

**SERMON: Walking with Jesus is Walking in Victory by Faith****GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we continue verse by verse, to exegete or bring out the meaning of the First Letter of John the Apostle. As is the whole Bible, it was inspired by Holy Spirit. In my previous messages from the First Letter by the Apostle John, I have attempted to bring out the meaning of John's instructions to Christians. This was to help them to do the will of God, by **Walking Close with Jesus**. Today's Message I have titled **Walking Close with Jesus is Walking in Victory by Faith**. Last week closed the message with **(1 John 4.21) And he has given us this command: Those who continually love God must also continually love their fellow believers.**

God would not ask us to do such an impossible deed, *continually love*, if He were not willing to give us the power of Holy Spirit to cause it to happen, to the Glory and Praise of the Father & the Son. That Hymn #387 (TH), **."Oh to be like Thee"** that I mentioned earlier in my last Message says it correctly and truly. Let us all make the Refrain from this Biblical song our prayer: **Oh to be like Thee! Oh to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art! Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness--- Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart..**

**THE STONE AND THE ROCK AND WHO IS JESUS?**

The Apostle John next defines what a Born-again Christian really is. Belief in *the truth* of "Who Jesus is!" is the truth turns the world upside down. It rescues the perishing, turns sinners into saints and thus creates the unbeatable Church of the Living God out of the broken and the lame. *This Truth* is Jesus true identity: **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."** This statement was first spoken under the grace of God by a fisherman named Simon by the Sea of Galilee.

It was the summer of \*AD 29. So powerful is this statement that Jesus gave Simon a new name just because he spoke it. His new name became 'Peter' which means 'stone.' This birth of the Church **in the spoken Word** from Heaven was from the mouth of a mere human man, Simon. Yes, Jesus was the Word of God in the flesh. The total Birth of the Church would require **God's breath of the Holy Spirit** received inside all Believers in Jesus. This did not happen until that glorious Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' Crucifixion, on \*May 28<sup>th</sup> AD 30. But yet a year before Jesus Crucifixion for sins, God would give to Simon the Words of Power to Co-work with Holy Spirit before He came inside them. These words that .Simon-Peter spoke were, and are still, for

spiritual re-birth of sinners, to Create Born-again Christians. Let's read and hear how it first really happened.

Jesus had just asked His original Disciples what the crowd was saying about “Who He is.” Then in **(Matthew 16.15-18)** *15 Then he asked them, “But who **do you say I am?**” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. 18 Now I say to you that you are Peter (petros, Greek-which means ‘stone’), and upon this rock (petra, Greek which means Mountain) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.* Thus clearly a born-again Christian is anyone who sincerely says **“Jesus is the Messiah (or Christ), the Son of the living God.”** **The importance of Jesus name and identity in it is why the Gates of Hell oppose it. In schools of learning all around the world teachers give failing grades to anyone who includes Jesus' name in their classroom discussion of their religion. The importance of Jesus' name for salvation is still as it was about 2000 years ago. The Bible tells us in (Acts 4.10-12)** *10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by **the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.** 11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, ‘The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’ 12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”* **As Jesus' little brother James said in (James 2.19)** *You say you have faith, for you believe that there **is one God.** Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. **Saying good things about God is simply Not enough! For Jesus builds His Church, saves lost souls, by this statement on Who Jesus Is...** “You are the Messiah {the Christ} , the Son of the living God.”*

John repeats this truth found in the Gospel by Mark which was at that time being circulated among the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians. Also there were many eye-witnesses still living, including John, who loved to “tell the story of how a Savior came from Glory!” We read this in **(1 John 5.1a)** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. So, **Walking in Victory by Faith is Faith in Jesus, Faith in His name alone.***

### **THE IMPOSSIBLE AND THE IMPERFECT**

**(1 John 5.1b)** *And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too.* When a sinner becomes a born-again Christian by faith in Jesus' blood sacrifice for sins, Holy Spirit enters the body and creates a new person deep inside. This causes new attitudes and feelings towards all Christians.

This causes love for Christians, the Father's Children. John has been repeating this through this Letter on Love to the Church.

**(1 John 5.2-3) 2** *We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. 3 Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.* John has been repeating a basic theme or TRUTH when we walk closer to JESUS, the TRUTH. The power to be obedient Christians to God's Commandments, comes through the power of Love. Christians have God, thus Love, now within them as a gift they received with the Gift of salvation. Christians are in the process of becoming Sons of God, just like Jesus but not divine. Although perfect obedience seems impossible, Love and Faith causes God to make obedience happen. God is patient with all Christians, and loves them all. Yet the Bible tells us in **(Hebrews 11.6)** *And it is impossible to please God **without faith**. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.* Even with a small faith Christians can prayerfully follow a path with Faith in God's doing the Impossible. Sometimes I think that the Christians with a smaller faith to start with end up with the biggest. Why? Because they sincerely seek God for a faith that grows. Then God's gift of Love for His imperfect Children, as we are in ourselves yet imperfect, shrinks "impossible" down to "Lord Willing!" Therefore this Love that God puts in a Christian's heart, makes *His commandments not burdensome.*

#### **TAKEAWAY#1**

**The Apostle John has been connecting in this Letter to the Churches the mysterious and divine and supernatural connection between Love and Faith in Jesus, even in His name. The world looks at what it calls "love" as only for pleasure. Power to those of the world, comes from overpowering the weak, especially one's enemies. Jesus said: in (Luke 6.35) "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. So John has revealed to us how Love is the Greatest power in the Universe. When we are like our Father we are connected to this Power, this God Who is Love.**

This TAKEAWAY fits and brings out the meaning in the next verse that John wrote as he reveals a Christian's enemy, "this evil world." For we read in **(1 John 5.4-5) 4** *For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 5* *And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

**It is important to note that loving Enemies (people) of the world, is not loving the World.** As John warned us in **(1 John 2.15-16) 15** *Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when*

*you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions.*

### **DEFEATS THIS EVIL WORLD**

**Next, looking closely at (1John 5.4)---** *For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.* Pastor Bruce, what does it mean “*defeats this evil world?*” We want it to mean an easy life on earth until we see Jesus in Heaven, in Glory. What the Bible tells us is different. Now, God's plan *For every child* is unique and personal. He desires a personal relationship with each Christian. Yet, I will start at what **we know what God's will is for the Church, for every Believer who desires to walk close to Jesus.**

That fact of being a Christian known, let us strengthen it by the fact that God is One! To emphasize the *Plans in Heaven against the Hopes of Hell* let's look at **(Mark 12.35-37)**. Jesus was correcting the crowd regarding the religious leaders' errors about **Whose Son Is the Messiah?** *35 Later, as Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple, he asked, “Why do the teachers of religious law claim that the Messiah is the son of David? 36 For David himself, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, {in Psalm 110.1} ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your feet.’ 37 Since David himself called the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?”* The large crowd listened to him with great delight. **On this side of Jesus' visit to earth, “‘The LORD said to my Lord,” clearly means “The Father said to the Son.”**

The child of God who loves His Lord should not ignore Jesus' interests for his own temporary plans! God the Father's plan is to fulfill His promise to His Son: *Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your feet (Mark 12.36)*. Therefore, **every child of God defeats this evil world** by a commitment to what the Father's and His Son Jesus' goal is, to *build my {Jesus'} Church*. Jesus enemies are those whom God will humble beneath Jesus' feet.

I realize that personal gifting and appropriate callings, make the personal assignments from God vary among Jesus' Sheep, the Church. But every member has a part to play to move sinners to say those glorious words: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Every sinner who says this shows another spirit enemy of Jesus humbled beneath His feet.

### **VICTORY THROUGH FAITH**

Every Christian is given a measure of faith. Whether big faith or small faith, it must align with God the Father's and God the Son's goal---**by faith to defeat this evil world**. Notice that the Bible does not limit the responsibility to just the Leaders in the Church for we read **every child of God'**

I guarantee that if you are willing in your heart to obey this command to use your faith to seek and save the lost, God will use you. It may be by your lifestyle attracting sinners to come to church. Maybe sinners will simply take note of your Christianity. Maybe God will answer your prayers more than others for great Victories for Jesus' Church-Building. Whatever your personal “mission” may be, do not neglect it! For God intends that the whole Body of Christ be defeating this evil world by faith.

Once Christians are committed to victory by faith, God will reveal more of Himself to them. He will be more personal. This may include temporal or material blessings as you are passing through this earth to Glory. Many Christians here at OIC have made this commitment, I know. But, I also know that clouds of doubt darken the skies over many of my dear brothers and sisters here at OIC. Well, I sing a song to encourage myself in my darker skied days with the Lord: *It's Just Like Jesus to Roll the Clouds Away*. Let's keep asking Jesus to do that for all of His beloved at OIC. Then the Victory by Faith to overcome this evil world will **be achieved**.

John again emphasizes that it is a group effort in the Church. It is not fought by non-Christians. For we read **(1 John 5.5), 5** *And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

**John knew that his Christian audience who read this Letter knew the “gory” details of Jesus' Death in order to become Christians at all. So, he did not repeat what he was writing in his Gospel as I will quote here. I want this Message to be understood by saints and sinners alike. So, I will quote much of Jesus' Crucifixion from John's Gospel to bring out the meaning in John's 1<sup>st</sup> Letter.**

We see next in **(1 John 5.6-8):** *6 And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. 7 So we have these three witnesses — 8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree.*

### **CHRIST REVEALED – WATER AND THE SPIRIT**

In \*A.D. 27 God the Father spoke audibly when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. We read in **(Matthew 3.16-17/BECK)** *As soon as Jesus was baptized, He stepped out of the water, and now Heaven was opened, and he {John the Baptist} saw God's Spirit coming down on Him as a dove. And a voice from Heaven said, “This is My Son, Whom I love and delight in.”* God thus revealed Jesus' identity in public there at the Jordan River, the Water Baptism with the Father and the Spirit. John the Baptist later testified to this in **(John 1.32)** *Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him.”*

## CHRIST REVEALED - BLOOD

*The Death of Jesus by Crucifixion*

**The Day was Good Friday, \*April 7<sup>th</sup> 30AD, the Day of the Son of God's Crucifixion for man's sin.** (John 19.16) *Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.* (John 19.28-35) *Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty."* 29 *A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips.* 30 *When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* 31 *It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down.* 32 *So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus.* 33 *But when they came to Jesus, **they saw that he was already dead**, so they didn't break his legs.* 34 *One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out.* 35 *(The man who saw this has borne witness to it so **that you too may believe**. His witness is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth. {NTG-Greek} ) { Please note that the (NLT) translation missed the mark here. It said **that you may "continue" to believe**. The original Greek keeps the intent of John's Gospel clear as he says again in the last chapter of his Gospel, (John 20.31/NTG) **but these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** Again, in John's Gospel, the (NLT) is a poor translation for it says there in (John 20.31) *that you may continue to believe.* John's audience for his Gospel was sinners, not Believers. He clearly had the main intent in the Gospel of John of evangelism, to convert the sinner. }*

Crucifixion was a very bloody event with extreme suffering unto death. Any of John's 1<sup>st</sup> Century audience knew, and had likely witnessed, many of their fellow Jews who were crucified for rebellion against the Roman government forced upon them. The victims wrists were nailed to the wooden cross beam. The form of the Cross was affected as the beam was lifted onto the "tree" or vertical pole. Then the feet were nailed to the "tree" or vertical pole.

The BLOOD in John's testimony here is the results of Crucifixion. To begin the flow of our Lord's Blood, **As Jesus was Sentenced to Death by Pilate:** in (John 19.1) *Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.* This was the first step to a victim's crucifixion. (VINES). As we recall the two-fold purpose of the Apostle's Letter was to 1<sup>st</sup> correct the heresy of Gnosticism, and, to 2<sup>nd</sup> encourage Christians to keep believing in Jesus until Glory in Heaven. So, it was vital to oppose Gnosticism for John to testify that Jesus was God's Son who came in the flesh and really died like

all men. John knew that his Christian audience who read this Letter knew the “gory” details of Jesus Death in order to become Christians at all. So, he did not repeat what he was writing in his Gospel as I have quoted here. In **(John 19.33)**, *But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs.*

Thus **(1 John 5.6a)** *And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood,*

Next, **(1 John 5.6b-7)** *And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. 7 So we have these three witnesses—*

John is including the Holy Spirit, not only as witness when He came upon Jesus at His baptism in water; but also, as the ever-present Reveal-er of Truth, the Reveal-er of Jesus. As the Apostle Paul said in **(1 Corinthians 2.12-14)** *12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. Man cannot understand the Holy Bible without the Holy Spirit, the Helper. So John is pointing to the Holy Spirit moving like an invisible wind to make the Bible and Jesus real to sinners to become saints, Christians. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. **(1 John 5.7-9)** 7 So we have these three witnesses— 8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. 9 Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son.*

John here refers to his human testimony as an eye witness of Jesus life and death. As I said already, about 55AD when John wrote this Letter there were many living witnesses as well. The witnesses declared that the Father spoke, the Spirit appeared at Jesus' baptism. Also, many disciples, besides the Apostles, witnessed Jesus' Crucifixion. But the main foundation of faith is in believing the Word of God through the Apostles and Prophets and the Voice of the Spirit. These will forever say “This is TRUTH!”

## TAKEAWAY #2

**Walking close to Jesus is walking in Victory by faith. This faith is in Jesus' identity. He is “The Christ, the Son of the Living God” as Simon said in the Holy Bible. Holy Spirit confirmed this at Jesus' baptism in water. The Father confirmed it there as He spoke, and as**

**He raised Jesus from the grave. Eye-witnesses, like the Apostle John, confirmed it also. Yet as God has testified about his Son in history, His Spirit will continue to testify of Jesus' Sonship here on earth today. Walking in Victory by faith is believing that the Spirit is everywhere that Jesus' name is spoken- ALWAYS! It is believing that the Spirit will cause men to believe the Bible words we speak concerning Jesus. It is believing that walking close to Jesus will cause us to have Victory to overcome this evil world for ourselves and others.** Next we read in **(1 John 5.10)** *All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son.* John here confirms Jesus' statement in **( Luke 11.23)** *“Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.* Opposition to Jesus' identity as the Son of God is calling God a liar.

### **VICTORY IS KNOWING YOU HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE**

**(1 John 5.11-12)** *11 And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.* Christians' confidence in God's Promises promote their Victory over this evil world. All believers in Jesus have the gift of eternal or everlasting life. The Greek word for eternal is used both for going back in time, only God in eternity past. And it is also used to go forward, all Christians in future eternity. This same word in English means “perpetual.” So often the monotonous and tiring repetitions we must perform in everyday life seem to be perpetual or never ending. But with God, perpetual life is of a quality that is the quality of God Himself. We have fellowship with God now. It will be perfect when we see Jesus in Glory...forever, never-ending, perpetual LIFE. This should give us Jesus Followers an attitude that “we cannot be defeated.” God wants us Christians to think that way but we must place our confidence in Jesus and not in ourselves. As the Apostle Paul encouraged the Church in Rome, **(Romans 8.31)** *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?* Our frailties and physical weakness often have us feeling the opposite of this TRUTH. Here is where the faith battle needs Holy Spirit unction and help to persevere. God has promised that He will give it if we keep asking. The apparently superhuman Apostle Paul said in **(2 Corinthians 12.10)** *That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

In **(1John 5.12)** we read, *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.* Walking with Jesus as a Believer is the only walk that has this quality of Life from God. Christians have it now and, even better, in eternity ahead of them. Walking through this world

without Jesus is not having Life now and it leads to eternal death.

### **John's Conclusion of His Letter:**

#### **ETERNAL LIFE CONFIDENCE-SPIRIT WITHIN- TESTIMONY BY GOD**

**13** *I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.* In 55AD John was writing his Gospel of Jesus, Good News to bring sinners to believe in Jesus for salvation. He was also writing this Letter to Christians. He wanted to encourage their confidence against the “heretics”, mostly mixing Gnosticism with a “confessed” but untrue faith in Jesus. For they denied that He was God because He came in the flesh. Since John's audience were *you who believe in the name of the Son of God*, he was strengthening their faith for Victory. He used *oida, Greek*, for *know*. Therefore he wanted these Believers to have a deeper understanding of their faith, with greater confidence in having eternal or everlasting life. This confidence in us Christians leads to victories in Jesus over the evil world by a confident faith. John also had told them their Victory was assured by the Spirit within them. In **(1 John 4.4)** says: *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.* Christians have confidence for Victory because the Spirit of God inside them is greater than the evil spirit of Antichrist in the world.

Now, John gives Christians even more reason for Victory in **(1 John 5.9)** *Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son.* **Walking with Jesus is walking in Victory by Faith over this evil world. God Himself, the Father and the Spirit, gave a testimony of Jesus' identity as the Son of God. This is greater than any human testimony and deserves our full trust.**

**We will walk in Victory by Faith in God as we walk with Jesus. So we will walk in Victory by Faith in God as He keeps His promise, to *humble Jesus' enemies beneath His feet.*'**

*Our walk now gets closer and closer to Jesus and will include being filled with more joy. Our walk gets closer and closer to eternity until it ends in Glory. Faith becomes sight. We will see Jesus!*

***Let Us Pray,....***

## REFERENCES

**BECK** – **The Holy Bible, An American Translation**, by William F. Beck, Lake Printing Company, Osage Beach, Missouri USA.

\* - Biblical dates from **BECK**.

**NLT** - **Holy Bible**, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

**NTG** – **Novum Testamentum Graece/Nestle-Aland**, Pinter in Germany 1898 & 1979

**TH** – **The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration**, WORD Music, Waco, Texas USA

**NOTE**- Pastor Bruce puts {...} around words not in the original exact text, but either the original Greek text, or his decision for more clarity, make it needed.

**VINES** – **Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words**, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Camden, NY USA 1985