



Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Certainty of God's Witness

⁶ This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. ¹⁸ We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. ¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in

His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1 John 5 NKJV)

In summary, remember that John wrote this as Gnostics were attacking the true doctrine of the Church.

1 John has been a difficult book because John is in an argument with some people, and we don't get to hear their side of the conversation. Primarily the letter was written as a response to the growing Gnosticism in the Church. Some preached that Jesus was never really human but rather was some sort of a spirit being. The statements throughout the letter are repetitive. John keeps emphasizing that the manifestation that we are of God and that we have His Holy Spirit abiding in us is that we have a love for God and love for one another. As I said on Wednesday night, it is a restatement of the "Great Commandment," which Jesus cited out of the Torah.

Gnostics said, "The more you know, the more saved you are." John responds that it's not about knowledge, but it's all about love.

V.1 Those born of God believe that Jesus is divine and is the Messiah. Without thinking those things, one cannot be "born of God."

V.2 We know that we are children of God by living out the Great Commandment in our lives. John is repeatedly giving a New Testament rendition of the Great Commandment. He's explaining to us how to love God with all of our heart, soul, and might and how we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

V.3 God's commandments are not burdensome. Those that love God keep His commandments. And what are those commandments again? The commandments are the same commandments that they have been from old: to love Him with all of our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The reason that His commandments are not "burdensome" is because He does the heavy lifting. Remember what Jesus said to us, ²⁸ *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. (Matthew 11:28-30, KJV).*

Following His commandments is NOT BURDENSOME unless you try to do it yourself. It is in Him that the burden is light. I want to remind you that in living out the Christian life, we don't have to "try harder;" we essentially just "die harder." By that, I mean that Paul tells us that we have already been "crucified with Christ" and that we no longer live; but He lives in us." Living that identity out is partly done by not trying to resurrect the old you! Submit to God and respond in the Spirit with what comes your way.

V.4 When we love God, our faith overcomes the world. This is precisely what we studied last week. John told us in 1 John 4:4: *He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.*" No mountain in front of you is ever greater than the God within you.

Scripture tells us that we are "more than conquerors" through Jesus. How do we overcome the fears that we have? It is by faith and faith alone. How do we increase our faith? ¹⁷ *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* (Romans 10:17, KJV).

V.5 And where is this faith placed? It is faith that is placed in Jesus. ¹² *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* (Acts 4:12, KJV). Our Christian life is not about trying harder. We don't become more holy by trying harder, and we don't become Christ-like by trying harder. We accomplish spiritual movement and maturity by trusting HIM TO DO THE WORK and submitting our flesh to Him to do the work. Obedience comes from submission to His will and getting yourself out of the way.

Vv.6-9 Now, we see a couple of verses dealing with Spirit, water, and blood. Again, we must remember unto whom John was responding. He was responding to the Gnostics, some of whom denied the humanity of Jesus. For 2,000 years, believers have discussed what these verses might mean. Some Gnostics believed that Jesus had been born as a human, and when He was baptized, he "transitioned" into deity and humanity. Then they thought that He "gave up His Spirit" and became a man again on the cross. This is a distortion and doesn't follow scripture. It is men trying to overthink what the Bible tells us. John recognized that Jesus came by "water and blood." In other words, he was God in human flesh, and He died on the cross and remained fully God and man.

How do the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify? We find the key to understanding this passage in verse 7, where we read, "Now there are these three that testify." I checked many excellent commentaries, including Dr. Thomas Constable's notes¹ which you all know that I love. I also used the Believers Bible Commentary, which I use a lot. They settle in on the witness of Jesus being: (1) through the **water** at His baptism where the Spirit descended and the Father spoke, (2) that same baptism as said in point one where the **Spirit appeared** testifying to the divinity of Christ, and (3) His **blood on the cross** testified as to His humanity. The simplest explanation I got was from my wife's teaching notes of 20 years of Bible studies.

I quote her, "John's reference can be summarized as follows: "born of water, he was baptized, born of the spirit (evidenced by the Holy Spirit at His baptism), He was divine. Born of blood, He was fully human."

V.10 John reminds us that the testimony of God is the testimony of the Spirit, and the Spirit is within you. The Spirit within us testifies to the truthfulness of Who Jesus is. Those who don't believe this testimony make God a liar.

Vv.11-12 And HERE'S THE GOSPEL TESTIMONY. GOD HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THAT IS ONLY FOUND IN HIS SON. He that has the Son has life. He is

¹ <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1john.pdf> (see pages 108-110)

referring to someone who has put their faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. If you don't have Jesus, you don't have life. Jesus said, "*I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE; no man comes to the Father but by ME.*" (John 14:6, authors paraphrase).

Vv.13-14 He is affirming that he is writing this letter to believers, not to unbelievers, so that we might know and be confident that we have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have *towards Him*. John shifts into talking about confidence in our prayer life. There are some essential things listed here about prayer. I love how he says we can have confidence as we approach God in prayer.

- a. "*You have not because you ask not.*" (see James 4:2-3). Why don't we pray about things? Well, perhaps it's because we're so self-sufficient. We think we can do it on our own. Sometimes we don't ask because we desire to stay in our problem (the person that wants to be sober but doesn't want to give up drink). Sometimes we just know we've gotten ourselves into the situation and feel we can't ask God to get us out of it. Sometimes we're so ashamed that we can't even pray.
- b. John says: "If we ask ANYTHING according to His will." Anything means anything. John is telling us that we can, and should, pray about anything. We don't have to figure out if something is too small to bother God or too big to lay before God. Just have an ongoing conversation with God. It can go on all day. It can go on all night. He never gets tired of hearing the cry of our hearts. When we ask "according to His will," He hears us.

v.15 Here is a verse that has been widely debated. But if we look at this simply for what it says, it helps. John encourages praying for a fellow believer who might have fallen into sin. John also seems to say that this hinges on if the brother has committed a sin that results in death. He is talking about physical death, not spiritual death. We are saved by grace, and WE ARE NOT KEPT BY WORKS. When we're saved, we're saved. This is super important. I don't think John is talking about spiritual death. John had seen people physically die (like Ananias and Saphira) when doing things contrary to God. We know from Paul's letters that he had seen people dying because they took the Lord's Supper when they shouldn't have done so. There are many instances in the Bible where people committed certain sins, and God just took them off the earth. I believe that is what John is talking about here.

Vv.16-17 This is again about continual, habitual, unremorseful sin. We went over all of this a couple of weeks ago in a Sunday morning teaching. He is not saying that believers don't ever sin, but that a believer will not be chronically unrepentant in their sins. The person who just sins normally is protected by the Lord, and the accuser cannot touch them.

V.18 Satan does not have freedom or authority in our lives to do whatever he wants to do. There are times when God will allow Satan to knock you around (Luke 22:31-34). But He is there to protect the believer. I believe that scripture tells us that God puts a spiritual hedge of protection around the believer. He protects us against the enemies of our souls, and he gives us spiritual armor to do it (Ephesians 6:10-18). The most wonderful protection we enjoy is the irrevocable indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22).

V.19 We know we're in the world, and for a time, Satan is in temporary control of the world. If Satan can't get to you from within, he'll tempt you from without (the world). I've battled not only with my flesh but with the world and its influences for my whole life. I am grateful that I had a 4'11" mother who was a giant in the Lord, and every day she prayed that I would be protected from "the world, the flesh, and the devil." When I was a little boy and heard her pray this, I wasn't sure what it all meant. In time, I understood it and appreciated it.

Vv.20-21 WE KNOW He has come, and we know that we're in Him who is true, Jesus. HE IS THE TRUE GOD, AND HE IS ETERNAL LIFE. This is so clear that Jesus the Messiah is God Almighty. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and our only hope. We are in fellowship, and John has written this book to remind us how we stay in sweet fellowship with Him.

John ends with a great warning. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." This is excellent advice for us today to keep our sweet fellowship with Him. John knew that idolatry was a constant threat to the believers back then. IT'S STILL A CONSTANT THREAT TO US. An idol is ANYTHING OR ANYBODY THAT COMES BETWEEN YOU AND GOD. Avoid idols. Be proactive and make a conscious decision not to let anything come between you and Him.

Jesus must be in a place of priority, preeminence, and prominence in our lives. We need to examine what is taking our time away from Him. We must be careful that those things don't eclipse our love for Him. Anything can become an idol: music, romance, books, sleep, horses, food, projects, hobby time, events, entertainment, and even religious service. Avoid those things.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.