

“Sin and Certainty”

1 John 2:1-2

INTRO:

The book of 1 John is an epistle which John wrote to inform us how we can know that we know Him. The first way that we can know that we know Him is by walking in a living, growing fellowship with Him. That is what chapter one is all about. He wants us to recognize that Fellowship begins with salvation through the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, he wants us to know that our fellowship is carried out with our God who is entirely holy and without sin. That means that we must “walk in the light as He is in the light if we are to have fellowship with Him. We can only do that through the prompt confession of our sin.

Chapter two begins by underlining the rest of the story when it comes to the practical forgiveness of our sins. **1 John 2:1-2; “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”**

First, John wants us to understand, that although no believer can live a sinless life this side of glory, he is not encouraging us to sin, but rather to not sin. Second, he reminds us how secure our forgiveness is.

I. To Keep Us from Sin (v.1a)

II. The Basis of our Forgiveness (v.1b-2)

I. To Keep Us from Sin (v.1a)

- A. **“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1a).** While our Bibles have chapter division here, the Apostle John did not put one in his letter. He wrote this as one whole letter. So, when John says, **“these things,”** he is not referring to the white space between chapter one and chapter two.

1. He is referring to the promises and challenges in **Ch. 1**. We are prone because we are fallen people to find in God’s gracious provision for our sin a reasons to not take sin seriously.

2. The Apostle Paul spoke about this issue in **Romans 5:20-21**. Paul underlined that sin cannot defeat God’s grace to us, so he wrote; **“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

If when sin abounds grace super abounds, why don’t we sin all the more that God’s grace may even more abound? Why doesn’t his truth encourage us to sin? Paul’s reply to this obvious question is unambiguous. **Romans 6:1-2; “What shall we say then?**

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not [IMPOSSIBLE]! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

The change that God made in our hearts when we came to Him through faith has made this not an option.

B. God making the forgiveness for sin so easy for us does not in any way imply that sin is not serious business. That is why John emphasized that God is faithful and just to what Jesus did in forgiving out sin. Had Jesus not died was buried and resurrected from the dead, we could not be forgiven, we could not walk in fellowship with the living God.

C. So, John wrote this not to encourage us to sin, but to make us not sin. Remember that he has already said that we do sin and will sin, so we need a remedy. That remedy for sin is the subject of the rest of these verses.

II. The Basis of our Forgiveness (v.1b-2)

A. ***"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world"*** (1 John 2:1-2). In the second part of our text, John introduces the basis of our forgiveness.

B. In the first place, the Lord Jesus is our Advocate.

1. Forgiveness is not ours simply because God says, "I forgive". Forgiveness requires a cost. If we forgive, we absorb the debt owed and never ever demand payment from the one forgiven. Jesus is our advocate with the Father. He is the One who intercedes for us when we sin. He does not make up stories or point to contingencies to explain our sin. He pleads guilty for us and then offers his death as reason why we should be forgiven.

2. He is Jesus Christ the righteous and He pleads His righteousness as our defense. We deserve judgment and condemnation, but He endured that judgment and condemnation in our place. So, we can be forgiven.

3. We should flee sin because, although forgiveness requires only our faith, it cost God the enormous price of His Son dying in our place. Sin is serious because Jesus had to die so He could forgive us. Do we recognize that every sin that we confess and are forgiven cost the Lord Jesus more than we will ever know?

C. The reason that Jesus could be our advocate and God the Father could forgive us is because HE is the propitiation for our sins. ***"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world"***

1. The word translated ‘propitiation’ contains two ideas. The first is appeasement of God’s wrath. God’s righteousness is offended by our sin. He has never done anything bad to us, we have rebelled against Him. Somehow we seem to think that we are just a little bad, and do not see the real offense of our sin. Everybody is doing it is not a defense.

2. **Romans 1:18** states the reality, ***“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”*** Sin always brings wrath. Someone has to receive this righteous anger against our sin. Someone has to pay the penalty of sin. God cannot and will not forgive unless someone has born that penalty. Jesus did that.

3. He also expiated. He paid off the debt. He took our sin on Himself and died in our place. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

“He [God the Father] made Him [God the Son] who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

*What a wondrous message in God’s Word
My sins are blotted out I know.
If I trust in His redeeming blood
My sins are blotted out I know.*

4. The Apostle John returns to this reality in **Ch. 4** of this epistle to make us understand the wonder of God’s great love. (1 John 4:7–11)

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

D. So, the fact that Jesus came and died should motivate us to try to continually win against sin. We do not want to sin because the forgiving of those sins cost our Heavenly Father so much. It also should make us want to love one another because He gave up so much because He loved us first.

Do we forget the importance of God’s forgiveness? Do we often downplay that cost of forgiveness in our thoughts? Does it motivate us to avoid sin? Does it also make us quickly seek forgiveness when we sin?

Do we love others because He first loved us with a love that is greater than anything we can comprehend? Are we asking God for opportunities to take this truth to others?