

“Of Saving Faith” part 12, WCF 14.3.2, The Nature and Certainty of Saving Faith’s Victory
2021.05.23 Sabbath School Lesson
Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 14.3 (TPH p927–8)

III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong;(k) may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, **but gets the victory;(l)** growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ,(m) who is both the author and finisher of our faith.(n)

(k) Heb. 5:13, 14; Rom. 4:19, 20; Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10.

(l) Luke 22:31, 32; Eph. 6:16; **I John 5:4, 5.**

(m) Heb. 6:11, 12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2.

(n) Heb. 12:2.

¹John 5:1 **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. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

From where does faith come (v1, 4)?

What, then, is faith guaranteed to do (v4–5)?

What does this overcoming especially look like (v2–3)?

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

All right, let's go ahead and pray for the class.

Our father in heaven how we thank you that you?Have made us brothers and sisters not only by an adoption that is in our older brother the Lord Jesus.But also by a new birth that comes from your spirit so that our birth is from God.We pray Lord that you would help us as we.

Consider briefly this morning the origin and the quality.And the certainty of our faith.As it comes from you and knowing that it comes from you we pray that you would measure out unto us and increasing portion of it now by the work that we ask you to do by your spirit.

Entry asking Jesus name. Amen.

All right, so I think this is going to be short every time I say that it not every time most of the time when I say that my expectations are are not realized but we're going to try to do just first John 5:1 through 5 and as we were just praying right now together.

The things to be watching for is where faith comes from and therefore what the evidence of faith is like and as we're continuing now you remember last from last week that our faith is a sailed by the devil. It's also a sailed by the world. The world being deceived by and in darkness under and slavery to the devil through fear of death.

And so, you know similar similar aims what we heard from the devil last week and about the devil last week what we hear about the world this week. So we are faith comes from and what that what the fruit of that faith looks like and what the opposition the fact of opposition by the world and then.

The confidence that we have in the victory.Over against that opposition.So first John 5:1 through 5, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ.Is born of God.And everyone who loves him who begot?Also loves him.Who has begotten of him.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.For whatever is born of God.Overcomes the world.And this is the victory that has overcome the world.Our faith.Who is he who overcomes the world?

But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.So so far the reading of God's Word.There are two things that this faith that is being discussed and verses one through five beliefs. This faith believes one thing at the very beginning of the the section in verse one about Jesus and it believes a second thing about Jesus at the very end of verse five.

So starts out by saying whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. So what's one thing that our faith believes this is reviewed but this this connects to other passages as we have talked about seen from the Bible saving faith. Remember scripture interpret scripture.So whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

So what does saving faith believe about Jesus?That Jesus says the Christ absolutely that Jesus is that promised anointed one who to whom every prophet looked forward that Jesus is the ultimate prophet to whom every priest look forward that Jesus is the ultimate priest to whom every king looked forward and then at the end of verse five we read who is he who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the son of God.

So what's another thing that saving faith believes about Jesus?That he is the son of God yes now this is despite what those who resist in their hearts that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of God particularly in Christ that's a claim to deity the the Jews knew that when Jesus claimed God as his father not in a covenantal way the way God was the father of Israel and said Israel is my first born son, but in an ontological way in which Jesus's being.

Is begotten of the father they knew that Jesus is claiming to be God.The he who is the son of man is a man he was the son of God is God and so so they tried to kill Jesus and wanted to kill Jesus for claiming to be the son of God it's very very important that you see that everywhere that it describes.

Jesus as the son of God earlier in the book it's it says you can know truth from error.In us in what a spirit says by the fact that it says that Jesus had Jesus Christ has come in the flesh that's the that's the same thing he was not man he was and is God and became became men, so saving faith is convinced that Jesus says the Christ and that Jesus is the Son of God that God himself became a man to be our Redeemer.

To be our prophet priest and king to be the one who gave himself for us who announces God to us who sorry did priest prophet and King and who rules over us and will destroy all of his his and our enemies so from where does saving faith come we see that already in

verse 1, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ.

Is born of God. Okay, so there's a birth from which that faith comes. As very important thing it's the difference between reform theology and Armenian theology or one of but a primary difference between reform theology and Arminian theology that regeneration the new birth precedes faith. Faith is something that is good and right it is right to respond to the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God as the living God and to trust in him.

It is not this kind of neutral thing that happens and after that you can start being good dead people cannot believe. Because believing is a right and good action and so the apostle tells us here. Not so much that if I believe. That I was born of God he is saying that but he is saying that for their benefit for recognizing what has happened in all of the other believers in the church, listen to the verses a whole whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and everyone who loves him, that is God who begot?

Also loves him who has begotten of him. Okay. I will not tolerate. If or will not take as genuine if someone says, you know what James I love you, but your children really can't stand them. Right you have not feel particularly loved by an individual who well how many people have you heard so me and Jesus we got this thing.

I just don't like the church. This full all kinds of people that I can't stand. Approaching the set of the southern accent.

Okay. Well everyone just pretended somebody else was accent and I'll try to conjure up like a Middle Eastern or next time and we'll be safe. But you hear the ridiculousness in that statement. And so the the apostle was saying that the origin of our faith is a work of God to begin with.

And the fruit of that faith is in the very least loving everyone else in whom that work has been done. He says if God has given you faith. Then you love him and if God has given them faith, then you love them because they have a birth from him too.

There his children whom he has begotten by his spirit. So the new birth isn't just a mechanism by which faith comes. It is something that identifies other believers with God himself. So that now because you love him you also love them. So that gets us from the origin of our faith working now into the fruit of our faith the part of the fruit of saving faith is you love believers, it's that psalm 16 relationship between on the one hand saying God is in my that is my inheritance.

God is my portion the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. I'm delighted in him but what does it say also about the godly ones in the land or the saints in the land in Psalm 16, then they're my delight? Now we have met Saints in the land, they're not finished being sanctified or sanctified if you have to use the word the way the way we ordinarily say it.

So they're not particularly likable in themselves, are they? I mean, they get more they can be and you can have things in common but the reason that the believer says that and knows that and you know kills any resistance to it because that comes from our flesh is because those saints belong to him and even more so now that we are more developed in our understanding of the doctrine of the new birth.

God's beginning us fathering us spiritually as it were. So by this we know that we love the children of God, so I know if I really do love other believers. A lot of people will say well the the fruit is or the evidence of that is in the work do you do this for them do you do that for them if they're hungry do you feed them if they're thirsty you give them something to drink do you rejoice with them when they were joist you born with them well when they mourn do you not allow bitterness or resentment to rise up in your heart against them, do you guard both yourself and them against the sin of last to you respect their their property and, As a sign to God by them and want them to keep it and we're just you know going through the commandments here right do you refuse to get gossip about them and seek to preserve the honor of their name in as much as you can to refuse to cut it their providence to be your providence, etc and those things would all be true.

Except for that's the second great commandment. Now what the apostle is saying here is. If you want to know that you're second great commandment keeping love or this is actually third right commandment love your neighbor as yourself for specifically for Christians love one another as I have loved you says the Lord Jesus if you want to know that that is genuine well go back to the first great commandment.

Because. Talking about a love that proceeds from a faith that came from God giving you a new birth and the first evidence of it is not actually keeping commandments 5 through 10. The first evidence of it is keeping commandments 1 through 4. So 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. So we can we need to first of all take this very personally. I'll make application to the church more broadly in a minute. But one of the things that for me and perhaps you have found similar about you in thinking about whether I'm not whether I am loving other people will is.

It's easy for me to think about that a lot. And to think about loving God well too little. So that yeah, I will want others to feel loved by me. And I will measure the quality of the love that hopefully God is growing me in by how much they feel loved by me how well I think I'm doing that loving them in a way that makes them feel loved by me but the the test that he uses and you know for for different kinds of conditions you got different kind of tests and so here's the litmus paper for the genuineness of Christian love for one of, Their is do.

I love God. In a way that makes me want to keep his commitments. Burdensome. I find my difficulty in keeping them burdensome. I find my remaining sin is the burden but the commandments are a joy because there is. Now those of you who have started out not reformed and moved towards reformed should say there is of us and it's probably all of us in this room and may the Lord and future generations give us better than that starting with a lot of you little ones here.

When you started coming into reformed understanding of the first commandment reform to understanding of the second commandment and how that touches what worship is and of what worship consists. And how worship is done. Reformed understanding of the third commandment, which we have. I was going to say barely steps to surface we have meant start to scratch the surface yet.

But all of the implications for speech and revelation and the reason words exist to begin with all the way to when we are addressing or speaking about God himself directly with those words. Reformed understanding of the fourth commandment. And what it means to consecrate a day? And you know, the the nature of the holiness of it.

One of the things that we often find when we love him and we start to understand those things and are difficulty in keeping it as a burden and the the command itself isn't the burden you go to share your excitement with somebody else. They say oh well, that's too much of a burden.

Worshiping like that is too much of a burden. Consecrating a day unto God. Too much of a burden. I like to focus on the second part the subsidiary secondary resting from these things. I'm not the resting unto. Resting unto his burdensome to me. Be careful with that because the fruit of genuine love for God.

Is keeping is loving him and keeping his commandments and the fact that there is there is there is and if you love his commandments because there is. That is when you could turn around and say, My first John 5 1 through 3. I genuinely believe that with the Holy Spirit is doing in me is making me love his people.

Because there is. And that's the Ephesians 2 form of reconciliation because we don't need what we do need racial reconciliation because we're all one human race and we all hate and our hated. Titus chapter 3 until the loving kindness and grace of God appears and saves us not by righteous things that we have done but because of his mercy.

And he remember how Ephesians 2 said it by our being reconciled to him is how we're reconciled to one another. If we don't love his commandments because they are his then whatever we've been telling ourself is love for other. Christians is not love for them because they are his.

But love for them out of. Well any number of other things? I won't get get into that. So where faith comes from? The new birth that God has given us what is the fruit of it you love him who begot you and you love his other begotten's yes mr.

Phil.

Yeah.

Yes, so there were two things that he couldn't give up for Jesus one is more obvious and the other is more deadly the more obvious thing was the stuff of this world the the rich young ruler couldn't. Couldn't lose in order to gain Christ but the more deadly one was his belief that he had kept all these commandments from his youth and the fact that he thought he had a pretty good cash of spiritual wealth too not just earthly prevented him from having that desperation for Christ that we must must all have and I would suggest to you that if there are earthly things or activities or people or status.

Or whatever that you can't give up in your life for you struggle with giving up in your life in order to have Jesus you may have a more obvious thing that you are clinging to that is an indicator of a more deadly thing which is the idea that you'll are not as needy of Jesus as you actually are.

Because more needy we feel of him not thinking that we have this cash of spiritually valuable stuff without him the more willing we'll be able to give up the earthly treasure because Jesus will will be the only the only treasure so very similar thing thank you Mr. Phil in the connection between first great commandment second great commandment here.

Says you really want to know if you're loving other believers just because they're his take a look at what you're doing with his commandments and are you loving his commandments just because they're his?

Yeah, that's what a Christian is one to whom God revealed in Jesus. Christ is everything. Yeah, you believe that Jesus is the Christ first one you believe that Jesus is the son of God verse five. So we're faith comes from the new birth, what is the fruit of faith that loves the beginner and it loves the others who are begotten of him.

But we have an opponent. Further whatever is born of God overcomes the world so he explains loving God loving his commandments because they're his loving his people because there is as an overcoming of the world so loving God and loving his commitment because there hasn't loving his people because they're his overcoming below what does that mean that the world is trying to get you to do?

Or stop you from doing if you put it that way. God. The world doesn't want you to love. His commandments because there is the wall that wants you to love. His people because they're his our same thing isn't it we're talking about how faith is assailed how faith is attacked last week we noted that what Satan wants and aims at an attacking your faith is in obscuring staining making look bad this reproduced image of Christ that that we who believe in him are becoming and ought to be already and growing in.

And so just like with with Joe, you know God displays job as a trophy of his grace and Satan says, that's just fool's gold. I got a bunch of stuff. I could do that'll make all the illusions of job and Job's righteousness and goblinness evaporate. Satan wanted to sift the disciples.

He said, oh you you think there look like wheat but just let me out. I'm I'll show you what kind of chaff they still are. And the world wants you. To not love God to not love his commandments to not love his people, so now we've got faith verses the world.

But verse 4 for whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Very important isn't it that you know that your faith comes as a gift from God why? Who what is opposing your faith according to verse 4. If your faith is from you. Is it going to win that battle?

But if your faith is a gift from God. Then whatever it's quality is so far does not determine whether you are going to win. If you go by your feelings instead of what the scripture says or if you are deceived by the prevailing doctrine and the churches to thinking that your faith is something that you produce.

Then you will live in constant detection isn't the word I'm looking for or discouragement despair, you're live in constant despair that your faith is going to lose because every time you fail to love God every time you fail to love his law every time you fail to love his people.

If you're looking at the quality of your faith instead of the origin or source of your faith. You will have this continual set of defeats. I'm going to imagine you're reading. About a war and every single battle report that that comes up in the well, we all got newspapers anymore in your feed or whatever it is, however everybody gets news now but everyone seems to be a losing battle.

Now what verse 4 says is you don't gauge whether or not you expect to win the war based upon the quality of success in the battles this far. Because the faith that clings to Christ as the Son of God has as its origin the creating work of God that has begotten faith in you and he being the one who has given it is what determines the victory.

And if you're a believer, who knows where your faith came from. You can get up every single time you stumble the scripture says the righteous never stumbles so as to fall. And it's because his righteousness his faith came from God and will get the victory in fact. He switches now to past tense and this is the victory that has overcome the world and the the original we can.

Talk about Greek text sources of New Testament with the originals you're our faith, this is the victory that has overcome the world your faith, same apostle who began the letter saying if you say that you have no sin you call. God a liar. Okay, this is the victory that has ever come the world your faith, who is he who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Do you know as a reality in your life that Jesus is God who entered the creation to be the Christ who had saved you. If you know that as a reality in your life. Then you have a faith that cannot ultimately be defeated. And all of your striving at loving God will end up successful.

Loving God as Jesus loves God. All your striving at loving his commandments will be successful. Loving God's commandments and keeping God's commandments as Jesus loves the commandments and keeps a commandments and all of your striving after loving his people just because there is will be successful. Yeah, there were yours and you gave them to me and I have kept them and I give them to you all of that love for his people from Jesus just because they're God's people.

That will be reproduced in you. And so there's this wonderful certainty of the victory of saving faith in the production of its fruit in the overcoming we're coming all of the opposition of the the world and the flush and the devil that comes from the origin of saving faith.

That's why they gave us that proof text first. John 5 verses 4 and 5 for. That faith may be often and many ways a sailed and weakened but. Gets the victory. Not because of how well it's doing. But because of where it came from. And it was not short.

So, let's pray.

Our father in heaven how we thank you for your word? For we feel much the ongoing weakness of our faith when we think about. Love for you being expressed in love for your commandments, just because they're yours and love for your people just because they're yours. We are appalled at how little our faith thus far is.

But we thank you for the certainty that if it is real it has come from you. And as we cling to your son. With whatever faith you have given us thus far. We thank you for the certainty that it ends as you destined it to end by our being conformed to his image so that at the last he will be the firstborn among many brethren.

Who have gotten our birth. From you by your spirit grant that your spirit would continue that work that he began for we asked it in Jesus name. Amen.

