



Message **Transcript**

Faith Effects

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Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Would you do me a favor? Would you welcome our Broomfield Campus who is also worshipping along with us? So great to have you. And as we have been worshipping the Lord, reading scripture to one another, to the Lord, let's continue to prepare our hearts as we hear his living and active word proclaim to us this morning. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor and praise, it is all yours, it always has belonged to you and it always will. And Lord, we gather here today because you wrote a book and your living an active word has the ability to penetrate both soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and judge the attitudes and intentions of the heart.

So Lord as your word is preached today, I pray for your help in being accurate and clear as I proclaim. And pray that your Holy Spirit would use your living and active word to change us. Lord, that we would own who your word says that we are, that we would become who you say we are and we would put into practice the very things that you show us for your great name. And Lord, now for all the wonderful things that you are going to do through the preaching of your word this morning, we give you glory, honor and praise in the mighty and the matchless name of Jesus, and all God's people agreed by saying, amen.

Last Sunday afternoon I went to a visitation of a dear saint of our church who has passed away and gone on to be with Jesus, and on Monday was at the funeral. And while I was at the funeral, I didn't officiate the funeral, but I was at the funeral, which is not often the case for me. And as I was listening to the stories being told, I was hearing about her life and how special she was. But more importantly, I was hearing

the gospel proclaimed, and it was proclaimed over and over and over again. And as the gospel was proclaimed, my heart was encouraged on so many levels.

Number one, because I knew that the woman who had died was in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Number two, I knew that the words that I preach on the weekend are ever so true and they're always important. And number three, personally, as I sat there and heard the gospel preached again, it warmed my heart for God's incredible love for me. And I don't know, because the Lord never shows us, how many people actually responded to the Gospel that day. Were there are people in the service that trusted Christ as their own personal Lord and Savior? Perhaps, we don't know. But from time to time this happens where people profess Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, they trust him, but then they asked this question, did I do it right? Am I really saved? How do I know that I did it right? I want to make sure. I believe but I don't know that I totally believe. And how can I be certain that I really trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ? And I want to tell you today you can be 100% certain.

And in the book of First John, John in this section is going to unpack for us some certainties of our faith, some effects that happen as a result of our faith. Have your Bible with you, I encourage you to open to First John chapter five, we're going to take a look at the first five verses here this morning. First John, chapter five, verses one through five. I'd like to read those and then we'll look at them together. Here's what John says, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And whoever loves the Father loves the child born of him. By this we know that we love the children

of God, when we love God and observe 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 the one who overcomes the world? But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

Now, as we look at this section, we're back in First John, it's been a while, we've been having Christmas services and such. But if you'll remember, this book is really snapshots, like a photo album of what the Christian life looks like from several different perspectives, so a lot of the themes in this book continually are repeated. So the themes that we're going to look at today we've looked at before, but we're taking a look today at the effects of what faith produces. Some of you have heard of lake effect snow, okay. Lake effect snow is this idea that there are certain parts of the country that get more snow than others. And the reason that happens is that the cold air mass that travels across the warm lake water for a period of time picks up some of the air from the warm lake water, it rises, freezes, and gets deposited on the downwind side. So while your neighbor across the lake may have got three inches of snow, you got 15 inches of snow, okay.

Faith is the same way. If you genuinely have faith, it produces something in you that's different. Jesus says that when the seed is sown, when it goes into good soil, it always produces a harvest of 30, 60 or 100 fold. So if you have genuine faith in Christ, there are effects that come from the faith that you have, and this is what John is unpacking for us this morning. So we're going to take a look at three of those effects

of our faith in Jesus Christ with what is produced.

And the first is this, that faith in Christ produces a genuine love for God's family. Faith in Christ produces a genuine love for God's family. Now notice what he says, he starts in verse one by saying, "Whoever believes, whoever believes." This is not the first time John talks like this by the way, in John 3:16, John 3:15, actually, but John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes ... " It means that anyone can believe, but who is the gospel for? The gospel is for a group of believers. The apostle Paul said in Romans one, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for everyone who believes." The gospel is proclaimed to the world, but the gospel is for those who will own it, and believe it, and take it into their lives.

As we've talked about before, there's a difference between placing my faith in a stool over here versus placing my faith in a stool over here. We're not talking about cognitive understanding, we're not saying that Jesus died, rose and that's good, and I don't deny that, that's fine. We're talking about people that say, Jesus Christ came, he fulfilled the law, he is the Son of God, he died on a cross in my place, for my sin, bore all my punishment, was buried, rose from the dead, and I am reorienting every part of my life to live with him. I am believing or trusting that he and he alone is the way of salvation.

And the reason I say this is because so often people in our culture will say, well, I believe, I believe, I believe, everybody believes, but we're talking about is believing in Christ and in him alone. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is what? Born of

God. That's what he says. In verse one he says, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

Now, whether you like that term or not, it's a biblical term. It's not a charismatic term, it's not a Baptist term, it's not a denominational term. If people ask you, are you born again? They're asking a biblical question, because in John chapter three, when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, he told him, "You must be born again." In the same way that you are physically born when you come into this world, you must be spiritually born to enter the kingdom of God. That's the only way it works. And the way that you become spiritually born is by denying yourself, by turning your back on your life, by repenting of living for yourself and trusting in Jesus Christ and him alone. When that happens, the Bible says, you are born again, you've been given a new identity.

And here's what happens of many things that happens, Christ comes to live in you through his Holy Spirit. It's Christ in you the hope of glory, that's Colossians 1:27. That what happens when you're converted is not, oh, good, I'm going to heaven. What happens when you're converted is the living God comes and in dwells you so that it's his life that is now being lived through you. And if his life is being lived through you, there's going to be an effect in your life that's different than it was before. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And whoever loves the Father, loves the child born of him." What happens is, as you've been baptized into the family of God, you've been immersed into the family of God, you weren't part of the family of God, now you're part of the family of God. So let's talk about that for a second.

It is true that God created everybody. It is true that God has a general love for everybody. It would be true to say that God's desire would be that none would perish, but that all would come to the knowledge of him. So to tell the world that God loves them is true, God loves everybody. But when someone is born again, they are in the family of God, they are God's children. And when you're a child of God, there is a specific, lavish, unconditional love that is different than the love that there was before, because now you are part of the family. You're not born into the family by natural birth, you are born into the family by conversion or spiritual birth. And when you're on the inside of the family, you will have a love for God and a love for others like you never had before. It changes you. It changes you, right.

And this is true in our earthly families too. I mean, I have a younger brother and it is totally fine for me, and has been for years, for me to punk my younger brother. I have no problem with that, I don't mind telling stories about that. That's my brother, that's what we do. But if you punked my brother, I have a problem with that. That's my job, that's not your job. He's family to me, right. Do you see what I'm talking about? And it didn't just happen that way, it just works that way.

I mean, our youngest child is five, she was down in children's ministry, and here within the last couple weeks I heard this story back from children's ministry that when my daughter was down there, they were teaching the children about sin and what sin is, and that everybody sins. And one of the kids spoke up and said, "Well, then pastor Jeff is a sinner too." Which is great theology by the way, we're teaching our kids properly. My five year old wouldn't have it. She said, "That's not my dad, you take that

back. My dad doesn't sin." And while I appreciate her loyalty, we're working on her theology over time, right. But that's family, right, family. We support the family, we have a love for God and a love for the family. One of the effects of being born again is there'll be a change in your heart where you'll have a love for the Lord and you'll have a love for his people in a way that you didn't have before, okay.

Now this is confessions of a brave pastor right here. When I grew up, wrongly, but this is what I thought, as a high school student when I was being invited into youth group, here was my thought, when I looked at church I thought, if you weren't an athlete and you weren't a cheerleader, or you couldn't make the drama team, or you didn't sing in the choir, or you couldn't make the reader's theater club, or there was the Glee Club kicked you out, and the Key Club said, we're not looking for a person like you, and there was absolutely nothing that you could do, go to church because they'll take anybody. That was my view of Christians, right.

And when people would speak bad or make a joke about God or Jesus, it didn't bother me at all. But I knew that I had been born again because once I had been born again, these same people that I had looked at with my selfish, sin stained eyes and thought, who are they, they're nobodies, became people that I wanted to get to know because they shared the same daddy that I now had and I wanted to partner and fellowship with them. And I got defensive if people spoke badly about them. And that's never ever changed. I love Jesus and I love his church. And it bothers me to my core when I hear people say negative things about Jesus or people who serve in his church.

Which means I'm not just talking about this church, I'm talking about the church.

See, when we've been born into the family of God, we're not born into a community of people in a certain subdivision of God, we are born into the Family of God. Means we have love for God and all of his people all the way around the world. When I'm in a conversation and I hear somebody talk badly about the church they used to go to, it bothers me on the inside. Don't tell me about your pastor that was this or that, he's my brother, okay. We can talk about doctrine that's off, we can talk about philosophies that are different, they all are. But at the end of the day, we're all on the same team and we're going to spend glory together with Jesus Christ. Amen. That's what changes.

If that's not going on in your heart, if you say, I know I'm born again but I can't stand church, and I don't like pastors, and I don't like church people, and when people make fun of Jesus, I totally get why they make fun of Jesus, check your heart, just take a look inside. Because if you were really part of the family, it would bother you when people speak about your family.

What will also happen to you is you'll get a bigger view of the family. The family won't just be your local church, the family will be what God's doing all the way around the world. And when you hear about people in India that are being persecuted for their faith, and you hear about the RSS, the radical Hindus that are basically saying, by 2021 we're going to eliminate Christianity, which, by the way, is an audacious goal because it's never going to happen. But when you hear that and you know our brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing torment, it's not enough to say, too bad for them,

you start praying for them, and you start asking God, what can we do to help them?
And how do we support them because they're our brothers and sisters in Christ?
That's what happens. That's one of the effects of our faith when we are born again.
We love the Father and we love the children, born of him, that's what faith produces.

So check your heart. So do you have a love for God? And by the way, all these things that are effects, they are growing things. It doesn't mean you start day one and say, I couldn't love God or his people anymore than I do right now. I mean, there is always room to grow and love God and his people more. And there's an ongoing growth for God and his people more, an ongoing love for God and his people more. And yes, I get it, we're the family, right. We have some distant cousins in our family that maybe they're in the family but they're like cousins. Like yes, we don't spend a lot of time ... I get that, but they're still family. And here's the truth, Jesus Christ died for them. And Jesus Christ loves them. And so we're commanded to love them too. Amen. Amen. That's an effect that faith in Christ produces. Faith produces a genuine love for God's family.

And here's the truth, can Christ be in me, can Christ truly be in me if I don't have a love for the Father and don't have a love for his children? Here's the answer, no way, because Jesus does. He spent the entirety of his life demonstrating what it looked like to love the Father and love the people of God. Everywhere Jesus went, what did he say? "I'm only doing what I see my Father doing." He was sneaking away to spend time with his Father. Everything he did was about getting with his dad so that he could love the people his dad wanted him to love. That's his whole ministry. Our whole

ministry should be on seeking the face of the Father and loving God's people, because that's exactly what Jesus did. And if the same Jesus is living on the inside of us, it's the same thing he's wanting to accomplish in and through us this day. Amen. Faith in Christ produces a genuine love for God's family that we'll grow in.

Secondly, it produces this, faith in Christ produces a willing alignment with God's demands, a willing alignment with God's demands. He says in verse two, "By this we know that we love the children of God." By this, this is how you know that you're actually loving the family of God. How do I know number one is taking place? Here's how you know number one's taking place, when we love God and observe His commandments, it means this, obey. I'm using the word alignment for this reason, we use the word obey so many times in church sometimes we don't even know what that means. Alignment and obedience, I'm using them the same way. I'm saying, we were once living like this, but now God's given us a command to live like this. And my life wasn't aligned with that, but I'm joyfully bringing my life into alignment with the things of God. That's what I do.

If I am born again, that's what God commands. And if God commands me to do it, I want to do it. Not because I have to, not because God's going to stop loving me if I don't, but because God loves me I want to align my life in such a way that demonstrates, I know that you love me and because you love me, I want to align my life with you. It's true of anything.

I mean, at the end of chapter four in this book we've been looking at, in First

John chapter four and verse 19, it says, "We love because he first loved us." How can we love the children of God, because God first loved us, he demonstrated it by sending his Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. Verse 20 and 21 says, "If someone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this is the commandment", there's that word again, "we have from him that the one who loves God should also love his brother."

There's this command, God gives all sorts of commands. Well, how can God do that? Because he's the authority of the universe, because he's the one and only true God. When we read his Word, oftentimes God gives commands, not suggestions. Not, hey, if you'd like to do this, it'd be great, but don't worry about it. God says, this is the day, do this, forgive, treat people with kindness, here's what you're called to do. If you are born again, you will align with that with great joy. If you are not born again, you will reject that and feel like somebody is putting a weight on your life.

Let me explain. If you take a new mother who has just given birth to her first child, who she has been waiting for, for nine months, and both the mother and the child are healthy, and there's incredible joy in the hospital room, and you were to pull the mother aside and you said, hey, listen here, mom, from now on it's your responsibility to feed that child, to care for that child, to shepherd that child, to make sure that child's warm, to make sure they have a shelter, and it's solely your responsibility to take care of that child. That command would not bother that loving mother one bit because that loving mother would say, that's what I was put on the earth to do. That's my job. Of

course, I would do that, right.

Or you telling an Olympic athlete when they make the Olympic team, hey, if you're going to be part of this, it means you're going to eat differently, it means every day you're going to be here for 10 hours in the gym, and you're going to work out, and you're going to do all this, and you're going to reject parties with your friends and doing all that because you've got to get aligned for what we're going to do. No Olympic athlete worth their salt would say, I'm not doing that. The command would not be burdensome, that's what they signed up for. A soldier that goes to serve in our military, when they go they understand what they're signing up for. And when they get there and they're instructed and commanded on what they're going to do, and when they're going to do it, and how they're going to do it, they realize, not a big deal, we signed up for this, right?

People that don't understand what they signed up for, those are people that quit, right? I mean, if a soldier showed up at boot camp and was like, hey, I got to let you know a couple things, on Tuesdays and Thursdays I have piano lessons from 4:00 to 5:00. And I know y'all like to keep hair cut short, but I prefer mine longer, so I hope you take that into consideration. And by the way, I need a full 10 hours a night, so I really need it quiet when I sleep. So if I could get some private sleeping quarters, that would be helpful too. I mean, soldiers don't make demands of the commanding officer. They realize what they've signed up for. If you've been born again, God's commands are not burdensome to you, they're the very things you know are designed to help you.

And while they can be challenging, right, being a new mother can be challenging,

that's a great place for ladies to give me an amen, right? And husbands to give me an amen, right? Can be challenging, it doesn't mean I won't do it. Being a soldier can be challenging, doesn't mean I won't do it. Being an Olympic athlete can be challenging, doesn't mean I won't do it. Being a follower of Christ is challenging, but the born again believer says, but this is what I signed up for and I'll do it. I'm growing in it. And when I fail, I'm meeting the challenge, I'm confessing that and I'm repenting because, God, I want to be who you say that I am. That's what happens. And this is what John's telling us, that one of the effects of our faith, if we have genuine faith in Christ, is a willing alignment with God's demands, his commands.

If you flip back over to John chapter 14, John chapter 14. I have these underlined in my Bible, one of these days I'm actually going to memorize it because I quote this so often from this pulpit, because we live in a day and age, and here's what we got to understand, we live in a day and age it's so easy to say, I love God. I mean, you could be the biggest pagan in the world and hit a home run and do one of these. And what a Christian, right? All you got to do is point to the sky and just pretend that you're doing ... I have been to church, I pray, I read my Bible, or just say this when somebody's sick, my prayers are with you. Now, you don't you have to pray for them, you don't have to do anything, but just say that, that sounds really Christian, right?

But here's how you know whether somebody actually is a Christian, according to Jesus Christ, John chapter 14, verse 23, Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves me", here's how we know, "if anyone loves me, he will keep my word." That's the

litmus test. Well, they say they love God but they've never kept anything about his word. That's because they don't love God. Born again people keep God's word, right? Does this mean that all born again people keep God's word 100% all the time? No. But somebody who is born again that hears God's word knows deep down in their soul, I'm not keeping God's word and every part of their fiber and being says, I want to keep God's word, and I'm messing this thing up, and I wish somebody would show me how to keep God's word because God is important to me. There'll be evidences of keeping God's word.

This is Jesus talking, not me, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and My Father will love him and we will come and make our abode with him or our home with him." Meaning, if you keep God's word, if you trust in Jesus Christ, God lives on the inside of your life. He's indwelt you, he's living in and through you. Verse 24 says, "He who does not love me does not keep my words. He who does not love me does not keep my words." They don't keep his word. I went to church for 18 years, I had a religion class in my Lutheran grade school I went to for nine years, I had things memorized, I had memorized the Bible. I didn't keep it, but I thought I did, I mean, based upon my hybrid of what I thought good was, right. I didn't keep his words.

"And the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father who sent me." Here's the litmus test, do you keep God's word? Do you listen to his commands? Are they not burdensome to you? Right. They're not burdensome to me. When God talks about marriage being between a one man and one woman till death do you part, not a big deal to me, that's what God teaches. He designed marriage. It doesn't matter what

anybody else says marriage is, that's what God says it is. When God says, you shall not commit adultery, I don't wake up in the morning and complain to my wife and say, Kim, you'll never let me commit adultery, what's wrong with you? It doesn't even cross my mind. I love her. I want to do what God wants, right? They're not burdensome commandments to me, right? God's commandments are not burdensome for those who walk with him. They can be challenging, but they're not a burden because we want to walk the way Jesus Christ wants us to walk. Amen. That's what he's showing us.

And this is why it's so important, going back to First John chapter five, he says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome." If you've been born again, it means you've been given a new identity on the inside. And because you have a new identity, you can live in a way that you otherwise could not live before. I mean, take two animals for a second, okay, let's talk about two animals, a pig and a cat, okay. Think about the differences in their nature. Cats predominantly indoor animals. You'll see them prancing around, they like to play with string, they like to chase lights, they just take care of themselves, they do their own thing. If they get dirty, they lick themselves to make themselves clean. That's just the nature of all cats.

Compare that with a pig, what's the nature of a pig? I mean, pigs roll in mud, they're in the sky, they just are known to be dirty, filthy the animals, that's what they are, right? But if you could reach inside of them and change their natures and just switch it so the cat nature would go in the pig and the pig nature would go in the cat, I mean, what would you have? I mean, you'd walk out to the pig sty and you see a little

pig up prancing around on the sty, and staying out of the mud, maybe licking itself. And you would go over to that pig and you'd be like, dude, what is going on? And it'd go, purrr, right?

And you would think the pig was crazy, but what happened was its nature changed. And so it looked the same on the outside but on the inside it was fundamentally different. And as you're having that thought, you walk back into your house and you see your pet cat and you're like, what happened? The cat just rolling around in the mud and oinking and all these sorts of things where you think the cat has a demon, right? I think most cats do, and I'm a son of a veterinarian, so a whole nother topic.

But you see what I'm saying? Nothing changed on the outside, but on the inside their natures have changed. When you are born again you've been given a new nature. And so over time what happens is in this new nature, you have a love for God and a love for God's people you didn't have before. And you have a desire to be obedient to God's Word in a way that you never did before. And overtime, some people may look at you the same way you would look at a cat and a pig that got their nature switched and say, what happened to you? I mean, you look the same, but you're acting different. And you're not laughing at the jokes I used to tell, and you're not hanging out with us, and you're talking about church, and you're doing this. And what's wrong? And you say, nothing's wrong. Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life and he saved my life and you can save yours to. That's what you say.

See, that's the new nature. And when I have a new nature then I can live out his commands. If you don't have his new nature, let me tell you what happens when you come to a bible church like ours, you will hear the word preached and here's what you'll think, bigoted, fundamentalist, jerk, authoritative. Who are you to tell me what that's all about? Right. But if you hear the word of God with a new nature here's what you're going to say, thank you, Pastor, for being true to the Word of God. I needed to be fed today and that changed who I am. See the difference? And if you don't have a new nature and you don't have the effects of that going on in your life, you can call yourself whatever you want, but you'll never enjoy the freedom that God provided for you to have, right?

And John is saying, here's the effect of your faith, a love for the Father and a love for His people. Here's the effect of your faith, a willing alignment with God's demands. Here's the question, how can Christ be in you if you don't have a willing desire of God's demands? Here's the answer, he's not in you, right. Christ in you has the desire for you to live out everything he lived out when he was in the flesh.

Faith produces a genuine love for God's family, a willing alignment with God's demands. And here's the third one, the third one John tells us about is that faith in Christ produces persistent wins over sins, persistent wins over sins. I didn't say consistent, like perfectly, I said persistent, it means you work at it. Now look at this, verse four, "For everyone or for whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." All of the

things we're talking about boil down to faith and where you're going to put your faith. Are you going to put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and him alone or not? If you have, you are an overcomer, you are a victor, okay.

This word victory, we pronounce it in English, we pronounce the word Nike, okay, it's [nikkei 00:28:58] in the Greek. We pronounce it Nike, you'll know Nike. Nike means victory, it's why that company chose that brand. It's victory, right. All these words, overcomer and victory, Nike, it's talking about who you are. And one of the effects of your faith that you have is not only a love for God and his people, and one of the effects is not only a willing alignment, but here's the truth and you can choose this or not, but one of the effects that you can have in your faith is you can see yourself as the victor over this world that you are or you can live a defeated life. You get to choose how you view yourself based upon what the word of God tells you. And here's what God says about all those who are born again, they are all victors, they are not victims. They are all overcomers. And what does he tell us that we overcome? He tells us that we overcome the world, the world.

Now, what's this world that we're talking about? And we've talked about this a lot in this section of scripture when we've gone through First John, we talked about the political world, the sports world, he's not talking about a specific place, he's talking about this global system. When we talk about the world in the Bible, we're talking about a system or pattern that's hostile to God. You can overcome that system or pattern that is hostile to God, okay. We're overcomers of that. Which means this, listen

up, those of you who are born again, listen and listen real close, if you're a born again believer in Christ, no sin has mastery over you anymore, period. The only way it can is if you allow it to. And the way that you allow it to is to say, I can never get victory over this, I'm plagued and doomed until I meet Jesus, oh, woe is me. That's what the devil wants you to say. No, in Christ one of the effects that you have is to speak the truth about who God says you are, that you're a victor and not a victim. Amen.

Now, John is not the only author that writes this way, but we'll start with John and then we'll look at Paul. But in John chapter 16, and I'm not in the book of First John anymore, I'm back in the Gospel of John, John chapter 16 and verse 33, he says this, "These things I have spoken to you so that in me you may have peace." God wants you to have peace, peace with him. "In this world you have tribulation." In the world you have ... Dah. Okay, here's a promise, you're going to have some hardship in your life if you continue to live, that's a promise. But here's what he says, "But take courage, I have overcome the world."

What did Jesus overcome? He overcame the world system of sin, those things that pull you away from the eternal, glorious weight of God and give your attention to that which is fleeting, and sensual, and temporal, that pull you away from the most important things. Jesus said, I overcame that. I spent my entirety of my life serving my dad and loving God's people. And I'm an overcomer, I overcame the world.

Now in this world we also have two other things against us, we have our flesh, our flesh is our sin nature that likes to go after the temporal and sensual things. And how I wish I could tell you that went away when we're converted. Oh, how I wish I

could tell you that, hey, back in 1989, that died in me. I mean, I never have thought about sin ever again, I don't even know how to sin. If I tried to, I wouldn't even know how to do it. That doesn't happen, but I can have victory over that flesh nature and victory over that sin nature because Christ is now in me.

I also have Satan who whispers in my ear, who is constantly tempting me towards the fleeting, and the sensual, and the temporal, and that which is less than what God intended. That voice is still there, my flesh is still here. But here's the truth that John wants us to know, because Christ overcame the world and because Christ is in you, you too are overcomers in this world. You are not a victim to your sin. You can't say, well, my marriage will never. You can't say that I'll always be like. You can't say, that's just the way that I am. No, that's what you used to be before God changed your nature, now you're a new creation. The old things have passed away, behold, all things have been made new, and you are victor in Christ.

And it doesn't matter what your past was, it doesn't matter what your day is, it means from this moment on you can live to the fullness of who you are in Jesus Christ. Amen. That's the effect of our faith. And that's what John is pointing out. I mean, John said in First John 4:4, "Greater is the one who is in you than he who is in the world." Right. I mean, I mean, John's been pointing out who we are, he's been telling us that we're victors in Christ. I don't have the ability on my own to live that way, but in Christ I have everything that I need to live the way God wants.

The apostle Paul talks the same way in Romans and chapter eight, which in my

opinion is a contender for the greatest chapter in the entire New Testament. He says this in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Here's what he's trying to say, if Christ is in you and God the Father, through the Son and by the Spirit is completely for you, and Jesus Christ has already overcome the world, and you plus God make a majority, then what's your problem with sin? You can be completely freed from what your past was and live in the moment in the fullness of who you are in Christ. Because God is for you, and if God is for you, who can be against you?

Well, my husband ... who cares about him? Just for this illustration. Well, my wife said ... yes, but what did Jesus say? Yes, but my coach said ... yes, but what did Jesus say? Yes, but my mom and dad always told me ... yes, but what does Jesus say? See, we have to reprogram ourselves from the inside out and say, no, Jesus says I'm completely loved, and I'm holy, and I'm forgiven, and I'm redeemed, and I'm free, and I'm not a bound to my sin anymore, but I can live in the fullness of who I am in Christ. And when you start walking that way and living that way, you will actually live out your new nature.

This is where I find most Christians fail, it's not that they're not saved, it's not that they're not born again, it's not that they don't love God and people, it's not that they don't want to live the way God wants them to live, they just don't see themselves the way Jesus sees them. They see themselves like this, I'm just a miserable, lousy sinner that's going to screw up 432 times this week. I'm lousy, I'm no good, God hates me, he's disappointed in me. I know I'm going to Heaven but this is terrible life. And if that's your inner monologue, that's how you will live. But if your inner monologue is, I am

crowned with glory and honor. I am God's son and he is so well pleased in me. I'm his daughter and I'm completely freed up of my past. And there is nothing in my past that can keep me from being everything that God would have for me and my future. And I'm not going to listen to what the world says, because the world has no power over me. I'm a victor in Jesus Christ.

You live that way and you watch God take over. It's a whole new day, amen. And this is what John's telling us, it's accessible to every Christian. It's why some of us think there's only a few people that are successful Christians. It's those few that see themselves the way God sees them. And you might look at them and say, who do they think they are? Here's what they think they are, they think they're nothing but for the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen. That's what God wants for us, that's what God wants for you.

And here's what Paul goes on to say in Romans, I love this, because we don't realize how great God's love is for us. I mean, I end every service by telling you that you are loved, and I've told you already whether you know Jesus or not, he loves you. But I'm telling you as his child, the love for you that he has is so unfathomable, but Paul says it this way, after he says in Romans 8:37, "But in all things we are overwhelmingly conquerors through him who loved us." He goes on to say, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing."

I mean, it's almost like Paul's like, what else could get in the way? He's like, okay, we'll just say anything else created, okay. There's just like nothing that could do

what? Nothing that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It means this, listen, listen, listen, listen, because I know even while you're here the enemy is lying to some of your minds and saying, maybe you're not saved because look at your life, you're not living. I'm not telling you to look at your behaviors, I'm saying, do you have a greater love for God and his people? I'm saying, do you have a greater desire to live for God?

Here's what God's saying, if you do, then make the choice today to live in your new identity with who Jesus Christ says you are and walk tall because you're a son of the king or you're a daughter of the Most High and you can live it out everything that God has for you. And nothing, but nothing, but nothing can ever separate you from God's love. If God were here in the present, in Jesus Christ in all of his glory, and just took the time individually for all of us who have trusted him just to tell us how much he loves us, we wouldn't have enough time, it would take an eternity. Which is why God has granted us eternal life for God to lavish us with the riches of his love.

You cannot walk out of here today as somebody who doesn't know Christ and say, God doesn't love me, because he does and he wants you to be in relationship with him. And if you know Christ, you can certainly not walk out of here today and say, well, there's so many things I got to work on, God's disappointed, you missed the whole message. The message is by faith, it's our faith, John says, it's our faith in Christ and in him alone that gives us the ability to live out everything that the Bible teaches. And it's not us doing it, it's Christ doing it in and through me.

And Jesus is saying, hey, just take a step of faith. Just trust that who I say you are, you actually are. And quit trying to change all your behaviors, how well has that been working for you? I mean, think about how many times you write this down, from now on I'm never going to do this again. From now, this is the last time I will ever. I mean, how many times are you going to write it down? How many times are you going to say it? How many times are you going to pray? Let me help you, you're never going to change apart from Jesus Christ, ever. Not in a full lasting internal change. You can change behaviors for a while, you can modify things so that people think you're okay. But deep down, you cannot get to where you need to go.

I have a friend of mine who was a chaplain for NFL team a number of years ago and he was telling a story, he was playing golf with his pastor. And the foursome in front of them, they had a guy in the foursome that swore like a sailor. And every time they got close this guy just kept swearing, I mean, just major swears all the time. He looked at his pastor, he's like, "I'm sorry." And pastor is like, "It's no big deal, he can't change himself." He didn't have Christ on the inside, what's the big deal?

Well, as the day went on, I mean, the group was teeing off while they were waiting for him, and the guy that was swearing, the chaplain went up to him and said, "Hey, I just want to introduce you, this is my friend, he's my pastor." And the guy swallowed his tongue, "Oh, I'm so sorry, Pastor, I didn't mean to do that." And if you've never been a pastor before, it happens all the time. And the pastor said to him, "Don't worry about it, you couldn't not swear even if you wanted to."

He's like, "What do you mean?" He's like, "Because you don't have Christ in your life, so all your best effort, you can't not swear, it's just who you are. It's your nature." "Guys, I got to stop swearing." He goes, "You can't." He said for the rest of the day he would watch that foursome up and the guy would duff a shot or something and be like ... I mean, he thought it, he was just trying to behaviorally model ... You can't change that. But I can tell you this, with Christ on the inside, he can change everything about you. He can change the way you love somebody who you think is unlovable. He can change behaviors about Your life you never thought you could change. Jesus can do the impossible, and it's him in your life doing the work. See, that's the effect of faith.

If you are truly born again, you will have a love for God and his people. If you are truly born again, you will have a desire to live in alignment with what God wants. And here's how you live in alignment with what God wants, you'd start declaring what God declares over you already, that you are a victor in Christ, that you are more than a conqueror in Christ, that you are holy, that you are forgiven, that you are dearly loved, that you are a child of God, that you are his chosen One, that, that's who you are, and that nothing can ever snatch you out of his hand, and that you're looking forward to the day that he presents you with exceedingly great joy before the Father. That's who you are.

And if you start living that way and you realize you're an ambassador, a Sojourner here, this is only for a period of time, what's going on for eternity is the best that's yet to come, and all this is a dress rehearsal for all those things. You start living that way and you watch God, he will change everything about you and your sphere of

influence. That's who you are. That's the effect of faith.

So the way that I wanted to end our service today is by making sure that you knew the Lord, because it'd be pathetic to preach a message like this and then just make the assumption that all of us have the faith in Christ alone. So I want to give you an opportunity to do that. It's also an opportunity for those of us who say, there's no doubt pastor Jeff, I've trusted Christ and him alone. I love him, I love his family, I want to align, I'm going to start living out my new identity, to ask you this question, because Christ is in you, what's the area God's asking you to trust him for more? What's that area he's putting his finger on saying, hey, let me have that? Quit trying and give it to me, I'll put it back together for you. What's that area? Where do you need to trust him? Right. That's what God would have for you.

So just right where we are on both campuses, if you just bow your head and close your eyes, let's just pray to the Lord. Jesus, we come before your throne today because we don't want to make any mistake about it that you are the way, the truth and the life. If you're here today on either campus and you've never trusted Jesus Christ personally, you would say there's no effect of faith in my life that I see. And you want Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life, here's how you can pray. Jesus, I believe that I'm a sinner. But I believe that you came and died on the cross for all of my sin. That you were buried in the grave and that you rose on the third day. And right now here in this moment, I confess you as my personal Lord and Savior. I turn from my sin and I turn completely to you.

Lord, I pray for all those who prayed that prayer as you indwell them with your Holy Spirit right in this moment and they become new creations that you would grow them up in Christ. And for those of you who are here today, who are believers in Jesus, that you would say, Lord, show me how to trust you more. Lord, how to become the man, woman, boy or girl you want me to be? Where do I need to trust you more? Lord, help me to live out my new identity in you with everything I have. We give you all the praise, in Jesus Christ name, amen.