

SUMMER OF LOVE

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

1 John 5.4-12
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I. Connecting With One Another

Who have been the most influential people in your life? How did they shape you into the person you are today?

II. Introduction to this Series and Study

As we near the end of our study of 1 John we see John continuing to encourage his readers to remain faithful to Jesus whom he and others had seen, heard, learned of, and touched. John is also trying to instill confidence in Jesus for those who are part of the faith community. That confidence was been challenged by some who taught that Jesus was not fully human and that he really didn't die on the cross of Calvary.

The conviction the Jesus was The Lord was shaken by the authorities and powers of Rome and their demand that the emperor be worshipped as a divine Lord and Conquering hero. To make matters worse, the culture was opposed to those who did not go along with Roman nationalism - those who didn't became the scapegoats for the growing ills of first century Roman society.

John returns to a familiar theme: the right view of Jesus really matters. Through trusting in him one overcomes (or conquers) the world. Jesus is the true life-giver.

III. Study the Text

- Read through 1 John 5.4-12. What are the most repeated words and phrases in this passage? Are there any words that you would like to understand more fully?
- Let's focus on 1 John 5.4-5. We have seen John's reference to "the world" before. Look at the following passages from the Gospel of John. How do they describe the "world"? How do they help you understand the "world" John is referring to in verses 4 and 5?

John 1.2 _____

John 1.10 _____

John 3.16 _____

John 12.30-32 _____

John 18.36-37 _____

- What is the key to overcoming the "world", that is, the godless attitudes, standards, and actions in human culture, and the forces and authorities that are estranged from God? Put this into today's context. How is ours a "worldly" culture?
- Looking at 1 John 5.6-9. We have seen that an influential group within the Christian community was teaching that Jesus only seemed to be human (docetism) but was not really human. Some even denied that Jesus could have died since he was not fully human. Further, Greek mythology held that some deities had "ichor", a watery substance, instead of blood, in their veins. How does the Spirit testify to Jesus (see John 1.29-34)?

What is significant about Jesus "who came by water" (a reference to Jesus' baptism and possibly to his human birth)?

To what does his blood testify (see John 19.33-35)?

How does John's description of Jesus in verses 6 through 9 refute the claims of these teachers?

- e. Now take a look at 1 John 5.10. John uses the phrase "Son of God" in reference to Jesus. Once again, take a look at the following verses to gain insight into the meaning of this phrase:

John 5.16-21 _____

John 10.25-37 _____

John 11.26-28 _____

John 19.6-8 _____

John 20.30-31 _____

What does the title "Son of God" signify?

Bear in mind this phrase is a title describing the intimate filial relationship between God the father and God the Son. This relationship is between equals, two persons within the Being of God.

- f. Now let's turn to 1 John 5.11-12. This is the testimony. This is what God has made known. God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. Read John 10.10. How does this verse expand your definition of "life"?

John's "couplet" stating the affirmative and the negative has to do with his wanting to be emphatic: Life and the Son go together. It is impossible to have one without the other. Read John 14.1-7. How do you understand Jesus' claim to be the only way to God?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. Take some time to evaluate your life and faith. Are there ways in which your view of God, your priorities, your attitudes and behavior are being negatively shaped by the "godless standards" of our culture? Do you recognize how our media and other influencers are shaping you? What can you do to overcome these aspects of "the world?"
- b. How are you encouraged by knowing that through your faith in Jesus you have overcome/ conquered the forces that stand opposed to you and to God? How does it impact you personally to know that through Jesus death has been overcome/conquered?
- c. What are some ways you can help other people experience life filled with abundant joy, peace, hope, and certainty of eternal existence through trusting in Jesus?

V. Spend some time in prayer:

- a. Pray for yourself to be aware of ways you are being impacted by our culture and by forces that are opposed to God. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, to transform your mind, and to give you perspectives and convictions that are consistent with the Lordship of Jesus.
- b. Please pray for the Good Shepherd congregation, our Elders who lead the congregation, and all that we do as a congregation so that we can be God's means of showing our community - our friends, neighbors, co-workers - who Jesus is, what he is like, and that he gives us abundant (and everlasting) life.