

TITLE: THE CHILD OF GOD HAS FAITH

TEXT: 1 JOHN 5:5-21

INTRO: We've seen that a child of God (one spiritually begotten of God) does righteousness, does *not* sin, loves his brothers & sisters by actively seeking their best interest, and loves God by keeping His commands (2:29–5:4). This is faith – believing & obeying God. And it is this obedient faith that overcomes the world (5:4).

I. THE CHILD OF GOD CONQUERS BY FAITH (v. 5-12):

A. The Evidence Was Provided (v. 5-8) The evidence of Jesus (our Savior – 4:14)

(v. 5) *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

1. “The world” is worldliness (“lust of the flesh, etc.” –2:15-16) – i.e., that which will defeat you & cause you to be lost.
2. The one who can & will overcome worldliness is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (“the Christ”-5:1).
 - a. This refutes the Gnostic teaching that Jesus *wasn't* the Son of God. You *must* believe & confess Him (4:2-3,15).
 - b. It's understood that believing in Jesus means obeying Him. In 2:17, “*he that doeth the will of God abideth forever*”; **this** is how he overcomes those lusts – by obeying God.

(v. 6a) *This is he that came by water & blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water & blood.*

1. Water (i.e., His baptism) represents His coming at the beginning of His ministry. Blood (i.e., His death) represents the completion of His ministry. To Gnostics: “He really was baptized by John the baptist (a *real* body in *real* water), and He really did shed His **real**, human blood to be the Savior of the world (4:14).
2. These **facts** are evidence of the things John is claiming about Jesus of Nazareth – i.e., that He was the Son of God!

(v. 6b; or v. 7 in the ASV) *And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

1. Just like Jesus is truth (Jn 14:6), so is the Spirit (Jn 14:17), because like Jesus He only speaks what God says (Jn 16:13).
2. *And He beareth witness* of Jesus by being part of the Godhead & by giving men the knowledge & abilities to show the facts.
3. Due to the weak & improper use of “witness” in the religious world, we have to remind ourselves of its proper definition (“to be a witness, testify, to give report”-Strong; “to affirm that one has seen, heard, or experienced something”-Thayer).

(v. 7) *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

1. This verse (i.e., the “witness in heaven” part) is not in the ASV. Per Barnes, it is lacking in every Greek manuscript before the 16th century, & “it is never quoted by the Greek fathers in their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity, a passage which would be so much in point, & which could not have failed to be quoted if it were genuine.” Removing it doesn't affect the meaning or flow of the text at all (if any it helps it). And it is wondered why a witness would be needed in Heaven.
2. However, its inclusion doesn't harm the meaning either.

(v. 8) *And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

1. Three bear record (witness, testify) about Jesus (v. 5). John is giving evidence for believing what Gnostics refuse to believe.
2. The Spirit spoke from God and empowered witnesses. The water: God bore witness of Jesus at His baptism–“*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Mt 3:17). The blood: not only did “blood” show Jesus to be human, contrary to Gnostics, but He shed His blood in accordance with Scripture, & blood was required for a covenant with God & remission of sins (Heb 9:20-22). Also, *blood* is a witness because He died (i.e., blood was shed), but yet He lived again (resurrected)!
3. These things *prove* Jesus to be the Son of God; there are **no doubts!**

B. The Evidence Must Be Believed (v. 9-12)

(v. 9) *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God... hath testified of his Son.*

1. *If we receive* (accept) *the witness of men* (which we do) – we accept the evidences that men will give to prove a point.
2. *The witness of God is greater.* This is an obvious argument, especially in a miraculous setting, but it applies as much today. If you're willing to hear & accept non-miraculous evidence (i.e., simple facts) that a *man* might provide in order to prove a point, why not look at the evidence *God* has provided?! God has provided evidence miraculous *and* non-miraculous
3. Today, you accept logical evidence in non-religious situations (i.e., trials); why not accept the *religious* evidence of Jesus?
4. *For this is the witness...* - i.e., what John has already said about the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

(v. 10) *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

1. How does the one that believes have *the witness in himself*? This *cannot* mean that he himself is now a witness; this is clear since he required the witness (i.e., the evidence) in order to believe. It's figurative (just like *Jesus* dwelling in him–3:24). He has analyzed & accepted the evidence provided by the witness, & now believes the truth (which means he obeys–2:17; 3:24). Now, **figuratively**, he has the witness (the Spirit) in him.
2. He that believes not – makes God a liar because he doesn't believe the record (evidence) God gave. God is *not* a liar; this man's unbelief is the same as *calling* God a liar. That's how strong the evidence is! It's not like the evidence is weak, so he doesn't believe. It's clear! So the only explanation of his rejection of it is that he thinks God is lying!

(v. 11-12) *And this is the record (evidence), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

1. The record (evidence): When you analyze the entire historical record of Jesus, you not only see the evidence of His existence, His birth, His miracles, His death & resurrection, you also see the evidence of His purpose (4:14–“*to be the Savior of the world*”; to take away the sin of the world–Jn 1:29; to give abundant life–Jn 10:10).
2. This abundant, eternal life is in Jesus. You must be *in Him* to have it (approx 10 times in Eph 1:3-13; v. 7–*in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*”). He that has the Son (is *in Him*) has this eternal life...**victory** (v. 5)! This victory is ultimately in Heaven, to live with God & Christ forever.

CONCLUSION: This is the greatest promise...the greatest gift that a human could ever receive – victory over the lusts of the world and the spiritual death they bring. And it's all based on **evidence!** This is what John is reminding Christians here. Do you believe in the *possibility* or even the *probability* that Jesus was the Son of God? Or do you know & accept the **evidence & reality** of His existence?

INTRO: Having spent great effort in encouraging Christians to walk in the light & live as children of God, John concludes by providing encouragement & motivation to do these things. He speaks of our faith (v. 4) & the confidence we have because we are obedient to God: confidence that we can & will overcome the world & its lusts, and that we can **know** this because of Christ (v. 5-12).

II. THE CHILD OF GOD HAS CONFIDENCE BY FAITH (v. 13-21):

A. Confidence In Eternal Life (v. 13)

(v. 13) *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

1. *I've written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God.* He's writing to Christians, reminding them of why they believe (evidence—v. 5-12), & why they believe on the *name* (authority) of Jesus – because they keep His commands (3:22). And what he says will help Christians *continue* to believe on the name of the Son of God (i.e., continue to obey).
2. *I've written these things* – specifically the things he just wrote about the evidence that Jesus was the Son of God (v. 5-12).
 - a. Knowing these things provides security & assurance – for those who believe & obey Him.
 - b. But John also wrote a lot more about what the child of God must do in order to have this confidence (e.g., 3:9-10,24).
3. When we do these things (all of them), he says we can **KNOW** we have eternal life, because we know this was the purpose for sending Jesus (4:14; 5:11-12). God wants us to be saved, & He wants us to *know* we're saved. He doesn't leave us to wonder about our eternity. He doesn't say “do these things, and I *may* take you to Heaven!” He promises/guarantees it!
4. If you know His Word, then you **know** whether you're saved or lost! There should be *no* uncertainties. Yet so many Christians express doubt when this subject is broached. Why? There are no doubts...you're either obedient or you're not! The reality is that so few Christians know His Word. They know a few things the preacher has preached – enough to feel confident in their own knowledge – but nowhere near enough to feel confident in the day of judgment (cf. 4:17).
5. This is supposed to be a “happy” verse...you can **know** you're going to Heaven! But for so many it's not. And I'm sure John knew this when he wrote it...he *knew* many of his readers wouldn't feel better because they weren't obedient.
6. You'd think this verse would interest more people. Isn't eternal life what everyone wants? They want it, but not enough to believe in & obey Jesus. Because this isn't the eternal life they really want; they want a continuous life on earth. They're comfortable here, so they forfeit their eternity for a moment on earth, having no idea that this life cannot be compared with what God has waiting for us! **But we know!** And we *know* we have eternal life, because we know God's Word & obey it!

B. Confidence In Prayer (v. 14-17)

1. **A General Truth (v. 14-15)** *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:* (v.15) *And if we know that he hear us...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*
 - a. Confidence/boldness – John uses this word four times in this letter (2:28; 3:21—in prayer; 4:17—in the day of judgment).
 - b. If we can have this confidence with God in judgment regarding our *eternal* life, why not in prayer regarding *this* life?
 - c. John says we can! If we ask anything, he hears us; and if we know he hears us...we know he gives us what we want!
 - i. But notice the condition: *according to his will*. Most religious people I know simply believe that “God says He'll answer our prayers!” Whether they mean to or not, they almost always leave out the conditions!
 - ii. This verse does *not* promise that God will give us whatever we ask! It says we must ask *according to His will*.
 - First of all, how can we do this if we don't know His will? Most people who ask God for things refuse to even read His will, & when shown the truth still refuse to obey it. God doesn't even hear their prayers (Prov 28:9).
 - Second, knowing His will, we don't pray for things that aren't according to it (personal wealth, sports, etc.).
 - We pray for things we *know* are in accordance with His will (e.g., for the opportunity to study with & convert a lost soul). Then John says we know we have the petitions we desired of Him. But we also understand that God's will is for this person to *make the decision* to listen & obey, & that God will not take away his free will & force him to obey. So we understand that there are further details & conditions to prayer that John doesn't address here; he assumes that we, as Christians, already know this.
 - When we pray, we trust that He always knows what's best in every situation, & will answer accordingly. We also recognize that, although we know His general will by reading His word, we may not know how it applies in every situation. Is it His will that someone with cancer is healed, or a loved one is safe in travels? We can pray for these things, even though we may not know exactly how they fit into His will (cf. 2 Cor 12:7-9).
2. **A Specific Situation (v. 16-17)** *If any man see* (sees, knows) *his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.* (v.17) *All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*
 - a. *His brother* – John is speaking of a *Christian* sinning a *sin not unto death*...and *there is a sin unto death*.... Obviously this is *spiritual* death. So what is the sin unto death? And what is the sin *not* unto death (cf. Isa 59:2; Col 2:13)?
 - He doesn't name a specific sin or sins. He has however told us that God will forgive our sins if we confess (1:7-9), & he gives no “exception” sins. So the sin unto death is **ANY** sin for which the sinner refuses to repent.
 - This also shows that a *Christian* CAN sin unto death; i.e., fall from grace, lose his salvation (OSAS is false).
 - b. We can't ask God to forgive someone who won't repent! To do so is to ask something *not* according to His will (v. 14).
 - c. But for the sin *not* unto death – God shall give him life (i.e., forgive him), because he has repented (Acts 8:22). This is something we can & should pray for (w/confidence—v. 14-15).
 - d. This doesn't mean that *every time* a member sins he is required to tell the church (as some congregations teach)! John said “*if any man sees*,” which doesn't mean he has to witness it, just that he knows of it – the sin has become manifest to him...and he's aware that this brother is penitent (i.e., the sin is *not* unto death). A member should be concerned for this brother's spiritual wellbeing, and want God to forgive me! He can ask *with confidence* for God to forgive him!

CONCLUSION: Confidence is important in Christianity...confidence in prayer (when we ask things in harmony w/His will), & confidence in our eternal destiny. We know we have eternal life! In John 17:1-3, Jesus defined eternal life as knowing the Father & the Son (cf. 1 Jn 5:20). So as long as I know God & Jesus (defined as obedience to them—2:3), I have eternal life, & I **know** I have it!

INTRO: The post-modern world tries to tell us there is *nothing* we can know for sure (truth is relative/subjective). We respond by showing the evidence for numerous things we know to be true. And although there are many things in this life that *are* uncertain, what matters most isn't! In **1 John 5:18-21**, John says "we know" three times in these final four verses, referencing about ten things we **know** (are assured of).

C. Confidence in Christianity (v. 18-21)

(v. 18) *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth* (adhere or cling to) **him not.**

1. In conclusion, John reminds his readers that, as Christians, they are "born of God"; and he reminds us what this means:
2. The one *born of God doesn't sin*. This is a repeat of **3:9**—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...." We recall that, contrary to most commentators, this does *not* simply mean that a child of God doesn't **continually** sin (which is true), but that he does not sin – period! This is his goal; at any given moment, a child of God is **NOT** sinning. If he *is* sinning, he is **NOT** living as a child of God, & he needs to repent & confess his sin to God, who will forgive (**1:7-9**).
3. *He...keepeth himself*. "Keep"—to watch, guard/protect oneself from injury or loss.
 - a. Isn't this God's job (**1 Pet 1:5**—"kept by the power of God through faith"; i.e., O.S.A.S.)? **Jude 21**—keep yourselves in the love of God. And Here John says we are to keep/protect ourselves. How? In this verse keeping yourself is the same as "sinning not." When the child of God is not sinning, but doing righteousness, he is keeping himself. But from what?
 - b. Not *physical* danger, but *spiritual* danger – as seen in this verse (from "*the wicked one*"). "One" is added; literally "*the wicked/evil touches him not*." It's appropriate in the Greek to add "one" or "thing" (cf. **2:13**), but it may be just as appropriate not to: *Evil* itself doesn't touch (adhere/cling to) him. Either way is true of the one who *keeps himself*. We live in a world where we're surrounded by evil & wickedness; but we refuse it & therefore it doesn't "stick" to us! So Satan can't touch us! He is powerless against a faithful Christian (cf. **Mt 16:18**). And "we **know**" this is true!

(v. 19) *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness [the evil one].*

1. Notice the contrast: *We are of God* – again, because we don't sin, we do righteousness, & we love our brethren (**3:9-10**).
2. *The whole world* (other than faithful Christians) *lieth* (lay, set firm) *in evil* (or *the evil one*). Why? Because they choose to! Because they choose to sin & not do righteousness. Because they choose evil (evil one) over God. And "we **know**" this!

(v. 20) *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

1. *We know the Son of God is come* –a final refutation of Gnosticism. Jesus was the Son of God & *did* come physically (**1:1-3**).
2. *And He gave us understanding* (He taught us) *so that we may know Him that is true* (God the Father – **Jn 3:33; 8:40**).
3. *And we are in Him that is true, even in His Son...* – in the Father *and* in Jesus, since both are God (**Jn 10:30**), & both are truth (**Psa 31:5; Jn 14:6**). We are figuratively "*in Him that is true*" because we literally keep His commandments (**3:24**).
4. *This is the true God & eternal life*. Is 'this' the Father or Son? There's much controversy over this question. But considering John has identified Jesus as the eternal life (**1:2 & 5:10-11**), it's clear he's calling Jesus God (cf. **Jn 1:1-3; 10:30; 20:28**).
5. And again, "we **know**" these things are true!

(v. 21) *Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

1. "Idol" represents anything that is designed to represent God or to take the place of the one and only God.
2. John hasn't mentioned idolatry once in this letter. Why now...at the very end? He has just finished identifying the true God...Jesus Christ...the **only** way...being in Him and He in you, through obedience to His commands and love of His family. So guard yourself from anything outside of Him...*anything* that you could put in place of Him & His commands!

SUMMARY / FINAL OBSERVATIONS: (cf. *figurative* requirements w/the *literal* ones – shows us what God wants of us & the results)

<u>IF WE:</u>	<u>THEN WE:</u>	<u>REF:</u>
1. Claim fellowship, but walk in darkness	Lie	1:6
2. Walk in the light as <i>He</i> is in the light	Have fellowship	1:7
3. Keep His commandments	Know Him	2:3
4. Love our brother	Abide in the light	2:9
5. Do the will of God	Abide forever	2:17
6. Do righteousness	Are born of Him	2:29
7. Abide in Him	Sin not	3:6
8. Sin	Haven't seen or known Him (#3)	3:6
9. Do righteousness	Are righteous like Him	3:7
10. Sin	Are of the Devil (#8)	3:8
11. Are born of God	Sin not (#7)	3:9; 5:18
12. Do not righteousness	Are not of God (#9)	3:10
13. Love the brethren	Have passed from death to life	3:14
14. Love not/hate our brother	Abide in death & are murderers (#4)	3:14-15
15. Keep His commandments	Have answered prayers (#22); dwell in Him & He in us (#3)	3:22
17. Love one another	Are born of God & know God	4:7
18. Love one another	God dwells in us ; His love is perfected in us	4:12
19. Love God & keep His commandments	Love the brethren	5:2
20. Believe Jesus is the Son of God (faith)	Overcome the world	5:5
21. Have the Son	Have eternal life	5:11-12
22. If we ask according to His will	Have the petitions we desired (#15)	5:14-15
23. Are born of God	Sin not; keep/guard ourselves	5:18

CONCLUSION: 1 John is one of the last NT books written, and it begins & ends with certainties & assurances for the faithful Christian ("know" occurs over 30 times –**5:13**). Can you say "I know I'm saved"? We should be able to...not because we're perfect, but because we *strive* for perfection; not because we never sin, but because *when* we sin, we have godly sorrow for it, repent/confess, & **know** God forgives us!