

# Message 11 in the Series: Just So You Know

## Message: *The Christian's Playbook*

Text: 1 John 4:1-21

Each day is a day of victory in the life of every child of God. This is true whether it be a great day, a mundane day, or even a trying day. How is that? Because every day, the child of God enjoys freedom in Jesus Christ.

Remember, when you were without Christ, you were without freedom. Sin reigned over you. "At which time, you lived without God and you lived without hope, but now you are citizens of God's kingdom, and members of His family." (*Paraphrasing Paul's words to the Ephesian church*)

So, Stand and declare your victory! Celebrate Jesus Christ as your champion. His love has set you free! (this is not positive thinking – this is truth)

However, take caution. There is a spirit at work contending for our victory in Christ. In John's first epistle, he describes a contest of sorts that is spiritual in nature. Regarding this contest, he speaks of the timing of its occurrence. It is taking place in the "last hour." He also introduces to us the opponents and he identifies who the contenders are. They are the spirit of the antichrist and the Spirit of God. However, to John, the victor is undisputable.

Throughout John's epistle, one thing is clear, there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ. John states, "He who has the Son has the life, and he who does not have the Son does not have the life."

Introductions.

I. At this time, I would like to introduce you to Jesus Christ.

He alone -

- defeated death, hell, and the grave.
- He has become to us, our savior, for He has saved us, His people, from our sins.
- Through Him, we have peace with God.
- Born of a virgin, Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God.
- He was the word made flesh
  - This is not the "word" which the Greeks thought of as the essence of creation, this is the "Word" who is the creator.
- He was God and He was man.
- He was the perfect lamb of God
  - a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world. Your sin and my sin were placed upon Him, who knew no sin, yet He offered His life for our atonement and redemption.

This is Jesus Christ whose Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God dwells within us - the child of God and the church.

We are also introduced, by John, to Christ's opponent, the antichrist, whose spirit is in the world. *Antíchristos* is to be distinguished from *pseudóchristos*, or a false Christ.

Antichrist is he who opposes the Messiah and takes his stand against Him. He seeks to take His place, especially, upon the throne of a man's heart. This is the meaning of his title.

The spirit of the antichrist is currently at work through false prophets. False prophets who seek to replace the truth which is from the beginning with “another gospel.”

“Other gospels” may still have a form of godliness, but they deny the power of Jesus Christ!

If Jesus Christ was not God in the flesh, then He was just a man who died on a cross, and I’m still under condemnation.

If He was not God, then He couldn’t have rose from the dead. “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith,” **(1 Corinthians 15:14)**.

### The Contest: Truth vs. Deception

It is into this contest of truth vs. deception that John, who is an eyewitness to Jesus Christ, speaks with authority.

**1 John 4:1-4** <sup>(1)</sup> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>(2)</sup> This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>(3)</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. <sup>(4)</sup> You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Repeat after me, “Greater is He who is in me, than he that is in the world!” Amen!

This should be our mantra - our victory song in every one of our battles. Christ is the reigning champion, and so are we if He is allowed to reign in our hearts.

In the verses that follow, John discloses to us The Christian’s Playbook. We are victors when we Confess Christ, when we live like Christ, and when we love like Christ.

#### 1. Confess Christ

What greater honor can we hold than to stake claim in knowing Jesus Christ. What the world thinks of Him has no bearing on our thoughts toward Him, because we possess a firsthand knowledge of Him.

Like John, we have heard, we have seen, and we have been touched by the Word of Life— Jesus Christ.

**1 John 4:13-16** <sup>(13)</sup> By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. <sup>(14)</sup> We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>(15)</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>(16)</sup> We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

His Spirit witnesses with our spirit. We know His salvation through what He has done in our own life. No one can make us doubt Him; for we have personally experienced His life, His power, and His love.

How or why would we deny Him or fail to confess Him.

Confess > to acknowledge; to align with; to acknowledge in honor of.

We are overcomers by the word of our testimony. Our testimony is powerful because it is supported by the life we live. We live like Christ lived.

## 2. Live Like Christ

The gospels are a gift to us through the eyewitness account of Jesus' life. Not only did he reveal God's righteousness through what He taught, but even more so by the way He lived. He was the express image of His heavenly Father; to see Christ is to see the Father.

**1 John 4:17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

When Jesus was tempted, He remained faithful to the word of God reciting, "It is written." When He was mistreated, He did not retaliate. He took time to serve others, to help others shunned or looked over by society. He forgave those who hurt them the most. In every situation, he done the will of the Father, regardless of the consequences.

Jesus never showed any individual anything less than love. Not just any love, but the love of God. His birth, life, and death were predicated on love.

Never do we resemble our savior more than when we show love to others. Not merely to the people who are good to us, but, like Him, even to our enemies. And if to our enemies, how much more to our brother and sisters in Christ. We need only to remember the love and grace shown to us.

Love never fails. We overcome when we love like Christ loved.

## 3. Love Like Christ.

**1 John 4:19-21** <sup>(19)</sup> We love, because He first loved us. <sup>(20)</sup> 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. <sup>(21)</sup> And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

The capacity we have to love others lends itself as an indicator of our love for God.

No matter the situation, love never fails. To love like Christ, one must fully consider the worth of every individual's soul. Jesus valued the soul worth the giving of His life.

Life presents us with diverse situations. We wrestle at times with hard choices. We must be very cautious as to the spirit(s) we allow to influence our actions.

As God's children, we must be led by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Christ.

Confessing Christ, living like Christ, and loving others the way Christ has loved us, is the Christian's strategy for victory.

Doing these things empowers us with the witness of God's Spirit being with us and in us. We have blessed assurance and confidence before God. As John would say, "Just So You Know you have eternal life."