

JESUS CHRIST, OUR ADVOCATE AND OUR PROPITIATION

1 John 2:1-2

Intro: The primary way to learn how delightful and profitable this epistle of 1 John is, is by reading it, reading it over and over, each time praying that the Lord will enable you to understand it, to believe it, and to obey it. We can hear others teach it. We can read what others have written about it, but nothing will produce the joy and the blessing like reading it for yourself. You may not be impressed with it the first few times that you read it. It may not grip your heart like you know it has gripped the hearts of others. But if you keep reading it, you will understand why the Apostle John said in verse 4 of the first chapter, “And these things write we unto you, that our joy [which seems to be the best reading] may be full.” It is also true that the Apostle John wrote that the joy of his readers might be full. But the epistle brings joy to us first in reading and rereading it, and then our joy is increased in passing on the truths of this epistle to others, that is, to others who know the Lord and want to know more about this amazing fellowship with our heavenly Father, and with His Son, our Savior, “His Son, Jesus Christ.” The Apostle John wants us to know that the Christian life is a life of fellowship “with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” See verses 3 and 4 of chapter 1.

And let us remember as we read this epistle that it was written by one who was personally acquainted with the Son of God. He saw the Lord over and over again. He heard Him teach. He had touched Him. And he fully realized that this wonderful Person about whom he was writing was indeed the Son of God in human flesh.

So the Apostle John began his epistle by pointing us to Christ and to the heavenly Father, and we are to keep our eyes upon Them as we move from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter. And the fellowship which the Apostle John enjoyed with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Father, while the Lord was here on earth, was a fellowship that deepened and ripened and became more enjoyable through the years that that fellowship had continued after the Lord went back to heaven.

Remember that the word “fellowship” means much more than simply describing a relationship that we have with the Father and the Son, but it means that we actually share in all that they are. Fellowship means that

we actually participate in all that they are, the goal being that we become more and more like the Lord Jesus. I hope that you marvel even at the possibility of such a relationship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

After introducing this idea of fellowship, the Apostle John reminds us that our fellowship with the Father and with Jesus Christ is based upon what God is, not upon what we are. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” This means that God is holy, God is righteous, and there is no sin in Him – none whatsoever. God not only has never sinned, but He is incapable of sin. When Jesus Christ became a Man, He did not become a sinner. As one of our memory verses teaches us, God is “glorious in holiness” (Ex. 15:11). And the same is true of Christ. The Apostle John called the Lord Jesus in the first verse of our text for this morning, “Jesus Christ the righteous.” This means, since we are all sinners, having been born in sin, and having been guilty of sin on countless occasions, *that the big problem in our fellowship with God, is sin*. The Apostle John made that clear in the last five verses of chapter 1.

In verses 6, 8, and 10 the Apostle John expressed three ideas about sin that were commonly expressed in that day more than 2,000 years ago, and people, some people, continue to say that same things about sin today.

Notice in verses 6, 8, and 10 you have in all three verses, “If we say that, we . . .” So he was talking about people who profess to be saved. “If we say . . .”

Some say, according to verse 6, that you can be a child of God and still go on living in sin. John said, because this subject is so extremely important, that such a person is lying and is not living according to the truth, which is the Word of God. And anyone who reads the Bible knows that such a person is a liar.

In verse 8 John says that there are people who claim to be Christians who say that since being saved they do not sin anymore, that they are incapable of sin. “Sin” is in the singular, and probably refers to our sin nature. Again, the Apostle John is very strong in his response to such people. He says that they are self-deceived, and the truth is not in them. This means that he questions their claim to be saved. To say the least, they are guilty of pride, and always even more sins than that.

And then moving on to verse 10, there are people who claim to be Christians who deny that there is such a thing as sin. I knew a Methodist preacher years ago who hated anyone who talked about sin and claimed that there is no such a thing as sin. John says that he is a liar because there is sin, and “all have sinned.” That is the reason Christ came, “to save sinners.”!

On the other hand, we have verses 7 and 9. In verse 7 we learn that a true Christian walks in the light where God is. He walks with God. He walks with Christ. He lives according to the Word of God. But he is still capable of sin. It grieves him, but he has to admit that his life is not perfect. And yet he knows that in Christ, because of His sacrifice on Calvary’s Cross, there is continual cleansing “from all sin,” that is, *all kinds of sin*.

And so when he ties this with verse 9. If we confess our sin to God, that is, we say the same thing about our sin that God does, God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Notice “all sin” in verse 7; here, “all unrighteousness.” It is the character of God which determines what sin is.

Now as we come to chapter 2, verse 1, we see that the Apostle John says again *why he wrote this epistle*. But those of you who were here when I brought my first message in this series on this first epistle of John, might say to me that I said at that time that it is in chapter 5, verse 13, that the Apostle John said why he wrote the epistle. (Repeat 5:13.) Well, I stand by what I said then. He wrote to believers that they might know that they had eternal life. But, you see, chapter 2, verse 1, fits right in with that objective. A true Christian is not going to believe the ideas expressed in verses 6, 8, and 10 regarding sin. *Instead, he is going to do everything that he can to keep from sinning.*

So let me give this heading to the first part of 1 John 2:1:

I. A TRUE CHRISTIAN’S ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN (1 John 2:1a).

Note the tenderness with which the Apostle John addressed the true people of God: “My little children.” See these words again in 2:12, 13, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21. It is a term of endearment, and recognizes that they were in the family of God *by birth, the new birth!* To be born into

the family of God is a permanent relationship. We were all born into the family of our parents, and nothing can change that relationship. It is true also of God's family. There is no such thing as being *unborn* when once you have been *born*.

But we are not born sinless. We can still sin, but we do not have to sin. Probably a better translation of the word, "that ye sin not," would be, *that ye may not sin. The idea at this point is that you can, but you do not have to sin.* We will learn more about this as we go on in the epistle. A child of God *can, is able to, sin, but it is the will of God that he not sin.*

We need to get this truth firmly fixed in our minds. The Apostle John did not say that if you sin, you will lose your salvation and cannot get it back again. Nor did he say that if you sin, it means that you were never really saved. But he went on to say:

II. WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW WHEN WE DO SIN (1 John 2:1b-2).

The Greek text does not say, "If any man sin," but *if anyone sins.* So this means any man, any woman, any young person, any boy, any girl. Whoever it is who sins, there is something very important which he or she needs to know. He needs to know what he or she *has!* *It makes no difference how long a person has been saved, a long time or a short time. It makes no difference how devout the sinning Christian has been, or how much good he has done, or not done. If he knows the Lord, he needs to know that he has "an advocate with the Father."*

An advocate is one who stands by your side to help you. I heard a discussion on the radio about some people who might be involved in a crime, and one person said about these people that they had better get the best possible lawyer they could get. That is the idea here. But we don't have to get an advocate; *we have One! And He will speak before the Father, the Judge of all the earth, in our defense!*

Notice that if a believer sins, he or she needs "an advocate with the Father." Why, the Father? Because all sin is primarily against God. Sin is a crime against God. When King David was confessing his sins of adultery and murder, he said this in speaking to God as he confessed his sin: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight" (Psa. 51:4a). Of course, David had sinned against Bathsheba. And

of course he had sinned against her husband, Uriah. And his sins, since he was the King, had been against the whole nation. But primarily his sin was against God. This is always the case. Regardless of what the sin is, all sin is primarily against God. Sinners always have to deal with God whether they like it or not. Now unbelievers do not have an advocate, *but we do! And the Apostle John named Him. He is "Jesus Christ the Righteous."*

Does the Lord Jesus try to convince God that our sin is not sin? No! God knows that we have sinned. The Lord Jesus knows that we have sinned. And we know that we have sinned. What kind of an appeal then does the Lord make for me, or for you, when we have sinned. He pleads the merit of His own blood which He shed for us, covering all of our sins – past, present, and even future. Actually when Christ died on the Cross, all of our sins were future! And notice that when God charged Christ with our sins, He put them away by His death on the Cross, fully atoning for all of our sins, and the evidence that our sins are gone, is that our Lord is called, "Jesus Christ the Righteous."

The word "advocate" is the familiar Greek word Paraclete. The Holy Spirit is also our Paraclete, and He is continually being called by God to be our Helper, our Advocate, our Comforter (as it is often translated in the NT). And, as we learned in 1 John 1:9, God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Faithful and Just" to whom? "Faithful and Just" to His Son.

And verse 2 of 1 John 2 goes on to explain why the Lord Jesus has never lost a case in His advocacy for the people of God when they sin. Why because "He is the propitiation for our sins." The Apostle John used this word again in chapter 4 and verse 10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Paul used this word in Romans 3:24-26:

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The writer of the book of Hebrews, speaking also of Christ, used this word in Hebrews 2:17 where unfortunately the word propitiation was translated reconciliation. However the idea of a reconciliation is in the word propitiation. But let me read this verse to you using the word *propitiation*:

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17).

Let me give you one more verse where the idea of propitiation is in the Greek text, but where it is translated, “mercy seat.” It is in Hebrews 9:5 in a section where the OT tabernacle was being discussed.

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

Perhaps the word *propitiatory* might be used, since it was on the mercy seat that blood was applied on the Day of Atonement to indicate the covering or removal or forgiveness of the nation’s sins.

What we are concerned with this word propitiation is what Christ did in His death on the Cross to satisfy the demands of a righteous God concerning the sins of those for whom our Lord died. In the last part of verse 2 the Apostle John was not saying that all people will eventually be saved. He was not even saying that Christ died for all people everywhere. But he was saying that wherever in the world people are to be saved, it is only by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. He died to satisfy God that a sufficient sacrifice was made by Christ.

Concl: It is only by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the people of God that fellowship with God is possible. And that applies to people everywhere throughout the whole world. There is only one Savior. It is only by the death of Christ that anyone can be saved. But His death also secured the salvation of all those who were chosen by God before the foundation of the world.

These verses should make us very concerned but all sin in our lives, and very grateful for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.