

# The Requirements for an Overcomer

by Jerry Aman

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*The sermon emphasizes the call for all Christians to be overcomers through faith in Christ, addressing challenges and the importance of community in overcoming obstacles.*

**Duration:** 1:09:01

**Scripture:** Revelation 14:1

**Topics:** "Overcoming"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of faithfulness and being responsible in serving God. He uses the example of three young girls who stay behind to help reset chairs and tables after a gathering, highlighting their testimony of dedication. The speaker also mentions the story of David, who despite his failures, remained faithful and had a deep desire to build a house for God. The sermon encourages parents and grandparents to prioritize spending time with God and building a relationship with Him, rather than just focusing on performance and outward actions.

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## Transcript

We ought to be rejoicing. We're going to talk about overcoming instead of being overcome, and I think that's marvelous. And the reason that we can even talk about overcoming is because we know the great overcomer.

We have the great overcomer in our life and in our spirit, God's great gift to us, the great overcomer. So let's just begin with a word of prayer. Lord, we are so grateful this morning, Lord, that we finally discovered a new life.

We've discovered a new way of life. We've discovered the one who offers us the kingdom, the one who will reign as king. Lord, you had to pay a great price for me, for us to come into that place, that great redeeming price of the blood of Jesus, the broken body, which we've just celebrated.

And Lord, we celebrate it because it is indeed our freedom. It is our beginning in a new life. Oh, Lord, you're just getting us ready for that eternity that lies ahead of us.

Lord, we worship you this morning. We pray that you will anoint this time that we can both speak and be able to hear, Lord, not just with our ears, but deep in our hearts and spirits as we come before you this morning. I only ask, Lord, that you touch each one of us as it is needed this morning, that we might go

away, Lord, with the life of Christ more real in our lives.

I pray in Jesus' name. Well, last time, as I shared, I shared on the importance of the overcomer in God's plan for eternity and for the future, for the coming King and the kingdom. Overcomers are critical to what the Lord is wanting to do, and we're all called to be overcomers, to overcome.

The principle in the New Testament of what we call the overcomer is the same principle we see in the Old Testament when it refers to the remnant, a remnant. It seems like in the Old Testament, when the nation of Israel was failing, he always had a remnant. He had a few that would stand with him for what he wanted and for his purpose.

I remember the nation of Israel turned away from God, and God, in order to discipline them, not to punish, but to discipline them, allowed them to go into captivity for 70 years. During that time, the Persians who had captured them, who is now the nation of Iran, what a change there's been, but anyway, they did not try to enslave the Jewish people. They tried to incorporate them into their way of life, and the Jews were allowed to have businesses and to work and to do things, and they prospered, actually, in captivity.

But they also realized they were God's people, and they wanted to, in some way, try to serve God in that condition. Well, they came up with the idea of synagogues. It was man's idea.

It wasn't God's. It seemed to have the right thought behind it, the right motive. But the problem was they could really only appease their own conscience, and the reason was God was very explicit that to take care of their sins, that annual sacrifice had to be made in the temple in Jerusalem, no other place.

And therefore, though they were able to come and talk about God and read some of the Old Testament books, they were not able to offer up that sacrifice for their sins. They were not able to have the temple that would please God's heart. Their conscience was appeased, but God was not satisfied.

The temple is the foreshadowing of Christ. We need to remember that. The temple in God's heart was a foreshadowing of Christ.

It spoke of Christ. When Christ came, brothers and sisters, He came as the temple of God. He was the temple of God.

So today when people say, what ought the church be? What ought the church look about like it should be Christ? Well, the other thing was the sacrifices, of course, foreshadowed Jesus' own sacrifice on Calvary's cross for our sins that He offered before God in heaven, His own blood, and that forever satisfied God and delivered those under sin. Praise the Lord. That was God's heart.

But in captivity, they couldn't do that. But God in His mercy at the end of 70 years, Cyrus the King, He rose up Cyrus the King, and I'm pretty sure through the admonition of Daniel, who was one of His captives, He saw from the Scriptures that God had raised Him up, and He accepted that. And He allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and made provision that they might go back and build the temple of God and set up the sacrifices.

God's heart. God moved. God allowed it.

And as I have shared before on this, only about 4% of the total population returned. That's 40,000 returned to do this, to follow God's heart. Now, they returned at great risk.

They returned to a hard life. It was not easy because it was just rubble there. And not only did they have to think about laying the foundation and building the temple, but they had to be concerned about taking care of their own family at the same time.

Does this sound familiar, Saints? We are called to build the house of God. And we live in a very busy world. And it is not easy to take care of the family and all the matters that we're involved in in today's life, which are much greater than even in those days, and build God's house.

But that's God's heart. And that should be the main thing on our heart. Well, that 4% was the remnant that returned.

The principle of the remnant. Today we would call them the overcomers. They overcame all obstacles, all the oppression of the enemy.

It's interesting, in Babylon, the enemy didn't care. But once they got back to the temple, remember all the trouble the neighboring tribes gave them, ready to destroy them? They had to actually build it, Sid, with a sword in one hand, and I guess would be today a trowel in the other. They had their tools in one hand and their weapon in the other.

It was not an easy time. But they overcame. The foundation was laid, and eventually the temple rebuilt, and the wall under Nehemiah.

They overcame. Praise the Lord. You know, last time when I shared on this matter of overcoming, I spoke of Gideon, the selection of overcomers.

And interestingly enough, once again, in the book of Judges, you find that God's people had gone away from God. Their hearts were not quite there, and they were under captivity, basically in the land under the Midianites. And they couldn't even have weapons.

And Gideon was found sifting the wheat, kind of hiding in a spot where nobody could see him, because as soon as the Midianites saw somebody had grain, they would come and take it. They were living in poverty, crushed. And God rose up Gideon as an overcomer for that nation.

And Gideon sent out the call to the whole nation to come and help him to overthrow the Midianites. 30,000, praise the Lord, responded. But when they came, the Lord put these 30,000 to the test.

Their hearts were in the right place. But in the first test, He said, Look, anybody that's fearful, they just need to go home. 20,000 left out of the 30.

They were fearful. Let's put it in more practical terms. The bottom line is they were not ready to lay down their lives.

They were not ready to lay down their lives for the nation, for God's purpose. Their hearts were stirred. They wanted to, but they just weren't ready to do it.

Then the Lord put them to a unique test. He said, Go tell them all to have a drink down by the river. So, you know, they all go down.

There's 10,000 left. They go down to the river and they start drinking. Some just stick their heads in the water and just, you know, they're satisfying their thirst.

Others would cup the water with their hands and drink and be watchful. It was 300. The Lord chose them.

Only 300 were truly watchful and prepared and ready. And the Lord chose that 300. And through that 300, the remnant, they ended up overthrowing, I think it was, I can't remember the exact number, I believe it was 300,000 Midianites in the end.

The principle of overcoming. The point I want to make is, this is God's plan. God wanted all of the nation of Israel to be able to respond and to be able to be in that battle and to be an overcomer.

He wasn't trying to select an elite group. He wanted all of them to be there. But only 300 could He use as an overcomer.

But praise the Lord, the nation was temporarily delivered through these 300. I just want to leave you, thinking of last time, with this basic thought. That it comes to the overcomers.

It's God's intention that every child of His be an overcomer. It's not His heart just to select a few. His heart is that all might become overcomers.

In the book of Revelation, in chapter 2 and 3, we'll get to some scriptures in a minute. We saw the seven churches. And the Lord, as the high priest in chapter 2 and 3, is looking at the churches.

He's in the midst of the seven churches. He is really the standard of the seven churches. He's looking for Himself there.

And as He begins to observe, He finds some issues that He wants to point out where they are failing in. They have come short. In Ephesus, it was first love.

In Samarna, it was a matter of suffering. Were they willing to suffer for Christ's sake? In Pergamos, there was an issue with mixture. They were trying to have one foot in the world and one foot in the church.

They were trying to live in both worlds. And the result was that they were bringing worldly ways into the church. In Thyatira, the special issue seemed to be idol worship and a special priesthood.

Idol worship. Brothers and sisters, in those days, they worshipped wooden idols, golden idols, silver idols made with hand. Today, I want to tell you that an idol is not just a wooden object or an object that men worship.

For us, an idol is anything that replaces God in your life. Now, sin will separate you from the Lord, but an idol will replace the Lord in your life. That is the seriousness of idols.

That is why God is so absolutely deadly against idol worship. Idols. That was Thyatira.

In Sardis, they had the Word of God. They loved the Word of God. The problem is that they lacked the life and the reality that the Word was supposed to give.

We were talking yesterday at that little breakfast some brothers had about young people. They'll read the Bible, and they may learn some scriptures, but when they read it, are they really looking to discover the Lord as they read? Are they really looking to find out what the Lord wants to say to them personally as they read? Now, I could ask the same question of us adults, which are mostly here. When you read the Bible, are you just reading? Are you really looking as you take up a psalm and meditate on it to allow the

Lord to speak to your heart? Living reality, that's what the Lord is after.

We spoke of Philadelphia. The very name Philadelphia means brotherly love. And He was saying to them, you need to maintain that brotherly love.

Laodicea, what is the issue there? Well, Laodicea basically means the opinion of men. The men's opinion, the brothers' opinions, the sisters' opinions were taking a place of the mind of Christ in their midst. It was almost more like a democracy instead of theocracy.

Opinions of men. And why did this begin to replace the headship of Christ? It's because they were lukewarm. They were lukewarm towards the Lord in their heart.

There was a lack of passion for the Lord. Because when we have a passion for the Lord, we only want to know what He's got to say. Now, there's nothing against fellowship and brothers and sisters sharing their heart and their thoughts about the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if you're depending on others to make this decision for you or to give you full understanding, now, the Lord may use others to do that. But it's from the head and not from men. So, lukewarmness, what a danger that is.

In all seven of those churches, God's call was to overcome. Even in Philadelphia where there was no issue mentioned other than they had brotherly love and they needed to maintain it. The Lord called for overcomer.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know how you feel, but are you in first love? Are you willing to lay your life down for the sake of the saints and the Lord? Are you trying to live a double life? One in the world and one in fellowship with brothers and sisters? Is there idols in our lives? We read the Bible, but is there any life there? Do we truly love the brothers and sisters? Are we really making Christ head of our lives? All of these were issues and the Lord challenged them. He said, overcome. I'm calling for those that will overcome and stand for the rest.

It's not that they just said, Lord, I lack in first love and I want to be in first love. Lord, return me to first love. Lord, show me your love and then I will return to love.

No, it wasn't just that. It was, Lord, yes, I need to return. Lord, I need to return to first love, but I want all my brothers and sisters to return to first love.

That's what an overcomer does. Well, it's clear that what the Lord is after is a clear testimony of Himself in the life of each brother and sister as well as in the church corporate. The life of Christ manifests.

The character of Christ manifests. That's what we see in these first seven churches. It is through these ones that God achieves His purpose.

As we go on in the book of Revelation, we begin to open the seals or the Lord begins to open the seals. And in chapter 7, as we read, we saw a great multitude in chapter 7 of Revelation. These multitude of overcomers appear at the beginning of tribulation, just before tribulation.

First, we had the seven churches, the overcomers called for. And then as we get close to the beginning of tribulation, close to the beginning of the Lord's starting to return, the Lord brings forth a picture of the overcomers in Revelation chapter 7. These are the ones that have maintained the testimony of Jesus

through the church age. In other words, it is the overcomers that we see from probably about the first century when the seven churches were in the first century.

And now we come from the first century to the last days which we are in, and we see the overcomers. God calls overcomers. Last week, our brother, Max, shared on the matter of the Lord's table and the spiritual history of how God kept the Lord's table forefront and alive.

Brothers and sisters, it was kept alive through overcomers. The livingness of the Lord's table was kept alive through overcomers, not the general church. In general, the church turned it into a sacrament.

They turned it into, how do I want to say it, a tradition. And in the Catholic church, it even became a perversion. But it was maintained.

Our brother mentioned some names. It was maintained by many of the martyrs who were killed. The Waldenses.

The Huguenots. This is Huguenot Road. The Huguenots.

This was named after the Huguenots. Greatly persecuted because of their love for the Lord and their love at the table. Zinzendorf.

You remember, that whole community began as they went around and encouraged one another to come and join all these different peoples from all different lands to come to this table and let's celebrate the Lord together. Zinzendorf. And they became the Moravians.

Well known for their love for the Lord. Many of the Reformers during the Reformation also maintained the reality of the Lord's table. But even then, its significance began to wane in the church.

But the brethren, when the Lord raised up the brethren, it was that table that was central to them. Now, when I say the table is central, it's the same thing as saying Christ is central. I want you to be clear on that.

Not just the practice of taking the table. In chapter 12 of Revelation, we saw the man-child. Now here, we're at the beginning of the Lord's return, His parousia.

He's on the throne, and He is preparing to come down to the cloud. But first, there is this man-child that comes forth out of the woman, the church, and the man-child is raptured to the throne. And they are brought into view as the Lord begins to make His move from the throne to the cloud.

These are the ones that overcame, it says, by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimonies, and they loved not their lives unto death. In chapter 14, there's 144,000, which is not a literal number, but a spiritual number standing for fullness. The fullness of overcomers are standing with the Lord on Mount Zion.

The man-child has been raptured to the throne now, and they're there. And this is towards the end of the Great Tribulation at this point. It's just before the judgment seat of Christ.

They're ready to descend to the cloud. And I think that to me, as you read through that, and we'll read a little bit in a minute. I hope I have time this morning.

They have a special song, a special song in their heart for the Lord that expresses the deep love and union with the Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 19, we see an army of overcomers following the Lord who is on a white horse. This is His second coming.

He's coming now from the cloud to the earth. And once again, we see this army of overcomers. And they are recognized.

God recognizes them this way. He calls them the called, the chosen, and the faithful. The called, the chosen, and the faithful.

Now, I know that there's different interpretations. Many great men of God and scholars hold different interpretations on this matter of the Lord's return and on the rapture. One of them, one such interpretation, is that once you get past chapters 2 and 3, when John is called to come up here, and he does, he's brought up to the throne, the rapture, taken to the throne, many say that what that means is at that point, the church is raptured.

And the reason they say that is you don't see the church again until the end. Near the very end. In Revelation, I guess, 21.

The new Jerusalem coming down from heaven. Now, in a sense, they're right if you just look at it in that way. But once you begin to see this matter of the overcomer, you see that the church is involved in every stage of the Lord's return in the world going through the great tribulation that will come upon this world.

The overcomers are always there. And because he sees the overcomers, he has his church. And so, what I'm trying to say is in every case, what you see is these overcomers are reigning and ruling with Christ.

Even during the Lord's coming back. And they will reign and rule with Him during the kingdom age. So, in God's eyes, the church is always in view regardless of what your interpretation may be.

I do need to say very quickly that overcomers are not super-Christians. They're only Christians as the Lord wanted us to be in the beginning. Simply trusting, obeying, loving the Lord, following Him in faithfulness, laying down our lives for Him, His sake, and the church's sake.

That is what we're all called to. The Lord sees that as a normal life for a Christian. The problem is that we've become a sub-culture instead of the culture of the Christian that the Lord called for.

So, in no way am I trying to say this morning we need an elite group like special forces or the Navy SEALs. No, we need the whole group to become overcomers. The normal Christians, the overcomers, are simply ones that are willing to respond to God's grace because He makes all the provision to overcome.

Well, they've learned that they really don't have the ability to overcome. That's one of the great lessons that we have to learn. But they have learned to experience Christ in their life as the overcomer.

They've gone in certain situations in their lives and said, Lord, I am like Paul. I'm pressed out of measure. Lord, I'm almost knocked out here.

I cannot handle this, Lord. This is crushing me. But Lord, You're the overcomer in my life.

That's what makes the difference. He is the overcomer. Well, in other words, they're actively, the Lord is the active overcomer in their life.

Now, what I'd like to do, I mean we have to a certain extent seen something of the importance of overcoming and how God uses the overcomer in His great plan is the characteristic, some of the characteristics of the overcomer. Now, I mentioned in chapter 2 and 3 these overcomers from the end of the first, in the first century, right in the first century. But God calls them to overcome.

Now, thank the Lord. Some repented and some responded. Some repented and responded.

They saw they weren't in first love. And they repented and responded. There were some that did this.

And I think the great thing we need to see from chapters 2 and 3 in the call to the overcomer is that some did. The Lord was able to touch some hearts and they realized that they were not what the Lord wanted them to be. And they repented and they responded to the Lord's grace in their life.

Lord, I see I've fallen short. Lord, my love, it's not first love. I recognize that, Lord.

I don't want it to be that way anymore, Lord. You remember the maiden in the Song of Solomon? Draw me and I will run after Thee. Brothers and sisters, you can't work up first love.

It has to come from the Lord. But you can ask the Lord to show Himself to you. To show His love to you.

Then you will run after Him. Then you will see your love rising in your heart. I do not know any other way to generate love in man's heart until they see the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because He is love. Well, that's the one. They become living sacrifices for the Lord.

And God chooses them. Now let's look in chapter 7. Let's read this. Chapter 7, verses 9 through 11.

Revelation. Revelation chapter 7, verse 9 through 11. This multitude.

The overcomers from the first century until the last days in which we're in. Two characteristics that we need to point out of these overcomers. One, were their robes of righteousness.

Now I've mentioned this before, but it's important for us as Christians to understand this. When we accept the Lord Jesus Christ, we're given His righteousness. Oh, hallelujah.

It is a golden robe. If you read in the psalm, you'll find that this is a golden robe. Because it is the pure character and nature of God.

Righteousness. It's a golden robe. And we receive that.

And what that allows you and I to do is to approach God the Father. You would not be able to approach Him without that robe. You can never approach Him.

The great thing about this robe of righteousness, it can never be spoiled. It can never be stained in any way. Even our own personal unrighteousness cannot stain the righteousness of Christ.

You need to understand that this righteousness is real and God accepts it. And when He looks at you, that's what He's seeing. And therefore, He can accept you into His presence because of this robe of righteousness.

But here is a white linen robe that these saints have. And that always speaks of our... clothing speaks of righteousness. And it speaks of our life before the Lord, our walk before the Lord.

They walk in righteousness. In other words, the righteousness of the golden robe becomes righteousness in their practical life. It's the righteousness of Christ becomes practical.

And it begins to become a white linen robe. So when we appear, thank the Lord, when we appear before God, there should be two. The golden robe of righteousness and then the righteousness that have come out for accepting the righteousness of Christ.

Two, they had palm branches. And if you read the history, you'll find out that palm branches represented victory. They were victory.

They waved the palms. It was victory. It signifies victory.

To me, that means that these overcomers had finally learned there was no victory in themselves, but they could find victory in Christ. He was their victor and He was their victory in their lives. They had discovered this.

Let's look at chapter 12, verses 1, 2, 5, and 11. Revelation chapter 12, verses 1, 2, 5, and 11. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Verse 2, And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth and in pain to be delivered. Verse 5, She brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. Verse 11, And they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.

Brothers and sisters, as I mentioned, if you read this chapter, you see that the dragon, our enemy, Satan, didn't pay much attention to the woman, the church in general. Her testimony was so weak, it didn't matter. But he was very concerned about this man-child.

And this man-child is the overcomer. The overcomer. Coming out of the woman.

And he's very intent. He's ready to destroy the man-child as soon as the man-child is manifest. And they were raptured to the throne.

Not to the cloud, but to the throne. To reign and rule with Him. But brothers and sisters, it talks about overcoming.

These are ones that overcame by the blood. They overcame by the blood. That tells you something.

That tells you they were not perfect. And that they were totally sinless because they needed the blood. They needed that blood in their lives because they did sin.

It's not that they were controlled by sin, but they did fall. But they were able to keep current with the Lord. They would repent and go back to the Lord and say, Lord, forgive me.

And the Lord says, if you confess your sins, I'm faithful and just to forgive you. Doesn't He? I don't know how many of you really believe that. But He is.

They are current. Two, the blood allows them to have fellowship. You want to come before the Lord Jesus Christ, it will always be on the basis of His shed blood.

You have been given a golden robe of righteousness, but first Christ shed His blood for your sins. You will never be able to approach the Lord based on your own righteousness or how you value yourself as a Christian. You always need the blood.

One dear saint says, even our tears of repentance needs the blood of Christ. They were able to fellowship. They understood the value of the blood.

And when they came, it was under the blood of Christ. But there's more. Who did they overcome? It says, they overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood.

I want to speak to this just for a few minutes because I think many of us live under the power of the accusation of the enemy. You come to worship and you cannot open your mouth because He's constantly accusing you. How can you say anything? You who have fallen.

You've fallen short this week. How can you possibly come to this table? How can you open your mouth? How can you testify of God's love? He's always accusing. Accuser of the brethren.

His purpose is to keep you under bondage. Brothers and sisters, you need to know that. I don't know, but if you come and you want to worship the Lord and you find you can't, do you sense that as a reprimand from the Lord? Or do you sense that as a bondage that you're in that you can't break through? I would say to you it's most likely a bondage.

It is the enemy. It is his whisperings in your ear. Brothers and sisters, the accuser of the brethren wants to shut your mouth.

He wants to limit your life and your testimony of God in your life. And that's what he's constantly doing. Not only does he accuse you personally in your conscience, he accuses you before God.

Now the interesting thing about the accusations of the enemy is they can sometimes be right. His accusations is usually based on something that's right. But they can also be absolutely wrong.

He doesn't care just so he can stop you and the testimony of Christ in your life. He'll come to you and say, you really have no value, do you? You don't really have anything to offer. But God has said, everyone has been given a gift.

Everyone has been given a talent. Everyone has the grace of God to express the testimony of Christ in their life, brothers and sisters. That's what the Word says.

Do you believe the whispering of the enemy or do you believe what God has said? Doubt. Oh, that is his great weapon. That's the one he used on Eve.

Remember his words to Eve? Half God said, you can't eat of this tree. Eve said, no, you can't even touch it. God never said that.

But you see, he was putting down into her mind as to God's motive in her life, as to God's care for them. He said, you eat of it. Don't listen to God.

Listen to me. If you eat of it, you'll become like God yourself. What a great thing.

Eve unfortunately fell. The doubt took her. She fell before the accusation of the enemy.

Brothers and sisters, how great is the precious blood of Christ. When you sense the enemy is coming at you with his accusations, you need to say, no, I have the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ has cleansed me from all sin.

I can approach God because I have his blood. I can open my mouth in testimony because of the blood of Christ. I depend on the blood of Christ.

You know, during the days of Darby and some others like Darby, the brethren, there was a man called F.W. Newman who fellowshipped with Darby and the others and the brethren. Apparently a very intelligent man and for a number of years really followed the Lord. Then all of a sudden his heart turned and he actually, he was a college professor and he actually ended up teaching against Christ.

He just turned. What's the word for, I'm looking for, he was apostasy, thank you. He became apostate.

Thank you, John. He became apostate. And if you read the word of God in Hebrews, boy, there's a fiery trial that God is awaiting an apostate person.

They're not going to lose their salvation, but there's a fiery trial. Anyway, I don't want to go into that. What I want you to see is this man really became an apostate.

There's not that many apostates, but he became one. But praise the Lord. At the very end of his life, the Lord was able to touch his hard heart and he changed it.

And he asked this to be put on his tombstone. I died trusting in the blood of Christ. I died trusting in the blood of Christ.

Oh, how powerful is the blood. It shuts up the accuser of the brethren, not only in your own conscience, but before God. Hallelujah.

How much we allow God has to put up with because we just don't take the blood of Christ as we should. Now, I do need to say the Holy Spirit does touch our conscience as well. But the purpose of the Holy Spirit is not to put us in bondage and keep us from praising God.

It's to release us, to deliver us from that thing that is separating us. So the whole purpose of the Holy Spirit when He comes is not to condemn you, but to convict you. There's a difference.

The only thing, if you're sensing these things in your life, and most of us do, there's a great difference between conviction and condemnation. I think in your spirit you can tell. And then it says, the word of their testimony.

They overcame by the blood. Oh, I've got one more after that. The word of their testimony.

Basically, the testimony of the Christian, there's a testimony that encompasses everything, and that is Jesus is Lord. Now, that needs to be backed up with reality in our lives. And that's what is the reality of the overcomer, is they made Jesus Lord of their life.

And He is Lord. Once again, I didn't say they were perfect, but He is Lord. That is the main thing in their life, is the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Everything else is secondary. Jesus is Lord. So basically, their life backs up this testimony.

So when they are able to say Jesus is Lord, it carries weight in the spiritual realm. Thirdly, it says, they love not their lives unto death. They are willing to lay aside their own soul life for the sake of Christ.

They're not drawn by the desires of the world upon their life. You know, our soul desires so many things. And the world has much to offer it.

Pleasure, fame, power, recognition. I think that's what most of our politicians are after. I should add money to that.

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. We are just as guilty.

We desire these things. And often, this matter of pleasure, I think particularly with the younger generations, is a real serious challenge. The world offers it.

And there's pleasure in sin for a season. But then there's the payment. You've got to pay for it.

So, these are ones whose souls are not overtaken by the pull of the world. They're able to lay aside its pleasures, reject its fame, reject its power and recognition, and stay true to the Lord. The Lord says, deny yourself.

Take up the cross and follow Him. It goes deeper than just the draw of the world. It affects our souls deeply.

The cross does that as you experience the cross in your life. The real challenge is, who is Lord? Who's Lord of your soul? Who have you given your soul to? Or are you trying to run it yourself? It affects our relationships with others. Instead of us being in control, often we find we allow others to control our lives.

Our soul longs for love. It longs for appreciation. And it longs for acceptance.

We strive for it. We will perform for it. Actually, that's the way we bring up our children, isn't it? So often, we reward them for good performance.

And unfortunately, that carries over into their life with Christ. They continue just to be trying to do the right things instead of having a relationship with the Lord. Brothers and sisters, as parents and as grandparents, and maybe as great-grandparents, we need to be encouraging children.

Yes, read your Bible. Yes, take some time. Be before the Lord.

Meditate before the Lord. I don't want you just to read one chapter a night. I want you to read, just read this one verse for me and think about it before the Lord.

Get them used to interchanging with the Lord through the Holy Spirit. That's what they need to learn. Anyway, because often they'll do it just to get your acceptance and your approval.

Yeah, I'll read it. Now, we have rebellious ones too who won't do it just because you've asked them to. And that has to be dealt with as well in love and discipline.

The point I want to make is that this longing that we have, even as adults, the enemy uses to control your life and keep you from giving it fully to the Lord. But one day the cross works in your life and we find that our true acceptance, true love, is found in Jesus Christ. Then you're set free.

Then you can really be free to serve others. Because there's a deep work done in your soul. And what has happened is Christ has come in, in a living way.

You're Christ. And you can say, I love not my life, even unto death. It's a deep work.

A deep work has to take place in our soul. There's so much that we love besides Christ. Brothers and sisters, I can only say that it goes to the deepest levels of our being, this work of the cross.

And if we're willing to allow the Lord to do that, then we can be an overcomer. Chapter 14, read verses 1 and 3. Chapter 14, verses 1 and 3. And I looked, and lo, a lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. Verse 3. And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders.

And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins, and they follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes. Once again, we see the overcomers right near the end of the great tribulation, getting ready to descend to the cloud with which, when He does that, there will be the judgment seat of Christ for Christians.

I think what impressed me so much about God's revelation of these overcomers on Mount Zion was this song. It was a new song, and nobody else could understand it or sing it. You know, sometimes we sing songs, and we can sing them, and our voice is heard, but our heart's not in it.

You know what I mean. And there are other times when our hearts are so full we can hardly sing it. It's a new song.

It's a song that has come out of deep experiences with the Lord. They have experienced the Lord in deep ways in their lives. It's come out of many experiences, not just one.

And it's a song that they can worship and praise the Lord with, that those who have not experienced those deep experiences can possibly sing because they have no experience. This love song is based on experience with the Lord. And they have it.

Praise the Lord. Let's go to chapter 19. We'll see the army.

Chapter 19, verse 11 and 14. Chapter 19, verse 11 and verse 14. And I saw opened and behold a white horse.

And he that sat upon him was called faithful and true. And in righteousness he judges and makes war. Verse 13.

He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called the word of God. Verse 14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses clothed in fine linen white and clean.

Now let's go back to chapter 17 because this is the same army. Chapter 17, verse 14. And these shall make war with the Lamb.

Speaking of the nations. And the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Listen to this.

And they that are with him are called chosen and faithful. They that are with him are called chosen and faithful. We see the Lord on a white horse.

He's called the faithful and true one. This is the overcomers at the end of tribulation. The Lord has left the cloud and come down to the earth and the last battle of Armageddon is on.

And it says that they in chapter 19 it says they are on white horses. Man. In other words, they are reigning and ruling with Christ.

They are ones who have made Christ their King. And they are the ones who fully submit to the authority of their King in their lives. They understand the kingship and the authority of our Lord Jesus and submit to it.

And therefore they are allowed to reign and rule with him as what? Kings and priests. Not only priests serving God and worshiping God but as kings in authority ruling with him. They are on the white horse.

They also have pure linen garments which are mentioned again the practical righteousnesses of the saints. And then in verse in that chapter 17 it says God calls them the called the chosen and the faithful. Now we know the word of God says many are called but few are chosen.

Why? Many are called. We are all called to be overcomers. We are called by the grace of God.

Our problem is we don't live by the grace of God. We have not yet learned to live in the grace of God in our lives. And we need to depending on him.

God's grace to do things that we just can't do. Or maybe to do things that we can do but it's much better if he does it. They learn to live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they are faithful. They are faithful to the Lord. Now brothers and sisters I think faithfulness is the most rare quality that we tend to find in our society today.

Faithful ones. That is a quality highly esteemed. Faithfulness.

I remember a couple of weeks ago I was at Chick-fil-A and I think on Tuesday mornings there's about 40 junior high girls that come in from all the schools in the area. And they have a little Bible study in there. They of course eat their little breakfast and then they all get around these tables.

They push the tables together. And they'll go through a little Bible study. And each group of about 10 has somebody, you know an adult supervising them and doing their little study that they do.

And what I noticed after seeing them a number of times was it was always about three of those girls when everything was over and all the girls were... And I'll tell you what. Girls can chatter. That's one thing I found out.

They can really chatter. And they just like little chattering all over the place. And they're always excited.

That's just one. I see these young girls and it's just full of life. But anyway they all kind of ramble start going out to the cars.

Three of the girls it's about three of them will stay behind and help reset those chairs and tables. That to me is the testimony I see. There's three of them I know that's been affected.

Three of them I know that have seen something that they need to be responsible and be faithful. And they do that each time. Faithfulness.

A rare quality. I think of David. Remember David's story? He failed greatly brothers and sisters.

He did. But he was a man after God's heart. He was not perfect but he was faithful.

All of his life his heart was on one thing to build a house for God. It never left him day and night. He said he couldn't even sleep at times because it was so much on his heart.

He prepared and prepared and all the things that would be necessary to build the house of God. And finally in the end his son was able to build it. He was faithful.

I hate to say but I believe excuses is the order of the day. Our whole society is just bound up with giving excuses about everything. And oh, and then people say oh yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right.

It was your circumstances. It was this. It was that.

Sure, you're not able to do this because of that. We accept them. I really like the Marines.

There's no excuses. You know, I really like that. There's no excuses.

No excuse, sir. Faithfulness, a rare quality. These are the characteristics, some of the characteristics of the overcomers.

We have to confess we've fallen short. We're called to overcome. Brothers and sisters, we're not elitist.

Rather, we should be greatly humbled that we even have a place in God's plan, in God's heart. The real dealings come from the Lord to transform us into His image. And one of the major characteristics of our Lord is humility.

So overcomers are not the elite group. They're the humble group. Our Lord Jesus overcame as a lamb, brothers and sisters, not as the King of kings.

His way of life was the cross. He got to the throne, but He had to go through the cross. How humbling.

The reward of overcomers is, of course, being able to reign and rule with Christ. I hope we've seen something this morning of how critical overcomers are in the plan of God and in bringing the conclusion to this age and bringing in His fulfillment of His kingdom. And the New Jerusalem, which we see coming down out of heaven.

That New Jerusalem expresses the full character of Christ. You need to know that. And that's what it's all about.

An expression of the full character of Christ. There's no spot or wrinkle there. Spot is there's no defilement in that New Jerusalem.

There's no wrinkle. In other words, there's no oldness there. Everything is fresh.

Everything is alive. Everything is full of life. God has created man in His own image.

But brothers and sisters, we marred that image through our disobedience. And man fell. But Christ died that man could be restored.

That His image could be restored. He represented you and I on the cross. Not only did He die for your sins, but He represented you and I on the cross to do away with the old man, to bring in the new man.

Christ in you. He arose and we arose, a new man in Him. We're a new creation in Christ.

And that image has been restored in you and me. We carry the image of Christ. But how well do we carry it? The overcomers carry that image.

So our life is in transition. It is in process. The church itself is in transition and process to be matured.

But she has failed. No doubt. But brothers and sisters, God's plan will not be thwarted.

God is calling overcomers. You have that choice. I have that choice.

And we can only become that by His grace. Brothers and sisters, I want to say this to you. Everyone in this room, I believe we're all Christians.

If you're not, may the Lord touch your heart today. But we've been called. The call is very clear.

Are you going to be chosen? I think it will depend on faithfulness. Called, chosen, faithful. Called, chosen, faithful.

So what are the characteristics that we looked at? There was a lot. First love. A willingness to suffer for Christ.

To live for Christ and not the world. To have no idols or anything that takes the place of Christ. The Word that we read and share on needs to be living and real.

We need to have a love for the brethren. Not because they love us or do something good to us. But simply because we love them because they are brothers and sisters.

They maintain Christ as head of their life. They heard the call to overcome. And they responded.

They learned the value of the blood of Jesus. They experience Christ daily in their lives. Maintaining a fresh testimony.

They are willing to lay down their life for the life of Christ and the brethren. They have a love song in their heart. From deep experiences with the Lord.

They are not only the called. But they are faithful. And they were chosen.

Revelation 3.21 says, To him who overcomes, I will give the privilege of sitting down with me on my throne as I have overcome and have sat down with my Father on His throne. Lord, we just come to You this morning. I thank You for Your Word, Lord.

I thank You for Your desire to get us all ready for Your soon return. And Lord, that You are willing to speak to us and to share Your heart with us. Lord, that's a great thing.

Lord, we just want to have a response by Your grace. We look to Your grace, Lord, that we might respond.  
Lord, I pray that our eyes will be turned back on Jesus.

When we see You, Lord, then we are drawn back to the place we should be. Lord, we just pray now that  
You'll bless the Word. Lord, that You'll make real to each of our hearts what is needed.

And Lord, may You gain fruit. We pray, Lord, that You will gain overcomers. In Jesus' name, amen.

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