

Faith and the Believers

1 John 5:1-5

The first three verses of this chapter are a continuation of the discussion that we looked at in chapter 4 and they may look out of place simply because our modern Bibles have chapter breaks and verses assigned. But the Holy Spirit has a purpose in placing them here because this is a letter and therefore should be viewed and read as a letter. John is simply setting the stage for a study of the believer's faith. Paul did the same when dealing with the converted Jews in his letter to them.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Faith is the beginning of salvation, faith is the continuation of salvation, and faith will be the climax of salvation when we, by faith, receive our eternal reward. Faith is the heartbeat, the bloodstream, the very life of the Christian experience, from start to finish. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

I. FAITH IS THE VICTORY...

Vss. 1-3

(a) **Active Faith:** *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ...*

Again, the word 'believeth' is a word signifying activity. It is not a faith that is dormant or stagnant but rather a faith that is active, productive, and continual. John wants the believers of Asia Minor to have an active faith!

Vs. 1a

*Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, **Come**. And let him that **heareth** say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. And whosoever will, **let him take** the water of life freely.*

1. I'm part of that "whosoever will" because of an invitation by the Holy Ghost ('...*Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*) and then an activity on my part; believeth. By faith I believed that I could take the water of life that was offered and satisfy the thirsting of my lost and parched soul. EVERY PERSON in Heaven will have to be at least that active in their faith.

(b) **Reasonable Faith:** “*Believeth*” is heart knowledge, not head knowledge. Now let me explain that on the spiritual level.

1. Reason in the world is based on sight and evidence and is why that a jury renders a verdict based on the absence or presence of ‘reasonable doubt’. Reasonable doubt means that not enough proof has been given by oral testimony or eye witness testimony. This is what we call “head knowledge”; I don’t see or feel it so therefore it isn’t real **or** I see and feel therefore my doubts are overcome by reality. They want Jesus to live in their head.

John 4:48 *Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*

a. Why do the devils believe? It is because they have seen and heard and know that God is real. They believe but they have no faith. We will hit on this again in a minute.

James 2:19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

2. Reasonable faith is different. You have not seen God but you know He’s real and that transfers to your faith because it’s not based solely upon sight or physical evidence. You don’t have to have all of the details and every question answered satisfactorily. All you know is that God is God, and that you’re NOT God and He has it all under control. You haven’t got head knowledge alone but heart knowledge too because Jesus lives in your heart.

John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

John 20:29 *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

(c) **Reasonable Expectations:** If you have an active faith **AND** that faith is reasonable because we know what faith cost Jesus, then we should also be ready for some expectations. Vss. 1b-2

1. The conjunction ‘and’ is crucial in correctly interpreting what John is saying here. Scriptures tell us that the demons who were cast out of the demon possessed confessed Christ as the Son of God (Luke 4:41). Did their confession change what/who they were? The answer is simply “No”. So, it’s more than just the wording and the words, there must be more.

2. Next, if you love God (*begat*), you'll love His children (*begotten*) no matter who they are or where they are.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also [is] Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.*

a. I believe that in the last several weeks, we have been reminded about how much we enjoy being around other believers.

3. Finally, if you love God, you'll do what he says; obedience. Love and obedience go hand in hand. Vs. 2

a. In the words of John; 1 John 3:23-24

b. In the Words of Jesus

Matthew 22:36-40 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

(d) **Reasonable Burden**: When we hear the word ‘grievous’ or ‘burdensome’ then immediately the thoughts of heaviness enter our minds. Vs. 3

1. Donkeys were the pack animals of prospectors and the settlers of the Old West. They carried everything from picks, shovels, food supplies and everything else that was too heavy for humans to carry.

2. Camels are the pack animals of the Middle East and they carried both luggage and riders across the deserts. You find many references to camels in the Old Testament. Job 42:12 tells us that Job owned 6000 camels.

3. But John tells us that love of the brethren and the obedience of God's expectations in Christ will not be hard to bear or do. His commandments ARE NOT heavy or unreasonable. Vs. 3

It is easy to obey God when the heart is right; and those who endeavor in sincerity to keep his commandments do not complain that they are hard. All complaints of this kind come from those who are not disposed to keep his commandments. Indeed, they object that his laws are unreasonable; that they impose improper restraints; that they are not easily complied with; and that the divine government is one of severity and injustice. But no such complaints come from true Christians. They find his service easier than the service of sin, and the laws of God more mild and easy to be complied with than were those of fashion and honor, which they once endeavored to obey. The service of God is freedom; the service of the world is bondage.

Barnes Notes on the New Testament

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

II. ...THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD

Vss. 4-5

(a) **Predetermined**: Jesus said in John 16:33 "*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*" God has won the victory, we're just tagging along. This victory was determined... Vs. 4

- Before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)

- Before Adam and Eve left Eden (Genesis 3:14-15)
- Before Christ died on the cross (John 12:37; 18:37)

1. “*Whatsoever*” also comes from the same word as ‘*whosoever*’ (pas). It is the whole to every part and particle of person that believes upon Jesus Christ by faith.

2. Notice that John says that this is ‘our’ faith. It is inclusive and encompassing, emanating from God. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, His coming to earth and living among us in a body of flesh, predetermined the outcome of the strife between the forces of evil versus the children of God.

Romans 8:35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

(b) **Previously:** Verse 5 reminds us of a previous portion of this letter that John wrote back in chapters 2 (Vss. 13-14) and more recently in chapter 4 where John wrote, “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*”

1. It is easy to get swept up in the emotionalism of the present world. We hear the statistics of COVID-19, the obvious divisions of the current political atmosphere and now the riots/protests that are taking place nationwide. These are the times where we need to be reminded that “...*greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” If you love and confess Jesus Christ AND you love His Church/children, then you have overcome this world ‘**BECAUSE** *greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*’ Don’t forget that!