



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

Pastor Toph Elkins

1ST JOHN PART 6

OPENING & PRAYER:

John's closing chapter of First John is presented as a pastoral, pastoral-practical call to rooted faith and active love. Using a simple parenting analogy to explain why John circles back to the same commands, the teaching emphasizes that the twin imperatives—love God and love others—are the constant rhythms that shape Christian identity. From the opening declarations about being born of God, the address moves to the central promise that faith is the victory that overcomes the world, distinguishing faith from law, works, or mere religiosity. The testimony of Jesus is shown in three complementary signs—water (birth/baptism), blood (atoning sacrifice), and Spirit (inner witness)—which align with Old Testament types and the life-changing presence of the Holy Spirit.

"Lord, thank You for bringing us together in this moment right now. We ask that You would stir our hearts and minds to be curious about You and kind to one another. Please reveal more of Yourself to us as we grow closer to You and one another. We thank You for this small group time we're about to have. In Jesus' name, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

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. **1 John 5:1**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. **1 John 5:2-3**

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **1 John 5:4**

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? **1 John 5:5**

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. **1 John 5:6**

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. **1 John 5:7-8**

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. 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. **1 John 5:9-10**

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life (Zoe Life), and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. **1 John 5:11-12**

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. **1 John 5:13**

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. **1 John 5:14-15**

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. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. **1 John 5:16-17**

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. **1 John 5: 18**

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. **1 John 5:19**

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. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. **1 John 5:20-21**

GO DEEPER:

Assurance is a major theme: possession of the Son means possession of Zoe—redeemed, abundant, eternal life—and believers are called to know and rest in that reality. Prayer is framed not as wishful thinking but as confident petition when aligned with God's revealed will; such prayer carries an expectation that God hears and answers according to His word. Difficult verses about “sin leading to death” are handled pastorally: there is a distinction between believers' occasional sins (which the blood continually cleanses) and the permanent rejection of Christ that leaves a person outside redemption. Finally, the sermon wraps with practical implications—continuing cleansing, the weakening of the enemy's hold on a life yielded to Christ, and the obligation to let transformed hearts leak into acts of love toward neighbors—so that love for God and love for others remain the living—and repeatable—marks of true discipleship.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Love God and love others. True Christian identity is revealed in a persistent orientation toward God and compassionate action toward neighbors. This is not merely moralism but the natural overflow of a heart transformed by intimacy with Christ; the command repeats because formation requires repetition. Living this way reorders priorities and exposes areas where discipleship must deepen. **[41:31]**

2. Faith is the world-overcoming victory. Overcoming the world is not achieved by effort, law, or mere moral striving but by faith—trusting the reality of God and His promises. Faith reframes suffering, reorients ambition, and grants courage to endure cultural and spiritual pressure because it anchors life to what is unseen and eternal. This victory is both present (resilience in trial) and eschatological (final triumph in Christ). **[09:38]**

3. Water, Blood, Spirit witness. The triad—water, blood, and Spirit—provides a coherent testimony to who Jesus is: incarnate, atoning, and indwelling. These images root New Testament truth in redemptive history and show how conversion, sacrament, and inner transformation work together to authenticate Christian life. The Spirit's ongoing testimony makes Scripture experiential rather than merely informational. **[12:23]**

4. Assurance of Zoe, eternal life. =] Possessing the Son brings Zoe—life redeemed from the penalty of sin, full and abundant even now. This assurance is not a pious optimism but a forensic reality: Christ's work secures the believer's status before God and reorients daily hope toward eternal realities. Knowing this reshapes fear, vocation, and the posture with which hardship is met. **[24:32]**

5. Pray according to God's will. Confident prayer aligns requests with the revealed will of God and Scripture, producing an expectation that God hears and responds. This is not an abstract formula but a cultivated habit of matching petitions to divine purposes, which refines desire and deepens trust. Such prayer invites partnership with God's redemptive work rather than trying to coerce divine action. **[28:28]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. According to John, what does it mean to “abide in Him”? How is this different from simply believing in Jesus? **[04:31]**
2. Since only faith overcomes the world (and not law, effort, or complaining), how should a believer evaluate the strategies they are using to face pressure, temptation, or cultural sway? **[10:42]**
3. Where have you been trying to overcome by sheer effort, law-keeping, or even complaining? Name one area, and then pivot to faith: pick a promise of God to trust and a concrete step of obedience to take this week. **[10:42]**
4. Repetition forms people. What are your two simple “kitchen and laundry” rhythms for this week—practices that help you love God and love people (for example, Scripture-before-screen, one daily act of kindness)? When will you do them, and who will you tell for accountability? **[04:05]**
5. Love your neighbor as yourself. Who is one neighbor (home, work, school, church) you can love this week the way you’d want to be loved? What is one concrete act (note, call, meal, help, invite) you will do in the next 7 days? **[42:16]**

CLOSING PRAYER:

“Father, thank you for the opportunities to grow in our faith. We will continue to lean on Your Word as we grow to bring people to know you. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”