

Christ OUR Advocate

Studies in 1st John

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Bible Text: 1 John 2:1

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Take your Bibles with me this morning and turn to 1 John chapter two. It took long enough to get through chapter one.

When Robert was in the hospital I would go up and I would see him and he would ask me, “What did you preach on today?”

And I told him, “You know, we got to 1 John chapter one verse seven,” and it became one week it was 7a and the next Sunday it was 7b, 7c. It took four weeks to get through one verse.

But it is important for us to have a good, clear understanding of what the apostle John was bringing forth in 1 John chapter one before we move on into chapter two throughout the remainder of this chapter, because if we don’t understand what he is talking about, if we don’t understand what you and I are confessing and what we acknowledge, we put ourselves into a position where we have a lot of confusing verses we have to deal with as we go through this thing.

Now I want us to look at this morning, I have entitled this message simply, “Christ Our Advocate.” We are going to look at just one verse this morning. We are going to look at 1 John chapter two verse one.

And I love the way John starts this off. He says, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

I pray the Lord will bless his Word to our heart, to our mind and to our understanding this morning and give us an insight into what it means to you and me as justified saints to have one who is, indeed, our advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, in this verse, the opening verse of chapter two the apostle John expresses his love and concern for these believers. I love the way that he starts it.

“My little children.”

It is not like, you know, we have a lot of young children in our church and he wasn't addressing this to little children, though it has implications for all. John, when he looked at these people, John know that God is the only Father of believers by way of redemption and he is the only true heavenly Father. But as an apostle John also held that office of spiritual leadership wherein he was these folks, these little children, he was literally their guide or their counselor. He was to watch over and care for them. He cared for them. He watched over them just like a father cares for and watches over his children. That is why he says, "My little children," because as far as he was concerned he had preached the gospel there. These people had come to faith under the gospel ministry that John either through written Word or the preached Word they had come to believe the gospel. And so he had the watch care over them. And he looked over them just like a father cares for his own children.

That is important. He says, "My little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not."

Now these things here refers not to what he is about to say afterward, though that would, indeed be implied. But when he talks about these things he is talking about what he has already written about.

"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not."

So these things refers to all that John has written concerning this glorious truth that we spent nearly two months talking about, fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son."

And with who? With one another.

And he is talking about that these things, he is talking about that gospel of light.

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

He is talking about that gospel that declares the literal cleansing of sin and the confession of sin.

"These things write I unto you."

Think about what he said. Now and this is important for us to understand and if you don't get anything else this morning I hope we get this straightened out in our minds when it comes to this important epistle that we are reading. He has spent this first chapter assuring them that every person who submitted to Christ and his righteousness, every sinner who walked in the light of the true fellowship with God, he had assured them that they are totally free. Now listen to me. They are totally free from the legal guilt of sin and they are totally free from the legal defilement of sin.

He had assured them, including you and me, that the legal guilt and defilement of sin could never, ever, ever any way, shape, form or fashion be charged to them and that there was no possible way that anyone of the objects of God's love, those who are in fellowship with the Son could ever be brought back under condemnation and wrath. That is important for us to understand.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

As Paul said in Romans chapter 8 verse 38 and 39, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We can't lose our salvation. It is absolutely impossible. And see, this is the thing. He had shown them that walking in this life, this life of this truth that we are free from the guilt of sin, we are free from the defilement of sin and we are free from the penalty of sin. It involves a continual confession in the believer of the remaining—and this is what everybody gets so confused on—we have not been delivered from its presence nor its influence in our lives. We are continually accosted by that, are we not? Aren't all of us forced to confess, even those who believe the gospel and rest in Christ in the Lord their righteousness and know they have been delivered from the guilt, penalty and condemnation of sin? We are constantly forced to confess the good I want to do I don't do and the evil I don't want to do, that is exactly what I find myself doing. We find ourselves in a warfare every day that we live and we will be in that warfare until the day that we die.

And that is what we preach. That is what we declare. That is what John said. “That which we have seen, that which we have heard, that is what we declare unto you.” What? Free from the sin. Free from guilt. Free from the penalty. Free from condemnation. Delivered from all that sin requires, all that God's law requires. Set free, free, free, free indeed like our Lord said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You will be free, indeed.”

And people hear that and in our generation, you preach those glorious truths, this blessed truth that sin is not charged to the sinner. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not charge sin. And the imputation and literal legal, the judicial charging of Christ's righteousness to a believer, it is opposed to what self righteous religious men and women believe and think and want to follow. And they hear that. You talk about that to them and and bring that out and make that clear to them and one of their main objections is this. They say, “If you preach that kind of freedom, you tell sinners that there is no possibility that they can ever be condemned, that no amount of sin can ever bring them back under the condemnation of God no amount of obedience can make them any more accepted of God.” They say, “You leave the door wide open. You give a man every excuse he could ever possibly want to live like he wants to and live an open, ungodly and immoral life.”

Their argument goes something like this, that men are assured that their sins can't bring them back under the wrath of God, Richard. Then what is there to discourage them from sin? What can stop it?

They will tell you... I have been told so many times throughout the year, "The kind of preaching you do will cause men to excuse their sin and to hide behind the righteousness of Christ."

I tell you. I have been charged by so many men in so many ways, all of us have. If we stand for this truth they will say, "You don't care about how men and women live."

That is not true. That is just not.

And I tell you. When they make that kind of an argument, such arguments reveal a serious misunderstanding of the gospel and it reveals a serious misunderstanding of the grace of God.

See, what such self righteous religionists don't understand and don't actually know what they are saying, they are actually saying is that the only way to motivate sinners to obedience, the only way to get men and women to live godly lives and be diligent in their service to God is threaten them with punishment, legal threats of punishment or promise them rewards.

Our Lord Jesus Christ addressed this kind of an issue and I would encourage you to read Romans chapter five, six and seven. Listen. One of the things we have got to do, we have got to remove all legal restrains. Now we do, because our Lord said this to men who were, indeed, trying their dead level best to avoid every known sin and do every possible good. He said to them and the Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things and they derided him and he said to them, "You are they which justify yourselves before men."

In other words, you are the ones that want to prove to people that you are saved based on what you do and do not do. But God knows your heart. For that which is highly esteemed among men... And what is highly esteemed among men? Religion, morality, sincerity, dedication, commitment. Nothing wrong with any of those things. And I am telling you, all God's children are, to some degree, possessive of all those things. But the weakest, most immature child of God knows that those things don't make the difference between life and death. That which is highly esteemed among men God hates. It is an abomination in the sight of God.

I say, such evil thinking casts shame and reproach upon every attribute of God's redemptive character. And it denies the efficacy—well, that is a hard word to say—the efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and it gives the sinner room for boasting. It gives him confidence in the flesh.

I will tell you the apostle Paul says, “We are the circumcision which worship God in Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”

If Paul couldn't put any confidence in the flesh and I have got a description of what Paul's life was like. And he said, “I am not trusting in me.”

What about me? What about you?

That such legal motives are the lowest form of... in sinning and for obedience and service and can only produce obedience of a born, a legal terror and covetous, not covetousness, not the... not a love to God for all his grace and his and his gratitude and his mercy towards us.

Man by nature... now this is an important statement. Many by nature can achieve no higher obedience than this Legalism. That is it. But God in his grace brings his children into the blessed light of obedience and service born out of love and gratitude.

Now let me be very clear here because I don't want anybody to have any misconceptions about what I am saying. Now the God of all grace doesn't excuse sin. He doesn't condone sin and he doesn't ignore sin in his children. Now he doesn't.

Now don't you go out of here and say, “Well, brother Richard says God just doesn't pay any attention.”

Oh, yes he does. He commands us, does he not? He commands us to obey him in every area. And he commands us to obey him, not to obtain salvation, nor to maintain salvation or any of his blessings, but he commands us to obey him because what has he already done? He has given us all the salvation freely by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. God requires obedience from each and every one of us without any Legalism.

We don't have to have a law to make me give. All of you. You... we have all got friends in religion. They always talk about that their preacher is out there finances drop down the church what does the preacher start doing? He starts preaching to tithe, why? It is a tax, Bart. I mean that is all it is. It is just a tax.

We don't preach the tithe. The tithe was the Old Testament law. It was a legal requirement. What do we preach? Give cheerfully.

I have been with you for 23 years now. In 23 years I have never said anything about tithing. Now if the Lord lets me stand here 23 more years it ain't going to happen. What are we going to preach? The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

I have told you this for years. If you can't give it and just rejoice in the fact that God has given you the ability to give it, keep it in your pocket. We'll be all right, won't we?

Twenty–three years. Our God will supply all our needs through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now he has and you don't... that is all you have to do. If a man or a woman loves Christ and loves this gospel, folks, they will support the gospel with their time and with their effort and with their energy and with their finances. And if they don't support it with their time and their energy and their efforts and their support, they don't know it. That is just it.

You say, "Well, I don't like that."

Well, I don't care. I really don't. But that is just the way it is.

Now notice what he says here. Go on. He says, "My little children, these things write I unto you." Here is an important charge. "...that ye sin not."

Do you see that? See, and this is the thing. Before he ever starts encouraging these justified saints to not sin, what has he already told them? You have life. You have been cleansed from all your sins. He says, "My little children..." That... this is the thing. Before he ever starts talking about what we should do, he has told us who and what we are. That is the proper manner of preaching. You tell sinners who and what God has made them in Christ. Then tell them what we should do, how we should love, how we should obey, how we should reform, how we should study, how we should pray, not vice versa.

It says from this vantage point of grace, knowing that we are already saved, we are already qualified, we are already walking in the light of the gospel, been assured that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has cleansed me from all my sin that John encourages believers, justified, redeemed sinners, men and women who are as sure and certain for heaven as if they are already there, Don't sin.

I tell you, we who are in fellowship with the Father and with the Son as we walk in this light of the truth, we are to set before us as our fixed and settled purpose and goal in this life not to sin at all. That ought to be your goal, mine, too. I will not sin at all.

Our aim ought to be holiness in our character and our conduct. So much so that he says, "Let no filthy communication proceed forth out of your mouth, but that which is profitable and edifying unto the body of Christ."

Down to earth, down to the most minute detail, Bart. That ought to be our goal. And I know....

You say, "Well, preacher, you are preaching law and legal...."

No, I am not. That is what we should shoot for. The child of God doesn't say, "Well, you know, it just don't matter. I can live however I want." If you have got that kind of an attitude, you don't know him. None of us would ever be satisfied with what we accomplish if we ever accomplish anything, but I tell you what all of God's children do

want. We do want to love him. We do want to love our neighbor. We do want to glorify and honor our God and we don't want to bring contempt on the body of Christ. Do you?

The apostle Paul wrote about that in Philippians chapter three. Read it for yourself where he acknowledges even though he had attained complete salvation and he was sure and certain for heaven, he said, "I have not yet attained perfection in my character and my conduct and I have not arrived."

Paul knew that he had been justified. We do, too. He knew that he had been sanctified. He knew that he had been forgiven. He knew that he had been cleansed from all his sins, past, present and future based on the righteousness of Christ, not by any of his efforts.

He knew that God couldn't and wouldn't charge him with a legal guilt and defilement of sin but he also knew he still had to deal with the remaining presence and influence and power of it in his life every day.

And in spite of it, in spite of the fact that he knew that he could not have achieved it in this life, what did he do?

"I press toward the mark. Even though I can't get there, what do I do? I press on."

Somebody says, "Well, if you can't attain perfection in your character and your conduct in this life, why even try? If you can't do it, why even give it a shot?"

Three reasons. The first one settles it. Because God commands it. Listen to you. You say, "Well, I don't think he does."

Well, let's see what the Scriptures say.

"But as he which hath called you..." called you to what? To salvation in Christ in holiness. "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy."

If he commanded it, what should we do? Now God is holy. We know that. I think one of the things that Henry stressed to me years ago that stuck in my mind, I can still hear him read when he would boom that message of God is holy, the way he would say it, holy.

Oh, when I think about this God that you and I deal with, I always think about Isaiah and the year King Uzziah died. "I saw the Lord high and lifted up and the angels cried," what? "Holy, holy, holy," thrice holy.

Now this God is holy. This God is so holy that men went into the veil one time. God killed them for it. This God is so holy that he met his servant in the way who... one of his choice servants who had not circumcised his own child after God's command, met him in

the way and sought to kill him. This God is so holy that when he found sin charged to his Son that were not his actual sins, legally charged to Christ, God required his soul's death.

Now you tell me about holiness, how we should strive with all our might in every area of our lives to love God, to be obedient in our service, but God can't merely command us to do the best we can. God is holy and as he is holy the only thing that he can do is command holiness from us. And we have to remember when God commands us to be holy he doesn't do it in order to obtain or maintain salvation. He commands us to obey because our salvation is already complete.

Now here is the second reason, because redeemed, justified, regenerated, forgiven sinners owe God nothing less. It is our... Paul said in Romans chapter 12, "It is your reasonable service."

It is not asking... Christ gave everything for you. So it is just reasonable what should you do? That you should seek to obey.

And here is the third thing. Because in seeing the standard of that holiness, we continually see how far short we fall of that standard. Now that is not meant to lead us to doubt. I have heard people say, "Well, I know I am saved because I doubted all the time."

You better readjust your thinking. Doubting your salvation does not prove your salvation. Doubting your salvation actually proves your doubt of God's willingness in his ability and his power to do what he said he would do. You want to give God glory? Believe... remember Abraham?

"Abraham staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith giving glory to God in that what God had promised he is able to perform."

What has God promised you? This is a record.

"God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son."

Now he either has or he hasn't. Do you believe that promise?

Now here is the next thing he said. And he said, "These things write I unto you that ye sin not." I like this one. "If any man sin..." Literally "And if any man sin..."

Now I know a lot of people they say, "See? This verse really is kind of implying to you and me just in case you sin, just in case you slip up somewhere along the line."

That is not what it is implying. Literally the way this verse is written it says, "And if any man sin as every man does sin..."

You say, "Well, I don't believe that."

Well, take it in its context. What had he just said in verse 10 of chapter one?

“If we say we have no sin we make God a liar and his truth, his Word is not in us.”

Some are lost sinners and some are saved sinners. All who have Christ’s righteousness imputed to them, all who are in him by faith, when they sin, notice what he says.

“And if any man sin as men do sin, we have an advocate.” Do you see that? “We have an advocate with the Father.” And I love the way this is stated. “Jesus Christ the Righteous.”

What is an advocate? I said all that this morning to get to this one word. What is an advocate?

And advocate refers to a legal position. It refers to an office. It is an office Christ took as the representative of his people to plead their cause or their case of them. That is what... an advocate literally in the original is a paraclete. What is a paraclete? A lawyer.

Now in my life time I have never had to have lawyer. Bu I know if a lawyer, if I did have to have one what is he going to plead? He is going to plead on my behalf. He is going to represent me, right?

See, this emphasizes the fact when he thinks about that we have and advocate with the Father it emphasizes the fact that salvation first and foremost, do you know what it is? It is a matter of law and justice.

As our advocate Christ stands alongside of us, folks, and pleads our cause in the way of law and justice, and advocate is a legal office having to do with strict justice.

Do you know what the advocate wants? He wants justice. A lawyer wants justice for his client. Is that not what they want? They don’t want to sneak you buy where you might could be charged with something else. They want... They want law satisfied.

This advocate is like a lawyer who accuses... of the... who defends his client honestly and demands that law and justice bring an exact ruling and set the accused free based on strict law and strict justice. And Christ our advocate, the advocate of every justified sinner, he pleads not what the sinner does. Jesus Christ the righteous, what does he plead? He pleads everything that he did. Christ is our advocate. He pleads with a just and holy and righteous God and so his plea has to be consistent with and based upon perfect satisfaction, law and justice wherein God revealed is both a just God and a Savior and, thus, a covenant God and Father. Christ’s office of advocate is part of his mediatorial office of priesthood.

What does a priest do? A priest makes intercession by virtue of the sacrifice they offer which renders perfect satisfaction of law and justice.

As our advocate, Christ pleads strict law and strict justice based on that satisfaction that he made for us.

That is why I read for you Zechariah chapter three back in the beginning of the service this morning because Joshua is the high priest over Israel there. And he is given a vision in a dream. And if you will remember we read that just a moment ago. Satan, the adversary, the accuser of the brethren, he charges Joshua with sin.

But the charges were groundless, not because Joshua wasn't a sinner, because what did Joshua have on? Joshua was clothed in filthy rags which represents what? The sinfulness of his best efforts. He was Joshua the high priest, but what is he still covered with?

But, see, this is the thing. The charges were groundless because he had an advocate who took away those filthy rags. That is the non imputation of the guilt and defilement of his sin. And he said, "Clothe him with what?" A garment of righteousness."

Now this is the thing. Whatever Satan charges us with or whatever men charges us with or whatever even our own consciences charges us with those who walk in the light of the gospel with Christ as our advocate, what does Christ do? He answers the charges. He doesn't excuse what we have done. He doesn't ignore what we have done. He doesn't deny what we do. He doesn't encourage our sin, but because of his substitutionary sacrifice for our sin, he pleads the non imputation of our sin to us and, praise God, he pleads the imputation of his righteousness to us.

And this title, "Jesus Christ the righteous," it refers to both his person and his work. Paul put it like this. We have been studying through Hebrews. In Hebrews chapter seven verse 25 he says, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

What does all that mean to you and me? Well, it assures all of us who believe the gospel of God's love, grace and mercy and power and ability to save based on the righteousness of Christ, that God the Father conditioned all our salvation on Christ, invested him with all the power necessary as both prophet, priest and king to bring every one of the objects of his love to glory.

Now look at one last verse. Look over at Hebrews chapter seven. Turn there with me real quick, because this is what I want you to see.

He says, "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him."

Look at verse 25, the end of it. "Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us."

And then he goes on. He says, "For such an high priest became us."

In other words, it was necessary for us. The only one suited to put away our sins was who? The Lord Jesus Christ and his perfect work of salvation.

See, we who were by nature and practice idolaters and ungodly and unrighteous and guilty, condemned, we stood in need of the righteous person to be our great high priest. We needed one who could identify with us in our name and in our nature. Yet he had to be not like us in that he had to be without sin. He had to be perfect.

And here we have the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning Christ's perfect, sinless humanity which he took into union with himself to glorify and honor the Father as both a just God and a Savior.

Let me close with this this morning. We have a worthy and loving advocate who stands for us, Jesus Christ the righteous. And that describes for you and for me our benefit that we can be comforted with absolute certainty of our salvation conditioned on him knowing that even when we sin...

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin,” when we sin the comfort is this. Our sin can't be charged to us. And since they can't be charged to us, what can they not be? They can't bring us back under God's wrath.

Listen to me. They can't rob us of our position in the family. It can't happen. They can't break our fellowship.

I hear people all the time say, “Well, I broke fellowship with the Lord.”

Well, we might have been away from him, but he promised me he would never leave me nor forsake me. And here is the thing and I don't think you could close out anything with a better statement than this one. What God's holy law says of Christ and his character and his conduct...

Think about it. What God's holy law says of Christ and his character and his conduct, it says of all who are in him by imputation.

John put it like this.

“As he is, so are we in this world.”

“I know that in me, that is to say, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. But to will is present with me, but how to perform I don't have a clue. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank my God through Jesus Christ my Lord.”

We have been delivered. Thank God we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteousness.

Let's stand together and be dismissed. I appreciate your presence. The Lord bless you until we see you.