

Date: September 9, 2012

Subject: Even our Faith - 1 John 5:4 part 3

"For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4

Well, my dearly beloved friends, we have come to our third and final study of this beautiful passage from God's Holy Book, the Bible, and ^{are} concluding our study - for now - of 1 John 5:4.

Thus far, we have found it to apply to only the regenerated of God's elect, ("Born of God"); and of our daily victory over the sins which beset us, ("Overcomes the World"); and now we are come to the place in our text which describes the means of such a victory we have in Christ, ("Even our Faith").

I. "Shall We Continue in Sin?"

Sadly, many Christians don't even try to overcome the sins in their life, they have settled into complacency, "Ah, why bother, as long as I live in this flesh I will continue to sin, so why even try...?"

But there is a difference from sin, and continuing to sin, to live in sin. Romans 6:1-2

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

We should never think it's acceptable to continue to live in sin; to grow and thrive in sin while under the Gospel, is to grow into a tare, and apart from the Vine - Jesus Christ. Christ doesn't save us for us to remain in sin, but He saved us from sin - from the punishment, from the guilt, & from the bondage of sin.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Romans 6:11-12

Most people get the impression that salvation is a quick decision, put it in your pocket, and go on and live like before... but this is not true salvation; once we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we will want victory over our sins, we will want to grow in grace, and we will try to obey more today, than yesterday.

A few years ago, i was in my cell for count-time. Count, is when all inmates are locked in their cells and counted to ensure no escapes. Well somehow, i leaned against the door... and the door flung open! The lock on my door had become stuck so it didn't fully lock shut. You see, i was in my cell, but the door was open - now of course i am not going to escape, and i quickly locked my door afterwards - but after so many years of that door being locked, i just assumed that it still was; but all i had to do, was try...

II. "Put Off... the Old Man"

Beloved, do you understand what i am getting at? For those of you who are in

prison and receive these letters, don't start trying all the prison doors, Jesus said in Matthew 5:26 "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." No, don't attempt to leave your cell; rather, leave your old way of life.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation [Greek: "anastrophe" meaning: "way of life, behaviour."] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

We have lived in sin for so long, that we lose hope and forget to even try to change; but if we are truly in Christ, it doesn't have to be this way, He unlocked the door; Nay, it's as though He comes bursting through the door and says, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

What are you going to do? Just stand there? What are you waiting for? Get out of there already! Get out of that "cell" that has held you for so long and so "put off... the old man... and... put on the new man".

III. Change Can Begin Today

"Ah Neil, that is all fine and dandy; but I am a very "holy" person and though I sin all the time, I can't change myself - I must wait for God, I must wait for His will, and for His time..."

Well His time is now, "behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) and His will for us is to not sin, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:6); and finally, while we can't ^{truly} change ourself, God isn't going to send an angel to force our hand to do the right thing. God does not do this work for us; but in us.

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13

~~the~~ Walk out of that "cell" beloved, by faith in Jesus Christ, and every step you are making, and every step you take; it is God working in you, Who has worked in you, and Who will continue working in you.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun a good work in you will perform [Greek: "epiteleō" meaning: "to finish, complete"] it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:6

Now all of this takes faith, for if we don't believe these things, how shall we seek to overcome our sins? God has given to us a Book filled with His "precious promises," but in order for us to receive any profit from them, we must believe them, and so we read in 1 John 5:4

"... and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

IV. "The Faith of Christ"

He says "our faith"; that is our believing in what God tells us in His Word,

"our faith." In other parts of the Bible we read "the faith of Christ" and sadly, this has brought much confusion to sincere people who - though very subtly - are taught not to believe, because faith must be, "of Christ." For example we read in Romans 3:22

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

Now I am not going to get into the particulars about the use of the genitive case in the Greek language. But I will mention this, "by faith of Jesus Christ" does not necessarily mean the faith which is His, but the faith of which He is the object; and in the Greek language, the genitive case often has this meaning. Check out Mark 11:22 sometime to see this for yourself (i.e. it's the same genitive construction; but doesn't mean, "have the faith of God" but rather, "Have faith in God" as it is correctly translated in the KJV).

Even if we were to read those passages, "the faith of Jesus Christ," and take it to mean that the faith is His - which is true also - does He not give it to us? Are not His people ... b-e-l-i-e-v-e-r-s, believers! Faith is part of His gift (Eph. 2:8), it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), it is His, and yet He gives it to us as we read in Romans 1:17

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Do you hear that my beloved friends who have come out of captivity? We live by faith, we please God by faith, and we overcome sin ... by faith.

"For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

IV. Faith is Like a Muscle

Faith is, as it were, a muscle and though we all begin with this "muscle" paralyzed and incapable of true flexing, once renewed and ~~quickered~~ quickened by the Holy Spirit, we begin to "flex" as it were, although ever so faintly.

This simple illustration shows that just as God has given us physical muscles to carry us about, so has He given ~~his~~ ^{His} people this "spiritual muscle" whereby we seek to do His will and to please Him as we go through this life; and the more we "flex," the greater our victory is in Jesus Christ, "and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." As muscles are stimulated to grow under greater weight, and small sparks grow into large flames, so does our faith grow by resisting the temptations that try us, and by having faith in God and His providence. Yes beloved, in God's Gymnasium He allows no slackers, and if we don't seek to get spiritually stronger and strengthen the "muscle" of our faith; He most certainly will see to it by

His Sovereign providence. They could be financial difficulties, physical afflictions, environmental events, etc., etc. God has His ways of trying our faith causing it to grow and strengthen. You want to trim that fat around your belly? Its going to take some work, isn't it? Well in order for us to grow in grace and trim the fat of this world from off of our affections it takes work too; this is the trial of our faith beloved, which is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7).

VI Conclusion

On the one hand all of our sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ which we receive by faith being "born of God" before; and yet on the other hand, we should strive to overcome the sins which so easily beset us and not get discouraged when we fail, but continue trying to overcome them, by faith, "even our faith."

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

Rev. J. W. W.

Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me by Hopper 1871

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
 over life's tempestuous sea;
 unknown waves before me roll,
 hiding rocks and treacherous shoal;
 Chart and compass come from Thee;
 Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,
 Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
 boisterous waves obey Thy will,
 When Thou sayest to them, "Be still!"
 Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
 Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore
 and the fearful breakers roar
 'twixt me and the peaceful rest,
 then, while leaving on Thy breast,
 May I hear Thee say to me,
 "Fear not, I will pilot thee."