

1st John 5:1-6

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, 4 for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 5 Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 6 This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth (NRSV).

Today we finish a series on 1st John, you may be starting to get tired of the love theme that is emphasized by John. However, it is emphasized because of the theological significance of the teachings of Jesus. We are to love people not money. The train of logic is like this...we are Christians – we are all about Jesus and Jesus is all about God and God is all about love. Any love you may have for God you are to have for humanity. Multiple biblical lessons connect God’s love for us and our love others. Love is the very essence of God’s being. We are children of God; we have God’s likeness, character, and God’s DNA. We are to be beings of love because God is a being of love.

Title is “Faith Conquers the World” but the how is through love. Faith conquers the world through love. Currently the world is full of stress. Inflation is due to the virus but it is always founded upon greed. The virus could be linked to biological warfare. America is under the threat of terrorism. Political polarization is due to foreign manipulation. The world is constantly at war somewhere. My personal theological theory is that nobody has a solution to the stress and that is because the answer comes from God and people are not following God’s love. God sent us Jesus to follow him and we claim to be with Jesus but we fail to follow the path he set before us.

Throughout history the Holy Land has been controlled by various political entities and has hosted a wide variety of ethnic groups. The Promised Land has been conquered by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome. Each of these contributed to Jewish Diaspora – the dispersion of Israelites out of their ancient ancestral homeland and settlement in other parts of the globe. Then there comes further war, invasion, the Crusades, Mongols, and for centuries under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. With the Promised Land being unavailable to the people God gave it to.

Zionism started 127 years ago due to the necessity of finding a home for the Jews who have scattered throughout the world for survival but face hostility, rejection, and oppression. After World War I the massive Ottoman Empire was divided up by the winners and the League of Nations established Mandatory Palestine. After World War II ended, Israel was re-established as a nation in the Promised Land. I do emphasize word re-established because it has always been Israel since the biblical conquest of Canaan. The current Israel-Palestine conflict has been unresolved and ongoing for centuries because human beings are unable to resolve the problem.

The primary Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) all know that the land is given by God for the Jews. The land they are fighting over has been pledged to Israel by God. People cannot solve the human made problem without looking to God. The answer comes from God. The Israel conflict is biblical. It is the same problem with

the same solution, over and over and over again, the result of the children of God failing to follow the will of God. In Acts chapter five, when the apostles are being persecuted, the Sanhedrin (the elders of Israel) was deciding what to do with them. Peter has the correct response that we all should make the rule of our lives “We must obey God rather than human beings.” A law teacher named Gamaliel addressed the Sanhedrin with keen theological insight that if what they are doing is from God they will not be able to stop them. That is the answer to the current Israel-Palestine conflict. Modern protests are focused on what is going on now without considering either the historical or theological significance. There is no home for the Jews other than the one that God promised. The Jews are attacked repeatedly both in their homeland and outside of their homeland. This does not happen to other people. The Jews continue to be victimized because people continue to run interference with the will of God.

Faith conquers the world is a complex concept. John links two commands; to believe and to love. You cannot be a person of faith and love God but have no love for God’s children. Love is our response to faith. We do not respond because we are supposed to, we respond to love. Evidence of your relationship as a child of God is seen through our love for others.

The 12 step addiction recovery program recognizes a power greater than ourselves and the participants are to turn their lives over to God. It recognizes that we make a mess of things on our own and need God to save us. The main thing to understand is that all wars, human destruction, crime, and evil are all avoided if the children of the God of Abraham would simply obey their God instead of fighting each other for the same resources. We, the Christians, need to lead the world in recognizing the love of God. My message to the world is, we need to lead the world in peace, and you will not be right with God if you do not have the love of God in your heart.