

Scripture Text

1 John 5:1-5

Context

John has continued to flesh out what it looks like to abide in God which involved faith in Christ, loving each other, and obeying God's commands. These are the three tests worked out again and again through the letter. John wants us to see that these three strands are deeply interwoven chords that can't be separated and make an amazing fabric. Here he continues these themes whilst talking about how in doing so we overcome the world.

Observation and Meaning

- John talks about overcoming the world in this passage. Where else does he talk about the 'world' in this epistle and what do you think he means?
- What are the marks of life that has overcome the world from this passage?
- What is the work of God in this passage to enable us to believe in Him and overcome the world?
- How does Paul describe what is necessary to love people properly? Is this surprising to you? Why?
- What link is there between loving God and his commands? How does loving God change our relationship towards His commands?

Big Idea

Believing in Jesus Christ is how we overcome the world, as true faith in Christ is evidenced by a love for God, love for His children, and keeping his commands. The source of this new life of faith is being born again through Jesus Christ.

Connecting to the Bible's storyline

Whereas sin makes us worldly (loving ourselves, doubting God, and disobeying His commands), the new birth through Jesus undoes all these things, and through our faith in Him enables us to overcome this world as we wait for His return.

Sermon Outline

1. What overcoming the world looks like
 - A love for God and His people, shaped by His commands
2. How the world is overcome
 - Being born of God
3. Standing in this victory
 - Our faith that overcomes the world

Application

- What are we called to do at the most fundamental level in this passage as the means of overcoming the world?
- If obeying God's commands is a sign of how we love him, how much do you love God, and how can you grow in your love for God?
- How does loving God and keeping his commands shape the way that you would love people?
- If you find God's commands to be burdensome, what does that tell you about your faith in Him? Which commands do you find most burdensome, and how should you deal with those feelings now that you have read this passage?
- What areas of 'the world' do you need to overcome, and what does this passage call you to do to overcome it?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

- Who is writing and to whom?
- What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
- Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
- Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.