

## **Faith That Overcomes!**

Samuel Schuurman

Is there a **doctor** in the house??

A **medical physician** that is??

It's alright, take a deep breath, I'm not asking because we are in need of one right now in the service.

**No one has collapsed**, that I know of.

I'm just curious.

Has anyone heard of **Imhotep**?

**Imhotep . . .**

What is **Imhotep**? Sounds like the latest model of car put out by Hyundai.

Entourage

Santa Fe

Azera

Elantra

**Imhotep!**

No, the question is **WHO** is Imhotep?

Imhotep is the first physician in history known by name.

He was an **Egyptian physician**.

How about **Hippocrates**?

Have you heard of **Hippocrates**, considered the '**Father of Medicine**'?

Hippocrates laid the foundation for a **rational approach** to medicine.

Hippocrates was the first person to categorize illness as **acute, chronic, endemic** and **epidemic**.

Then there is a Persian man by the name of Avicenna (at least that is his Latinized name). This guy built on the works of Imhotep and Hippocrates, and wrote one of the most famous books in the history of medicine:

## **The Canon of Medicine!**

This book, completed in 1025 was considered a **medical authority** right up until the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

But medical science has grown in **quantum** leaps and bounds since then.

**Biomedical Research** eventually began to replace early Western traditions based on herbalism.

Discoveries were made like the **smallpox vaccine** in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, or **antibiotics** around 1900.

Nowadays it is simply **astounding** what medical science can do.

I saw on the news just the other day, the first ever lady to have had a successful **voice box** transplant.

**INCREDIBLE!**

I bet you're wondering whether she still had her own voice. Or whether she took the voice of the person whose voice box she received.

The reporter sharing the story wondered the same thing.

**She retained her own voice.**

Rachel and I often enjoy watching those documentaries on amazing medical feats, such as the separating of **conjoint twins**.

Or **extreme makeover**, where '**beast**' is transformed into '**beauty**,' mostly through the medical practice of plastic surgery.

How well off are we, particularly in this Western nation, that we have such wonderful medical care?!

We take a trip to the doctors, explain what we are feeling, pop a few pills, and a few days later, we are **right as rain; good as gold; sweet as . . . sweets (lollies)?**

Medical science is managing to **prolong** our life span.

**We simply live longer!**

It's amazing stuff!

You know some people say that we don't see the same miracles in our Western world because medical science can do a lot of it for us.

*That God heals through medical science instead.*

I think there is some truth to that.

How long will the breakthroughs continue?  
 Where will medical science take us in the future?  
 What other diseases will they manage to **overcome**?

I was reading a blog on the internet titled:

**'Modern Medical Breakthroughs.'**

The introduction goes like this:

*'The medical breakthroughs of today are truly incredible, and everyday another one occurs. On their Health and Fitness page, MSN.com outlines today's top 10 "Ingenious Medical Treatments," and a quick glance at these miracle procedures really helps to give a positive outlook on medical successes of the future. **With doctors, surgeons and specialists like these around, the health of our future seems super-promising.***

Ah yes, the future of medical science is indeed **bright**.

But how bright?

**IS IT ENOUGH?**

Will medical science ever be able to completely **OVERCOME** the **sickness' that riddle our bodies?**

Will medical science ever be able to **OVERCOME** the **pain and brokenness in our hearts and in our relationships?**

Will medical science ever be able to **OVERCOME** **poverty and destruction in our world?**

Will medical science ever be able to **OVERCOME** the inevitable:

**DEATH!**

**Will medical science OVERCOME THIS WORLD?**

Maybe **William H. Gates will OVERCOME THIS WORLD?**

Know him?

Heard of him?

Most know him as **Bill Gates**.

How about **Andrew Carnegie?**

Or **John Rockefeller?**

**Joseph Rowntree?**

**Alice Marriott?**

What do these people have in common?

They are all famous **Philanthropists**.

Here are a few you won't have heard of:

**Timothy Hwang and Minsoo Han:**

*'In 2007, Timothy Hwang and Minsoo Han started Operation Fly, when they were only 14 years old. Their non-profit business offers cut-rate tutoring services to inner city students, and then uses the revenues to distribute blankets, clothing and soap to Washington DC's homeless. Their organization has since spread to five cities, involves over 800 volunteers and is entirely student-run. For his efforts, Ernst & Young and Junior Achievement named Timothy Hwang the 2009 Youth Entrepreneur of the Year for the Greater Washington Region.'*

**Phoebe Russell:**

*'5-year-old Phoebe Russell needed to complete a community service project before she could graduate from kindergarten. Uninterested in a lemonade stand, she saw a homeless man begging for food and decided to raise \$1,000 for the San Francisco Food Bank. Her teacher tried to lower expectations to something more reasonable, but Phoebe's heartwarming appeal to leave soda cans and donations at the school snowballed. Before she knew it, Phoebe had raised \$3,736.30 – the equivalent of 17,800 heated meals.'*

How about this amazing guy,

**Harry Moseley:**

*'Harry Moseley is a nine-year-old from Sheldon, Birmingham, UK. He lives with an inoperable brain tumor, but this hasn't stopped him from making and selling beaded bracelets for Brain Tumor UK. His bracelets are now available in over 30 shops across Britain, and so far he's raised over £15,000.'*

*'Harry also gives PowerPoint presentations to school kids, and encourages them to set up bracelet making clubs. Harry's system gives 15p from every bracelet sold to the kids' school and the rest goes to Brain Tumor UK. Harry started his fundraising efforts after an elderly friend in the hospital bed next to him died from their shared condition.'*

*'When presented with the 2010 'Britain's Kindest Kid' award, reports say Harry was "speechless" and "gob-smacked". He plans to give £200 each to his brother and sister and spend the rest on a wooden playhouse in the garden where he can make bracelets. He dedicated his prize to his late friend Robert Harley.'*

**Aren't these simply inspiring stories!!!**

**People** who are helping **people**.

People who are making a difference in this world with their **good deeds**.

And it's not just **individual** people doing it.

What about all the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)?

All the private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.

**ChildFund**

**Save the Children**

**TEAR Fund**

And it would be a crime not to mention **World Vision!** (Is Peter McNee in the house?)

These groups of people are making a positive difference in our world.

They are working to **OVERCOME poverty**,

They are working to **OVERCOME child abuse**,

They are working to **OVERCOME oppression**.

And they are doing a **wonderful job** indeed!!

**BUT IS IT ENOUGH?**

Will philanthropy ever be able to completely **OVERCOME** the **sickness' that riddle our bodies?**

Will philanthropy ever be able to **OVERCOME** the **pain and brokenness in our hearts and in our relationships?**

Will philanthropy ever be able to **OVERCOME poverty and destruction in our world?**

Will philanthropy ever be able to **OVERCOME** the inevitable:

**DEATH!**

**Will philanthropy OVERCOME THIS WORLD?**

**Perhaps the answer is in the mighty GREENBACK!**

The **Dollar**,

The **Yen**,

The **Euro**,

The **Pound**,

The **Rupee**,

The **Shekel**,

The **Won**, or best of all

**The RUFYAA!!**

Any ideas where that currency is used?

The Maldives.

Perhaps money is the solution to our problems?

Perhaps we just need to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor?

Have you been listening to the recent media attention on this issue?

The *Sunday Star Times* survey conducted by Horizon Research shows that the gap between the '**haves**' and the '**not-haves**', within New Zealand, is frothing over into **resentment, anger and disillusionment.**

The **POOR** complain about the government giving tax breaks to the **RICH.**

While the **RICH** complain that the **POOR** are a drain on the country's resources.

*'According to social researchers, the size of the gap between rich and poor can lead to a welter of other societal problems.'*

Some author's argue that almost all of developed society's problems – such as **reduced life expectancy,**  
**child mortality,**  
**drugs,**

**crime,**  
**homicide rates,**  
**mental illness,**  
 and **obesity** – have a single root cause:

## **INEQUALITY!**

And apparently New Zealand has **greater inequality** than most countries.

We rank **6<sup>th</sup>** on the list!!

Apparently New Zealand is not the **egalitarian society** it thought it was!

“If only the poor had more money, then we would all be happier!”

**“Tithe more!”**

**“Give more money!”**

**“The reason the church isn’t growing in converts is because we don’t have enough money to fund our ministries.”**

**“Give to the church, and you will receive a blessing in return far bigger and better than that which you gave!”**

This is the message our churches are proclaiming.

With **money** we can make a difference.

With **better money sense** we can fix our problems.

There is definitely **some** truth in these statements.

Organisations like **Christians Against Poverty**, known as **CAP**, are doing very significant work.

For those who haven’t heard of CAP it is an international debt counselling charity that works through centres based in local churches. It works to get clients debt free, achieving this through the provision of a wide range of specialised services, banking systems, personal support and ongoing education.

CAP has a high rate of success. It offers hope and a solution to many people in debt.

This is a good thing. Money is a good thing.

With **Money** we can do **soooo much**.

We can achieve many wonderful things.

We can help many people.

### **BUT IS IT ENOUGH?**

With enough money could we completely **OVERCOME** the **sickness' that riddle our bodies?**

With enough money could we **OVERCOME** the **pain and brokenness in our hearts and in our relationships?**

With enough money could we **OVERCOME** **poverty and destruction in our world?**

With enough money could we **OVERCOME** the inevitable:

**DEATH!**

**Will enough money OVERCOME THIS WORLD?**

**Medical Science just doesn't cut it,**

**Philanthropy just doesn't cut it,**

**Money just does not cut it,**

Though each of these things can be **wonderful** agents of positive change in our society, they are **SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH!**

There is only one thing great enough to **overcome this world.**

John reveals it in today's text: We are up to *1 John Chapter 5:1-5* in the series.

***Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.***

Last week Nigel did a fantastic job working through this idea of Love that John frequently raises in this book.

Love for **God**, and

Love for **one another**.

Three times now we have looked into this idea of biblical love. And this is highlighted again in this section of text, at least in the first 3 verses. I do not want to address this point again; instead I want to focus largely on the remaining two *verses*, 4 and 5.

### **Overcoming the world!**

The words '**overcome the world**' appear three times, in consecutive sentences, but each looking at a different angle.

1. ***Everyone who is born of God 'overcomes the world.'***
2. ***This is the victory that has 'overcome the world,' even our faith.***
3. ***Who is it that 'overcomes the world?' Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.***

Who is born of God? John tells us this in the first verse: ***Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God***. So essentially points 1 and 3 are the same.

In fact all three points are essentially saying the same thing:

**IT IS OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD!!**

**It is FAITH that OVERCOMES.**

**FAITH**

**OVERCOMES**

**THE WORLD!**

**FAITH IN JESUS!**

Why?

Because Jesus Himself overcame the world. He tells us this directly in *John 16:33*:

***"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."***

Friends, **Jesus Christ has OVERCOME THE WORLD!!!!**

Jesus Christ has defeated **our enemy**.

Jesus Christ has defeated **death**.

Jesus Christ has defeated **sickness**.

He did all this when he came to earth 2000 years ago!

He did all this when he walked this earth in person!

He did all this when he died on the cross and rose again after three days!

Jesus Christ is **victorious in all things!!!!**

**We can be too if we have FAITH IN HIM!!!!**

*Whooaoaooo Nelly . . . slow the train down . . . back the truck up!*

He who has faith in Jesus overcomes this world??

Is this really our experience in this life?

Most of us here have **faith in Jesus**, but I bet that most of us here wouldn't be too quick to put our hands up and say that we have '**overcome the world.**'

**What on earth is John getting at then?**

What are we to take from this then?

I believe there are two ways in which we can interpret this. The first is easy and makes sense. The second is trickier.

The first way is **ESCHATOLOGICAL!**

Yummmm . . . don't you love big fat theological terms!

Eschatology is essentially the theology concerning the future, the end times, the things yet to come, life after death, etc.

In a very real way our faith has overcome the world, in that we are no longer subject to the power of death.

By the grace of God, our faith in Jesus has granted us Salvation; has granted us eternal life.

We know Jesus will return to earth again, and we know we will live with Him forever. Because Jesus overcame death, in a very real way we too overcome death.

This is **good news** church. This is **VERY GOOD NEWS!**

**Let us eagerly anticipate our Saviour's imminent return!**

Now if the first way of interpreting this text is **regarding the FUTURE**, the second way is **regarding the PRESENT**. And this is trickier.

But before we can understand what it is to overcome the world in the **present**, we must align ourselves with a biblical understanding of the word:

**OVERCOME.**

Once again, Jesus is our ultimate example. Naturally because he is the only one who has ***overcome the world!***

What did he mean when he said this?

What did he mean when he said ***he had overcome the world?***

Did he mean that he didn't suffer?

**No**, we know he suffered greatly while he was here on earth.

Did he mean that he wouldn't experience pain of any kind?

**No**, we know Jesus experienced one of the most painful deaths possible.

Did he mean that he wouldn't encounter any difficulty or persecution or temptation or heartache?

**No**, the Gospels are full of examples of Jesus experiencing these things.

So what did he mean?

What was it to **overcome**?

For Jesus, to overcome was to embrace His suffering, rise above His situation and complete the will of his Father!

**For Jesus, to overcome was to embrace His suffering, rise above His situation and complete the will of his Father!**

The **Victory** was the completed will of God, regardless of the circumstances.

**This is what it is to overcome.**

So what John is saying is that if we keep our faith in Jesus, then we will overcome this world, that God's will in and for our lives **will succeed, REGARDLESS!**

**IT IS OUR FAITH THAT OVERCOMES; BECAUSE JESUS HAS OVERCOME!**

Church, it is not the absence of pain that reveals Christ's victory,  
it is not the absence of sickness,  
it is not the absence of suffering,

**It is the fulfilment of God's will regardless of all these things.**

Though we can and sometimes do experience **healing, freedom** and **deliverance** from all of these things, it will not always be the case.

This is a theological tension that we must live with.

That the Kingdom of God **has come**;  
But the Kingdom of God **is still to come**.

It's called the '**already, but not quite yet**' principle.

However, we can still take comfort in John's words.

**We can take strength and comfort from knowing God's presence is with us always,**  
**We can take strength and comfort from knowing that He has experienced all that we do . . . and some!**

Church, whatever problems we face in the future,  
    whatever difficulties come our way,  
    whatever challenges arise,  
    **whatever** the enemy throws at us,  
if we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and our hearts full of faith,

**WE           WILL           OVERCOME!**

Because **Jesus** has **overcome the world!**

Friends, let us hold onto

**FAITH THAT OVERCOMES!**

**Pray.**