will probably be the end of this book, this series.

Although I do, as of now, plan on doing the Christmas message, the weekend before Christmas, out of the book of 1 John. But we'll kind of finish up the book next week. I hope that it has encouraged you and strengthened you in your faith and reminded you of the things that you know that you can be confident in as a follower of Christ.

So 1 John chapter 5. We're going to look at the first five verses. I really hope this encourages you tonight. With all that's going on and all the bad news and discouragement that we face in life, I hope that this will be something that uplifts you and encourages you and edifies you tonight as we look at this passage.

[1 : 57] So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word. I knew there were a few of you that are like, I'm not sitting down. I'm just going to stay until he says so. So 1 John chapter 5, beginning at verse 1, Apostle John's writing this, and as he writes it, he's being inspired by the Holy Spirit so that we can say these words are being breathed out by God and come with his authority.

John writes, Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born 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.

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? This is God's Word.

[3 : 12] Let's pray together. Ask that you would pray for me as I try to preach God's Word faithfully. God, thank you for this moment. We want to listen to what you have to say to us.

We need eyes, not of flesh, but eyes of faith that can see the unseen, that believe in a reality beyond this world.

So Holy Spirit, come and do the work that only you can do. I am just a man. I can do nothing supernatural apart from your powerful work in this place.

Build us up, strengthen us, encourage us in Jesus. And we pray it in his name. And God's people said, Amen. Amen. Please be seated.

Every one of you here today is a failure. And that's exactly what I needed to hear.

[4 : 09] You see, those words that I just said were actually from my high school baseball coach. One day after practice, it was one of those days where things just didn't go very well.

A lot of errors were made. And I was in particular in a slump. And if you've ever played sports, for those of you that have been involved in sports at any level, you know that some days there are just those days it just doesn't click.

It's just not happening, that things are frustrating and they're struggling. And I remember our coach just gathering us all together right there on the field. And he put us all down.

And he said, Here's what I want you to know. You're never going to get to the next level until you realize that every one of you is a failure.

Now, I'm going to be honest with you, Faith Family. At first, that didn't encourage me at all. I'm like, What is he doing? Like, as if I wasn't already feeling bad enough. Now he says, I want to encourage you.

[5 : 11] You're a failure. But then he went on to teach us a very important lesson. He proceeded to tell us, What you have to realize is that you are a part of something bigger than your individual performances.

That your identity as a player is not based on your individual wins or losses, hits or errors, but the overall success of the team.

What he taught us that day was this. If you define yourself by your individual performance, you will eventually and inevitably get frustrated.

You will play selfish. You'll get discouraged when things aren't going well on the field. Why?

Because you're playing for yourself.

But if you will define yourself in the team's performance, then even when you fail, even when you have a bad game, and you will, it's not if, it's when, you'll keep playing hard.

[6 : 22] Do you know why? Because you're playing for something bigger than you. I still to this day remember that lesson because my coach was right.

And if you have ever played sports at all, you know that failure is a part of the game, is it not? I mean, just keep with the baseball analogy for just a moment.

Ted Williams, greatest batting average ever, batted in 1941 over 400. That's the highest ever recorded.

Meaning the highest mark failed six out of 10 times. And that's the highest mark. Or what about Babe Ruth?

714 home runs. But he struck out over 1,300 times. Cy Young, which is, if you know baseball, it's the award for the best pitcher in the league for that year.

[7 : 22] And it's based on a pitcher that lost the most games in Major League Baseball history, 316. Of course, he won a lot too. Here's my point.

If you've played sports, you know failure is a part of sports. And the sooner that you can just accept that you are a failure, the sooner you'll get to the next level.

Everybody listen. Those of you watching online, I want to encourage you tonight. I'm here to build you up and lift you up. And what I want to say to you is every one of you is a failure.

Because failure is not just true in sports. Failure is a reality in life. And to be honest, how many of you have ever felt like this? Right?

You swing and miss a lot when it comes to life. You strike out more than you get a hit. I mean, how many of you know this frustration? Like sometimes it doesn't matter what you do, you can't make contact at all.

[8 : 24] Right? Amen? Have you ever felt like that in life? Maybe you feel that way about a relationship. Maybe you feel that way about your parenting, like you have failed your children.

Maybe you feel that way at work, like you just can't figure it out. Maybe you feel that way at school.

Maybe some of you, you feel that way anytime you try to fix something or work on something.

It just seems to end up in a failure. Maybe you feel that way financially. My guess is all of us at some point have felt that way as a Christian. Like we're failures.

Like Peter who stepped up to the plate in the courtyard one night only to strike out three times. Like Thomas, who even though he was told by his brothers repeatedly, Jesus is alive, he struggled to make contact with the ball.

Elijah in the Old Testament had just come off an incredible victory over the prophets of Baal, and yet he found himself lacking the desire to play the game anymore.

[9 : 36] John Mark, do you remember the story of John Mark in the book of Acts? He's on the championship missionary team, and yet he decides to walk off the field in the middle of the game.

Naomi in the Old Testament became so upset with the coach that she all but confined herself to the bench for good.

Oh, trust me, all of us when it comes to the Christian life are failures. Amen? The Bible is full of men and women who got up to the plate, swung and missed more than they hit.

And no doubt the Christians to whom John is writing this letter to feel this way. As we've expressed many times before in this series, these Christians are doubting in their faith.

Some of them have been drifting in their faith. Many of them are discouraged in their faith. They feel like failures. And here's what John writes, okay? I might get a little excited tonight because we got some good news coming.

[10:44] You're not defined by your individual performances. You are defined by the success of the team.

Look at what he says in chapter 5, verse 1. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

That is, you're brought into the family of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. So again, the family reference. Now look at verse 5.

Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The first thing we see in this passage is Christian victory established. The foundation of our victory. John uses here a word.

[11:40] Even if you don't know it, you're familiar with it. It's a word that means conquer or to gain victory or win. The Greek is the word nikeo.

Nikeo. Anybody want to guess what the noun form is of the verb? Nike. Nike was from Greek mythology the goddess of victory.

The goddess of conquering. And of course, that word nike is extremely common in our culture, is it not? I mean, you've got nike shoes and nike shirts and nike hats and athletes like Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan and LeBron James.

They're all associated with nike because nike wants to be known for their name, which is victory. But listen, listen, listen.

The victory that John is talking about here in 1 John chapter 5 is a victory far greater than a PGA championship. It's far greater than an NBA championship.

[12:44] Let me give you just a few examples of where this word nike or nikeo is used in other parts of the New Testament. For example, in the Gospel of John, John chapter 16, verse 33, this is Jesus speaking.

He says, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart. Here it is. I have nike.

I have overcome. I am victorious over the world. That's the exact same thing that John mentions here in 1 John chapter 5, verse 5.

Now, if you want to see the symbolic picture of this, what book might you go to? The book of, we just did a seven-week series. It's the last one in the Bible.

Revelation. If you want to see a symbolic picture of this, you would go to the book of Revelation, where you see in Revelation believers that overcome the system of the world because the Lamb has conquered.

[13:48] You with me? Paul uses this word. In fact, he doesn't use nikeo. He uses like hyper nikeo. It's like even more than victorious.

We looked at that passage last week. Romans chapter 8, verse 37, 35, and 37. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Take note of this. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword.

And then in verse 37. No. Watch. In all these things, that is, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, things like that. We are more than.

We are hyper nikeo. We are more than victorious through him who loved us. That means, Christian, you have gained victory over tribulation and persecution and famine and sword that nothing, nothing can defeat those who are in Christ.

John has used this earlier in 1 John. 1 John chapter 2, verse 13. I am writing to you, young men, because you have nikeo. You have overcome the evil one.

[15:01] Everybody right here. Right here. Those of you online. You are not barely squeaking by, Christian. We didn't get this victory like with a last second field goal.

We just barely squeaked it in at the buzzer. Not at all. We have been given a final, eternal, and decisive victory in Jesus Christ.

I really, really, really want you to give this some thought, okay? Because we have been so brainwashed by the world. We've been so influenced by the world that we don't really think this way.

And I need you to please listen to me for just a moment. I'm going to share my heart here. I am being serious. I'm not trying to, like, I'm not trying to get an amen. I don't care if you clap or I don't

care how you respond.

I just want you to think about this reality. When it's all said and done. When the dust settles of human history, LeBron James, who is celebrated in this culture, he is a Nike figure.

[16:09] He is going to have a few trophies that recognize all his victories. Over who? The Miami Heat? The Golden State Warriors?

Big deal. You, because of Christ, will have trophies recognizing your victory over the world, death, and the evil one.

All taken out of the passages we just read. Now, put that in perspective. Stop thinking the way the world thinks when it comes to real Nike.

LeBron James has nothing on the children of God. And again, I'm not trying to, like, manipulate an amen or a... I'm just being real with you.

That... Paul says this in Corinthians, does he not? The things the world finds wise is foolish. We get all caught up in, man, LeBron James type figures because look at all their victories.

[17:17] Who gives a rip about the Miami Heat and the Golden State Warriors? When you can have victory over death, the grave, the evil one, and the world.

I'm pouring my heart out. I'm going to keep doing it. And I mean this with every bit that's in me.

There are single moms pulling night shift at Walmart trying to make rent who have gone all in with Jesus Christ that will rule and reign over any celebrity athlete in the kingdom of God.

I believe that with every ounce of my being. This is the Nike we have in Jesus. This is the conquering and the victorious reality we have in Christ.

So here's what it means. Are you ready for some freedom tonight? Here's the freedom. Stop defining your life by your individual performances. Stop defining your life.

Whether you're victorious or defeated based on your performance and start defining your life based on the performance of Christ. Because until you do, you're going to keep playing selfish.

[18:35] And that's what most of us are. Selfish. We get down and discouraged because we've started to think practically that this life's victory is based on how well we do.

Oh, and Christ has come for a far greater victory than that. So discouragement doesn't have to define you and you don't have to live defeated because you're already on the team that won.

It's like one of my fave, fave, fave, fave, all-time favorite movies. Remember the Titans? Remember that movie? Remember when they're at halftime at the championship game and one of the players says this, quote, Now, I ain't saying I'm perfect because I'm not.

And I ain't going to never be. None of us are. But we have won every single game we have played until now. So this team is perfect.

You see, that's what my coach was trying to teach me. Your identity is not found in your individual performance as a player. It's found in the success of the team. And guess who our coach is?

[19:40] Jesus! Like, who's already accomplished all of this for us. And if we believe in Him, the text says, we have been born of God, brought into the family of God, if I might change the metaphor for just a moment, into the team of God.

And there is where your identity is found. You've got to start living for something bigger than yourself. And that's when freedom really sets in.

You see, my coach really was trying to encourage me when he said, you're going to have to realize you're a failure. Accept that and play for something bigger than you.

And we play not for ourselves, but from the victory that has already been established in the person of Jesus Christ. Do you believe it? Amen.

Here we go. Victory has been established, but how does it get expressed? So victory has been established. Now, how do we experience that victory every day? Look at verse 4, chapter 5, verse 4.

[20:45] For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world.

Say these two words with me. Our faith. This is the victory that has overcome the world. Our faith.

So, not only do we have Christian victory established, but now we have Christian victory expressed.

That is, and this is big, this is big. Okay, you with me tonight? It's not enough to amen everything I've said thus far and then walk out tonight or tomorrow and not live in it.

We can sit here and say, woo-hoo, yeah, victory in Jesus, amen, you're right, preach, preacher, that's fantastic, and then go out and feel defeated. So how does this get expressed? How do we live

in the victory that has already been established?

And in one word, it is faith. Notice this on the screen, okay? Every day you live by faith, you live in victory. That'll preach. Somebody just say preach, preacher, okay?

[21 : 51] Every day, every day that you live in faith, faith, you are living, or by faith, you're living in the victory because the victory that we have is our faith.

So what is faith? Well, one of the most famous verses in the Bible, Hebrews 11, verse 1, look at it. Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Many of us, we know that verse, we've memorized that verse. It's basically a parallelism. That is, it's not two separate ideas. It's complementary ideas.

They're working together for one idea. So here's the part one is we have an assurance. We have a conviction. It's like what John is saying in 1 John, we know. Listen, faith is not a I hope so.

It's not a if I feel like it. It's not a 50-50. It's not blind optimism. Some of you just think that people of faith are people that wake up every morning like this.

[22 : 58] Like that's what it means to be a person of faith. You're just chipper all the time and too blessed to be stressed. And, you know, you need a little rain to have a rainbow like you've OD'd on fortune cookies or something like that.

No, that's nonsense. That is not at all what the Bible is talking about. And certainly the book of Hebrews of what it means to be a person of faith. I mean, you realize that some of the people in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 died because of their faith.

Listen, everybody, come on. Faith is not confidence that everything will go your way. Faith is confidence that when it doesn't go your way and it won't, God is still with you. It's not confidence that everything's going to go my way and everything's going to work out just how I want it to be. No, it's when it doesn't go your way, God won't forsake you. He is still with you. And you believe that. You're assured of that. You're confident in that.

That's part one of Hebrews 11.1. The second part is the things hoped for or the things not seen. And what are these things that we as Christians hope for?

[24 : 11] New car, more money, to get married. What's the thing that you're hoping for? Well, in the book of Hebrews, it's not these things.

It's not earthly things. It's God's promises about you in the future. All the promises that God has made about your life in the future. Let me give you just a few examples.

Okay, hang with me. There's Philippians 1.6. I am sure of this, that he that began a good work will complete it at the day of Jesus Christ. John 6.40.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life. Watch. And I will raise Him up on the last day. That's better than a car, by the way. A lot better. 1 Peter 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[25 : 08] To an inheritance that's imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Just one more. 1 John 3.2. By the way, I could do this all night in terms of the promises that God gives us about our future. 1 John 3.2. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

Ready to land the plane? Here we go. Notice it on the screen. Here it is. Living by faith is living in victory because you're applying God's promises to your present situation.

And when you do that daily, you are living in the victory that has already been established. Daily. I am living by faith.

I believe God, and all that He has said about me and my life and my future, it is true. I'm assured of it. I'm convicted of it. The thing's not yet seen, and I'm applying that right now.

[26 : 27] And in that moment, nothing can defeat you. Nothing. Are you with me tonight, faith family? This is how we live in the victory that is already ours in Jesus Christ.

I thought about, as I was preparing this message this week, I mean, literally I am preaching in a time where people are losing jobs because of the pandemic.

There are people in this faith family barely holding on to their business. There is some going through, whether it's COVID-related or not, a health crisis.

They are in the room, and I won't point them out, but they know who I'm talking about. Thanksgiving plans that were hindered. An economy that is at times very, very uncertain.

We are divided unbelievably as a nation. Politically, we are divided. We are living in an age of rage. So let me ask you, who will experience victory in all of these things?

[27 : 38] Those, amen, Christians, those who have eyes of faith, who are able to look beyond these things to the promises of God that are ours in Jesus Christ.

Those are the only people that walk through times like this victorious. Amen? So are you. Do you see what an encouragement this would be to the original readers that John is writing to?

Doubting, drifting, discouraged, feeling like failures. Listen, Jesus has established our victory, and the way you live in that is by faith.

So notice it again on the screen. Every day you live by faith. Faith family, every day you live by faith, you live in victory. Yes, say it. Let's all say this.

Every day you live by faith, you live in victory. That's what John wants you to know. I really know it.

[28 : 40] Be assured and confident. It's like, have you ever watched a movie where you know the hero or whatever is going to survive? I mean, you just know it but at some point in the movie, you're watching it like, there's no way this is going to happen.

Like, there's no way he or she lives. I mean, the obstacles that I'm seeing right now halfway through the movie, they're impossible to overcome. But what happens?

By the time you get to the end of the movie, they survive. In many ways, this is the Christian life. Namely, that even though there are times it looks like this victory you speak of is impossible, it is most certainly true.

And the way you express that and live in that is by faith. Victory established. Victory expressed. And then notice how John never ever leaves this to ourselves. He never stops with you. Look at verse 1 and 2 again. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

[29 : 45] Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey His commandments.

So here's the last point. It's not just Christian victory established and not just Christian victory expressed when we live by faith, but Christian victory encouraged. The point here is that it's not just vertical, it's also horizontal.

And John has been this way throughout the book of 1 John, has he not? If you've been going through this for the last several weeks, so here would be an example. God is love. And what kind of love is this that He has made us His children?

Everybody with me? Now love one another. In fact, you can't say you love God and hate your brother.

If you do, you're a liar. You see? So it's like the love of God, incredible, given to me, hard to even imagine, but it doesn't stop there. It must be expressed horizontally, socially.

[31 : 01] The same idea here, where John is saying, okay, victory in Christ. Amen. That's awesome news. And you live in that victory how?

By living by faith. Fantastic. I want to apply that. That's good news for me. But it doesn't end with you. Your living by victory in faith is a way of loving others.

Come here, come here, come here, come here. Brains, brains, brains. Think with me. Because this is how I approach a text as I'm studying it. Okay. How does my living in faith, and by living by faith, I'm living in victory, how does that love?

So think of this. How does living by faith love others? Think with me. How does your living daily by faith, and consequently then end victory, how does that love somebody else?

And so I got to thinking about John's context, people who are doubting, who feel like they're losing. And then it hit me. You with me? Listen. Listen. As you live by faith, which is applying the victory you have in Christ daily, as you live by faith, you will encourage others who feel like they've lost hope, which is a way of loving them in the gospel.

[32 : 31] So think about what I just talked about, the all that we're going through right now. The community of believers, brothers and sisters of Christ, need you to live by faith, because when you live by faith, you're living in victory, and when you live in victory, that's encouraging others to live in victory as well, and that can be the most loving thing you could do.

Neil is fired up about that. Amen. Thank you, brother. Okay? That's how I believe this is connected, living by faith.

That is, living in the gospel victory. It's not just for my good. It's for the good of my brothers and sisters in Christ. Faith family, if there is a culture of complaining within this faith family, let it be rebuked.

And to me as well. Well, you know, the government's this, and, you know, I don't got any money, and gas prices, this and that, and, you know, this person did this to me, and, you know, I'm working so many hours, and, you know, just griping and complaining, and then you walk in and sing songs about all the victory you have in Jesus.

Stop it. Stop it. We are far too a lot like the nation of Israel in the wilderness, just grumbling and complaining when God has already promised us the promised land.

[34 : 03] We love others. Notice it on the screen. Not by living as though we are defeated by the world. We love others by living like we know we have victory over the world.

That's how we love one another. It's Christian victory in courage, and no, it's not the, oh, what a beautiful morning, too blessed to be stressed, OD with me on fortune cookies, and it's not, that's not what we're talking about, okay?

You know those people, right? Some of you probably are those people, you know? Everything's a Christian poster with kittens on it, you know, it's just whatever. That's not what I'm talking about.

What I'm talking about is you're getting through this because I'm with you.

We have victory in Jesus. We will overcome. Let's persevere together.

That's much more biblical than too blessed to be stressed, okay? And it's very, very loving. Many of you have heard me share this example, but it's appropriate because Bill Bowerman was one of the co-founders of Nike.

[35 : 18] He was also the track coach, University of Oregon between 1949 and 72, and Sports Illustrated did an article on him from one of his players, one of his athletes, about the impact that Coach Bowerman made in his life, and what he said was it wasn't just, you know, the things he said or did, but the way he approached life.

He said, quote, Coach woke up every morning with new eyes. His impact was not just through words.

It was through the way he approached life, and then what did that do? That impacted his team. It created a culture of victory among his team and athletes so that they would run harder than ever before.

Victory established. We are united with Jesus. victory expressed when we live by faith, and victory encouraged. When we live by our faith, we encourage others to live in faith as well.

Faith family, can I encourage you tonight? Have I encouraged you tonight? Well, let me end one more time with this encouragement. Every single one of you is a failure. And believe it or not, that's exactly what we need to hear.

[36 : 41] Why? Because until you and I realize that Romans 3.23 applies to you, you will never realize that you were made for something bigger than you.

Can I say that again? Until you realize that Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, until you realize that that applies to you, you'll never live for something bigger than you.

You'll keep thinking it's about your individual performance, rather than the fact that you belong to a team that is victorious over the world and over the gates of hell.

And that you do not get that victory from your individual performance, but from the performance of Christ. A performance that one Friday afternoon looked to the world to be one big, colossal failure. But we know that victory was just around the corner. So regardless of what slump you're in, how many errors you've made on the field this week, the good news of the gospel is that victory is not found in you.

[37 : 47] So stop playing selfishly and stop hiding in the dugout of life because you belong to a team that has already overcome the world.

And all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. God, we have to believe this. We have to believe this. Yes, I want to encourage this faith family.

I want to preach in such a way that they feel motivated and inspired, but I don't want this to just be about a sermon. I want this to be about how we live life. Because, myself included, far too often, we live defeated, which is insane given all that we know is true.

And yes, this life is hard. People in this room losing businesses, fighting cancer, dealing with all kinds of frustrations and tragedies and sad things in life.

These things are true, but they don't take our victory away. Not even for a moment. How do we live that way?

[38 : 59] By faith. By not defining life based on our individual daily performances, but faith in the performance of Christ and all that has been promised to us in Him now and forever.

God, God, please, please, lift us up, build us up, encourage us, because now more than ever, the people in the South Metro and beyond need to see Christians living out their faith.

Because there's a lot of people looking for hope. So may we live faith as the victory. Each and every day by your strength, though failures we are.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.