

"We Overcome the World Through Our Triune God"

Text: 1 John 5:5-12 Holy Trinity Sunday, June 7 , 2020

Sermon Text: 1 John 5:5-12

⁵Who is the one who overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. ⁶This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ. He did not come by the water alone but by the water and by the blood. The Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷In fact, there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one. ⁹If we accept the testimony of people, God's testimony is even greater, because it is the testimony that God gave about his Son. ¹⁰The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in him, but the one who does not believe has made God out to be a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God gave about his Son. ¹¹This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Introduction: It happened right here in Michigan about 5 years ago. It is pretty rare anyway and the odds are certainly against it. When a golfer shoots a hole-in-one he has to hit the ball just right, get all the right bounces and, we often say, he still has to have a lot of luck. But one Michigan couple overcame even greater odds. On the 16th hole husband Tony made a good shot and discovered he had his first ever hole in one. Now that is pretty fun for any golfer. Tony's wife Janet, herself an avid golfer had already shot a hole in one some time before that day. When she saw her husband's great shot, she said jokingly, now I'm going to do it. And wouldn't you know it, she overcame the 26 million to one odds and sank a hole in one on the same hole, right after her husband did it. Independent witnesses verified that the couple really had done what they said they did. Most golfers play for a lifetime and never shoot a hole in one. Only a few overcome the odds. We all wish we could overcome, gain the victory, beat disease, cheat death.

Friends, those small victories, those million to one shots are fun while they last, and we can even consider them gifts from God, but we have a greater foe than a small cup situated in the middle of a well-manicured patch of grass. You and I are in a life and death struggle, a battle for our souls, and

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we cannot overcome in that struggle unless we have one who gives us the victory. Easter, Ascension and Pentecost show us plainly that we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are in this struggle every day and when temptation overcomes and we sin, it may feel as if we are losing. And instead of overcoming it may feel like we are being overcome. But when we feel as if we are losing, then we need to take a step back and remember that God SEES the big picture.

He sees much more than we see. He shows us how HE has overcome, and it is not just our Lord Jesus on the cross who overcame. We have a triune God who overcame all of our enemies and gives witnesses to us about his victory on our behalf. There is no enemy in the world that our God has not defeated. This is why we need to listen to what John has to tell us today as he shows us that we overcome the world through our Triune God.

I. **By Faith in Jesus**

A. Faith in Jesus is faith that he has fulfilled his Father's commands

1. When a coach tells his team what play to run, he does so by experience. He knows what will work against the opponent. When the players follow the coach's orders and run the play right, they have a good chance to win.
2. When a commanding officer tells his unit what it needs to do to win the battle and the soldiers follow his orders, they have a much better chance to win the battle.
3. Jesus and his Father were in complete agreement about what the Savior needed to do to save us.
 - a. And it was not only about Jesus' suffering and death. Yes, his death freed us from death. That was absolutely important.
 - b. But never forget that Jesus was your substitute in living a perfect life. So when you have been harsh and impatient

with someone, when you have spoken words that should never come from a Christian's mouth, when you have had thoughts of hatred or sexual immorality, and your conscience accuses you, you know you can do nothing to pay for those sins. But Jesus has. He was perfect in your place.

4. So when you look at the cross, remember, it is a perfect, holy Savior, a Savior who put his perfect, spotless life on the cross for you. Who is it that overcomes? The one who believes that Jesus Christ IS the Son of God—and that means he IS true God from eternity. It means he IS the perfect holy one from God. Trust in him and you know you have overcome the world through him.

B. He has done everything we need (Takes us back to Maundy Thursday). The disciples are bewildered and wonder how Jesus can win if he leaves them. But he assured them, "**I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.**"

C. Our faith in Jesus connects us to him and we overcome the world by his power.

1. We know our life is not our own. Jesus has paid for your life with his own blood. Therefore we rejoice in the new life, the eternal hope and the forgiveness of sins we have with Jesus.
2. By the power of Jesus we can and will do much more than we would ever think we can.

Application: Yes, through Jesus WE, you and I have overcome the world. What does that mean? It means that Jesus gives us the strength to resist the devil when he attacks and remain loyal to Jesus. His attacks can come in the

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form of accusations of sin. But remember, Jesus has taken away our sins, so you and I also have no guilt. Satan cannot accuse us.

Overcoming the world means that we use and live our lives according to God's system of values and not the world's sinister and evil philosophies such as, "You need to look out for number one—yourself." "**Get to heaven by fostering peace and love in this world.**" "Be a better person and you can love yourself more." And the list could go on and on.

Transition: But on the cross Jesus has crushed all those human ideas of how we can gain heaven. He has given us life, hope and peace by taking our sins with him to the cross and taking away their power. So we put our trust in Jesus and in the gifts he brings us. And since we were not there to witness his death or resurrection he gives us other witnesses. We overcome the world by faith in the power of God's word and the Sacraments.

II. By Faith in the power of Word and Sacrament

A. God wants us to Know, to be sure of everything he has done for us. **This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.** ⁷ **For there are three that testify:** ⁸ **the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**

B. So he sent the Spirit to inspire His Word to be written for us to read and learn from.

1. Our Savior gives us a great gift when he sent the Holy Spirit to inspire his chosen writers to right down his witness about his truth. And for those who doubt Peter simply has this to say: **"Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."**
2. So the witness of God's love for us in Christ is written everywhere in the Bible. The Bible IS God's witness of his

merciful grace to us sinners. The bible makes it plain, God, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit IS LOVE as John says.

- C. And what could be more personal than that the ONE who came by water and blood, as John says. What could be more personal than the water of baptism being sprinkled on your head? There is no mistaking for whom that water is intended. And likewise, you know for whom the body and blood of the Savior is intended when it is put in your mouth and the Savior's words given and shed FOR YOU are proclaimed for you to hear.

Application: And John tells us the Spirit, the Water and the blood are in agreement. This simply means that the Word of God, holy baptism and Holy communion all convey God's gospel promises, both to our hearts and to our ears.

Transition: This is God's Witness to us. IT is a witness that he gives us so that we can KNOW what he says and put our trust in all his words to us.

III. By Faith in the Father's testimony

- A. In order to help us understand how powerful God's witness is, John reminds us that a human being's testimony or witness has value. Even in ancient bible times, when a case came before the courts they were to establish the truth by the testimony of two or three witnesses. So John says, when we believe God's son and all his promises, we have the testimony of God in our hearts.
- B. So when you are feeling like the world is against you, when you are feeling like everything is crashing in around you, then remember the testimony of your God. He has given us eternal life and he gives it to us through his Son. And who do you suppose gives you faith to believe all these wonderful, amazing truths? Is it not the Holy Spirit?

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C. So, first of all, you can see how the three persons of the Godhead work together for your blessing. And when you hear the testimony of God, when the gospel promises come to you in word and sacrament, we need to believe them, because they come from God's mouth and God never lies. If we fail to believe God we call him a liar, John says. That is fatal and a sin we don't want to become guilty of.

Application: Satan would love to squash us with the useless, pointless lies of the world; he would love to lie to us and tell us we have been defeated. And if we give in to despair when the trials of life come, when we feel like we are snowed under by all of our sins, when we feel as though we cannot take one more setback in life, remember that your Triune God is in your corner. Jesus has defeated death and given us forgiveness and eternal life. The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith through the personal sacraments of baptism and communion; and the Father witnesses to all these truths; and we know they are true because our God does not change.

Conclusion: This is why you and I can put our confidence in God; this is why you and I know we have overcome the world through our God. What he says IS truth; what he says is always truth; when he tells us Jesus paid for our sins, when he tells us that nothing can separate us from his love for us, when he tells us his strength is made perfect in our weakness, we believe those statements as truth and the Holy Spirit gives us the desire and the purpose to put those truths into practice in our lives. Who would do those things, why would YOU do those things, why would you believe those things? Because you KNOW that through God you have overcome the world. Amen.