

“The Saint Who Overcomes” ***Revelation 12:10-12a***

Intro:

I. On Wednesday nights, as we’ve been going through Revelation, something that we’ve tried to continually emphasize is the relevance of the book to us as Christians today:

A. In recent weeks of continuing to read through the book I was struck by a verse that we had recently looked at: *Read 12:10-12a*

B. The verse jumped out at me because of how practical it is. It gives the disciple immediate actions to put into practice as well as food for thought:

II. Overcoming, or “gaining the victory” is what we as Saints are about, and it is one of the themes of the book of Revelation: In fact, consider how heavily the book begins by emphasizing this point:

A. John opens the book with a picture of victory; emphasizing that this message is from Jesus, who overcame death, and eventually, *everyone* will know: **Rev. 1:7**

B. After John himself is presented with a breathtaking vision of The One who overcame, he is tasked with delivering 7 messages, in which the common thread will be urging each recipient to overcome as well!

1. Ephesus: 2:7-- To Him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God
2. Smyrna: 2:11-- ...will not be hurt by the second death.
3. Pergamum: 2:17-- ...the hidden manna, a white stone...with a new name
4. Thyatira: 2:26-- ...Authority over the nations
5. Sardis: 3:5-- ...will be clothed in white...name in the book of life, confess name
6. Philadelphia: 3:12-- ...be made a pillar in the temple with holy names written on it
7. Laodicea: 3:21-- ...will sit down with the Lord on His throne:

C. In essence, the Lord ties every spiritual blessing imaginable to those who overcome! With so much at stake, it should make us sit up and ask the question: What does he mean by “overcome”? It is why I zeroed in with excitement on 12:11

1. For a long time, I associated overcoming with simply meaning being faithful even unto death: Particularly letting **Rev. 2:10** do the bulk of interpreting:
2. And while that is certainly part of the picture... it is not the whole picture:

3. So, let us take a few moments tonight, and take a close look and the description of the Saints who Overcome:

i. Because of the Blood of the Lamb:

- a. Did you notice that the first factor that allows the Saint to overcome is not what the Saint *did* but what was done *for them*.
 - i. In other words, the testimony that is given about these men and women by this voice that is heard in the heavens, begins by acknowledging that they would not have been able to overcome without the intervention of the Lamb of God:
 - ii. Well why did they need the blood of this Lamb? Why couldn't they overcome through their own power, the merits of their own deeds?
 - i. Because, none of them were worthy: **Rev. 5:9-10**
 - a. Think back to the context of these verses: John was brought to great tears, as he wept over the futile search to find someone who was worthy to open the seals on the book: And yet none was found in heaven or on Earth, until he was told to stop weeping, because in v 6, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb that was slain, came forward to open the book:
 - b. And why was He worthy? Because He was the one that was slain: it was His blood that had the power to purchase men from every tribe and tongue!
- b. The fact is, that this must come first, because no one has the power to gain the victory of their own power, or through their own righteousness.
 - i. If not for the blood of the Lamb, no one could overcome. As Peter states in **I Peter 1:18-19** "*you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ*"
 - ii. Anyone who hopes to overcome and has a starting place other than this, can expect only defeat:
- c. So what does this mean for us today?
 - i. Have you accessed the Blood of the Lamb?
 - i. Peter will go on to say in **I Peter 1:22** that we purify our souls through *obedience*, an obedience which Paul describes in **Romans 6:3-5**

- ii. Do you continue to remember, and give credit to the Lamb for having done the heavy lifting?
 - 1. We must never forget that it was Jesus who paid the price for our sins: Fight this notion that is popular in the world that Jesus did His half by dying, and we do our half by obeying:
 - 2. It would not be giving Him enough credit to say that he did 99% of the work and did the remaining 1%
 - 3. In every deed we do, in any good work we perform: we must always remember that they would be meaningless and worth nothing if it were not for the blood of the lamb!
- iii. It is vital that we always give the Lamb this credit: as being the only one who is worthy: Not just in the past, but in the present and in the future!

2. The Word of Their Testimony:

- a. What did the voice mean, the word of their testimony?
 - i. Preaching the gospel? Telling what the Lord had done for them? All of this and more!
 - ii. In the context of this time, the word of their testimony involved an unreserved, unashamed, total confession of their faith in Jesus as the Son of the one, true and living God: A confession that would take place before Roman governors, officials, and executioners.
 - iii. And yet, the occasion of offering incense to the Emperor was not the lone opportunity for these men and women to give testimony: This act of defiance marked Christians with the stigma of being Atheists and traitors to the empire:
 - 1. Therefore, for one who was a Christian, this was the image that was conjured up for their neighbors and co workers.
 - 2. But that would only be the case, if that person was living as a Christian: The word of their testimony went beyond the occasions of refusing to worship the Emperor: It was a description of how they lived their lives:

3. As committed Disciples of the Lamb, they bore witness with their words, their actions, by the company they kept, even down to the way they dressed: And they did it everywhere they went.
 - a. There was not a standard or code of conduct for when they were with other saints, and a separate set of rules for when they were out in the world:
 - b. Perhaps another way to phrase “the word of their testimony” would be to say that they overcame by being “unashamed of the Lamb” whose blood they so desperately needed:
 - c. *Luke 9:26: For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
 - d. *Matt. 10:32-33: Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. “But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*
- b. So what about us? What kind of lives are we living? Can our conduct really be described as our “word of testimony” about the lamb?
 - i. I’m not talking about simply keeping from any major slip ups-- Its not enough to be satisfied that we are not engaging in the same immorality as the world, if we are not engaging in the morality that the world refuses. Are we broadcasting a testimony about the Lamb?
- c. We need to see more consequences of the word of our testimony: Lets challenge ourselves, myself included, that we are going to have more studies in the homes of our friends and neighbors, that we are going to see more visitors in this building, that people will know about the Airport church-- through the word of our testimony:

3. Did Not Love Their Life...Even Unto Death

- a. In context, the meaning of this verse is both readily apparent, and greatly humbling: That our brothers and sisters of the first century trusted in the blood of the lamb, and lived a life that demonstrated that faith, even though it cost an untold number their lives on this earth:

b. What kind of person would chose persecution and hardship over a life of pleasure?

Our world would call that person a fanatic, someone with no common sense.

i. And yet Jesus said in *John 12:25*, *He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.*

ii. The Saints who overcame were those who no longer viewed themselves as having a life to lose, they'd already given it over to the Lamb:

iii. As a good friend recently put it: We aren't worried about saving face because we no longer have any face to save

c. We may never have the physical opportunity to die for Christ. But each and everyone of us should have already died with Christ: Our lives our His:

i. We sang: "take my life and let it be" How much of that do we mean?

ii. Do we sing, read and pray in our homes as families? Or do we let the weariness of the day keep us from it?

iii. Do we let our Television, movies, other forms of entertainment keep us from reading more about the greatest story ever told?

iv. Are we taking time to help our neighbors, help our community, looking for more chances to make more relationships to tell more people about the Lamb, or are we simply caught up in the pursuit of self?

v. Do we make time to grow closer to our brothers and sisters or are our schedules to packed with every kind of sport, vacation, and leisure that is made available?

vi. Are we seeking to contribute more, either to the church here, or by assisting saints around the world, or are we more worried about our own financial futures.

1. Brethren, what do we mean when we say that our lives belong to the Lord? If our life isn't our time, our resources, and the interests of our hearts: what is it?

2. For many supposed followers of the Lamb around the world, whether or not they would die for Him one day is irrelevant: they've not turned their life over to Him in the now.

d. Am I overcoming? If my life is still my own, the answer is no:

Conclusion:

- Read 12:11-- Are you overcoming?