

Christ Our Propitiation

Studies in 1st John

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Bible Text: 1 John 2:2a

Preached on: Sunday, November 7, 2010

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Ok. Take your Bibles with me this morning. I apologize for that little electronic glitch. That is one of the bad things about electronics. Sometimes they just mess up on you. Turn with me to 1 John 2. In the last message I preached a message to you entitled “Christ our Advocate”. Now we have to keep in mind that for us to properly understand what John is seeking to teach to these believers, as well as to you and I, and we have to have it squared away in our mind **what aspect** you and I have been released from sin. We established, I think scripturally, the fact that you and I, as far as our being under the guilt, the penalty or the condemnation and defilement of sin, it has been forever and eternally removed from everyone whom Christ represented, **all of it**. There is no possibility that anyone for whom Christ came and lived and died and rose again, (and I know this statement aggravates some people to no end). that no amount of sin that you could commit could ever bring you back under the wrath of God, nor could any amount of righteousness and morality and sincerity and dedication make you any more accepted of God. I know the self righteous religionists, they will run up the flag pole a red flag and say , “Well, that man has just said you can do whatever you want to do.” I am telling you, if you want to do whatever you want to do and you want to live however you want to live and you want to live without any regard for the revealed will by way of commandment and claim you know grace, **YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE GRACE OF GOD.**

God’s children, those of us redeemed by the blood of Christ, those of us regenerated, converted by his Holy Spirit, **we aren’t looking for a way to live like we want to live.** I dare say that every sincere blood bought, redeemed, regenerated child of God is absolutely positively miserably, (Do you hear me?) **MISERABLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THEIR OBEDIENCE.** You don’t pray like you should. You don’t give like you should. You don’t love like you should. You aren’t as faithful as you should be. And tragically you are aware of it. You know we don’t put God first in every single solitary thing. **WE WANT TO.** The good we want to do we don’t do and the evil we don’t want to do, that is exactly what we find ourselves, tragically doing. All of us continually are forced to cry, *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord we have been delivered.”*

And that is what John said. My little children, verse one, these things write I unto you that you do what? Don't sin. Don't. Do you best to avoid it. Seek to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Seek to love your neighbor as yourself every moment that you live. And if any man sin, literally, **but when you do sin, and we all do**, we have an Advocate, literally a Paraclete, or better, a Lawyer with the Father, the one who we are in fellowship with according to chapter one. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We have a Paraclete. We have one who defends on our behalf, *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. Now He is our Advocate and that is one of the things that you and I need to take to heart. We have one that ever lives to make intercession for us. **Think about what that means to you as a child of God.**

It is so important that we understand the fact that He is an Advocate because Christ's office of an Advocate is based on this thing that we are going to talk about this morning, this message that I have entitled, "**Christ our Propitiation.**" He couldn't be our Advocate if He wasn't satisfaction to God's law and justice. If He didn't do what He said He did and He wasn't who He said He was, **you and I are without hope**. If He didn't actually redeem us from our sins, if He didn't actually satisfy God's law and justice, we have a man representing us, one who can't do anything, who yet must have something done for his sin.

So He was made for the sins of his people. And, see, without His propitiation there could be no effectual advocate. This word "propitiation" (I try to speak in such a way to where if I can understand it everybody can understand it). The word propitiation, that is a big word for me. I am from Louisiana. That is a big word. But propitiation really is a simple thing when we think about it. What does propitiation mean? **Propitiation literally means satisfaction.** It means reconciliation. It means peace with God based on the satisfaction. **Is that simple enough?** We need to understand that when we say Christ is our propitiation, we're saying He is satisfaction to God's law and justice based on the fact that He did everything law and justice required. It means that Christ in His person is the High Priest and He was our great high priest of that covenant of grace and by virtue of His obedience unto death, He established and fulfilled every single solitary requirement, as well as every single solitary condition of God's holiness on behalf of everybody whom He represented. He didn't leave anything for you to do, ***not one thing, not one shred.***

See, this is the thing. His righteousness, His satisfaction of law and justice demands, it doesn't request it, but it demands the justification and eternal life of every sinner for whom He died, every sinner whom He represented based on that reconciliation. And, see, based on His righteousness, law and justice demands that we go free. And if you don't understand how important this is, if any one of those for whom Christ perished and satisfied law and justice and established a righteousness for, if one of them eternally perishes, law and justice and God himself would be unjust. And Christ's person and His work would be absolutely worthless. That is the implication that is involved. When people talk about Christ dying for everybody and trying to save everybody, they say, basically, Christ didn't do enough, He didn't accomplish enough, He didn't satisfy this holy God enough.

It is necessary that we take some time on this subject. That is why I have basically broken this verse in two parts because we want to understand how important this thing propitiation is. Now I spent my whole life in religion, was raised in a Southern Baptist Church and taught by well intentioned men and women all my life and they never really touched on things that I see in God's Word are so absolutely important to us. Now they entertained. They made us feel good about ourselves and led us in certain directions and maybe made us good men and good women. There is nothing wrong with morality. I would to God everybody was moral and honest and forthright and not hypocritical, as well as sincere and dedicated, don't you? But I also wish somebody had taken the time to deal honestly with the Word of God. Don't you?

How many of us, if we are honest, in the religion that we were raised up in, how many times can we honestly say anybody ever taught us about imputation? Do you ever remember being taught in religion by anybody, be it Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, talk about imputation? Is it important? Is it something that is necessary? How many times have we heard them talk about Jesus died for sinners. But did anybody ever explain to you what a propitiation was? **SERIOUSLY.** Well, I am going to explain it to you. And that is one of the things that I just don't want to do. I don't want unregenerate sinners to draw their own conclusions. They say, "We have got to leave it up to them to make their own conclusions." Look. Natural man, left to himself always comes to the wrong conclusion, always.

See, everybody you know talks about the blood of Christ, don't they? Go to any church anywhere, any place they are going to talk about the blood of Christ. They talk about being under the blood of Christ. Well, we are under the blood of Christ. They talk about being forgiven by the blood of Jesus. But then in their message and in their thinking and in their attitude they always go somewhere else for pardon and somewhere else for forgiveness of sin. To most of them it isn't the blood of Jesus that put away sin, that brings forgiveness of sin, that brings cleansing and pardon. It is all kinds of other things. They say, "Oh, yeah, Jesus died for my sin, but I have to go to church. I have to be moral. I have to confess. I have to repent. I have to be remorseful. I have to reform." **Think about it.** Think about how many who claim to be under the blood of Christ, but who turn around and claim that at some point in time they can lose their salvation or they can lose their fellowship with God based on their sin. I tell you what, folks. Somebody once said it and I wrote it down, but I've changed it a bit. Somebody said, "It is hard to put away sin." I think that is the wrong statement. **With men it is impossible to put away sin.** See, think about it like this. Tears of repentance and remorse can't put away sin. Didn't Esau weep bitterly? Did it do him any good? Being sorry won't put away sin. You say, "I am sorry about my sin." Well, that doesn't mean that you might be genuinely sorry. But that doesn't put sin away. See, that is the thing. Sin has got to be put away. We just can't feel sorry for it. We have got to put it away. Promising to do better won't put it away. I heard people say, "Well, I am going to do better tomorrow." That is the way religion says, "Start today and do better today to make up for tomorrow." Doing better, promising to do better won't put away sin. And, listen. We will go one step further. Even doing better won't put away sin. Joining the church won't put away sin.

I tell you, so many people think they are saved because they are in a church. Here is a group that was safe in the church at the judgment: *“Lord, Lord, have we not preached in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name? Have we not done many wonderful works in your name?”* Where is that? Where have they been at? They have been in the church folks. And our Lord spoke to them and he said, *“Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.”* **HOLD ON NOW**. What kind of works of iniquity did they do? He just told us which ones. Preaching, casting out demons and doing many wonderful works. There is nothing wrong with those things in and of themselves. We’re preaching today, right? Those gifts they have gone away. They are past. We don’t have those gifts anymore. And by God’s grace we seek to do many wonderful works. But what Christ is saying is that these people are standing at the judgment, and they are claiming something as a hope of eternal life. Nothing wrong with those things, but they were claiming that they deserve life and they are declaring why they deserve life. They preach, they cast out demons, they have done many wonderful works. They were making what they did of more value than what the One who was speaking, what His life actually accomplished.

I am going to tell you what, folks, a multitude are to be found in that group at that judgment and they are still going to be claiming (and they made it to the judgment and they are still) *“We have done enough. We gave enough. We have loved enough. We are moral enough.”*

Being baptized won’t do it. You can be baptized till your skin wrinkles up. It won’t put away. Morality and sincerity won’t do it. Tithing won’t do it. I know a lot of people think that. Suffering won’t do it. Dying for your country won’t do it. What does it take? That is what I need. I am a sinner speaking to a group of sinners. Dirt talking to dirt, that is all we are. And most of the time not even humble dirt. What does it take to put away my sin.

We sing:

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What is that talking about? That blood, that is our propitiation. And I tell you. This book from Genesis to Revelation is filled with propitiation. Without the shedding of blood (we took the Lord’s table last Sunday) without the shedding of blood there can be **NO SATISFACTION**. There is no remission. There is no forgiveness. It takes a propitiation. This is the thing. It takes perfect satisfaction of God’s holy law and His inflexible justice. It takes a righteousness established that enabled a holy and just God to pardon me and to cleanse me and to forgive me of my sin without ignoring, denying or perverting His holiness and his justice. **Now where are we going to find that?** Any petition or cry of mercy or grace or love, no matter how pitiful it is and no matter who it is from, has to be consistent with and in line with God’s holiness and justice and truth.

Think about it like this this morning. The cost of forgiveness isn't our repentance. It isn't our remorse. The cost of forgiveness was what? **THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.**

Listen to this verse in **Acts 13**. Paul stands before these Jews and he told them, "*But be it known,*" **verse 38 of Acts 13**, "*Be it known unto you men, you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man*", (through this person, **Who?** Jesus Christ) *is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*" In other words, God can't just... he can't just overlook sin. He has got to deal with EVERY SIN. This God is holy. He has got to deal with sin. In order for him to forgive, what has got to happen? He has got to have satisfaction. He has told us the soul that sinneth what has to happen? It has to die. And he tells them that. He goes on, "*Through this man preached unto you forgiveness of sins.*" **Verse 39.** "*And by him all that believe...*" (**Believe what?** God's promise to save and bless and qualified, entitled him to all grace here and all glory hereafter) "*are justified from all things.*" (Underline this next phrase) *from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*" You never could be justified by obedience to the law. And yet men, religious men, religious women, where do they always run thinking it makes a difference between life and death. **THE LAW OF MOSES.** And he said, "You can't be justified based on that." When he talks about this in this language it is just another of saying that God forgives sin based on the righteousness of Christ. All who come to God pleading for this mercy, seeking forgiveness based on Christ's blood which is His righteousness, what are they? **They are saved.** They are pardoned from all their sin before they have any remorse. The reason they are remorseful is because of what they SEE by God-given faith. They look on him whom they pierced. And when they realize their sins nailed him there, what do they do? Then they are remorseful. So they have pardon and forgiveness and salvation before they ever have any remorse, before they ever have any sorrow, before they ever repent, before they ever reform.

This word propitiation is used **three times** in the New Testament, just three times. And in all three places we are told Christ is our propitiation. And it is the key to understanding Christ's work of redemption. It means reconciliation through that satisfaction of Christ actually getting rid of the sin that stands between a holy God and unholy sinners based on complete, perfect, eternal satisfaction to law and justice. The idea of propitiation isn't that God just merely feels sorry for us and therefore simply looks over or ignores our sin. Do you want God just ignoring what you did or just overlooking what you did? Listen. If He just ignores it and overlooks it, what about if He decides not to ignore it one day or to no longer overlook it? The idea of propitiation is that God has provided a way that law and justice is perfectly satisfied. You think about it. To the believer, do you know what God's law sees when it looks at the believer, at the justified saint? What does the law say to you this morning? God's holy law that demands that you love God with all your heart, mind and soul and strength and love your neighbor as yourself and you know you failed infinitely on both parts. You say, "What does God's law say of me?" Do you know what it says? "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the kingdom which my Father hath prepared for you before the foundation of the world.*"

Now that very word translated "*propitiation*" in the New Testament is translated in the Greek version of the Old Testament two times. Do you know what it is called? The

mercy seat. Exodus 25:21 and again over in Hebrews 9:5, it talks about propitiation as a mercy seat. Now what was the mercy seat? The mercy seat was what covered the ark of the covenant and covered God's broken law. It was a place where atonement was made in the Old Testament, where literally a covering was put up when the blood covered those Old Testament saint's sin. And to that mercy seat men were directed and commanded by our God to look . To look to the mercy seat, to look to the work of redemption done inside.

Now we read in the beginning of the service there in Luke 18 and that publican, remember he wouldn't so much as lift his eyes. He was in the outer court of the temple. He wouldn't so much as lift his eyes and smote upon his breast and he said, "God, be merciful." Literally, "God be a mercy seat for me, the sinner." He cried, "God, if there is any way that this publican..." What is a publican? A bad sinner. If there is any way that he is going to be redeemed, what has to happen? God has to be a mercy seat for him. Look over at **1 John 4:9**. Here is one of the times he uses this phrase mercy seat or propitiation. **1 John 4:9** - "*In this was manifested the love of God toward us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love.*" **Get the order right. "NOT THAT WE LOVE GOD."** You hear people talking about how much they love God. He said, "*Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us.*" And because he loved us, **what did He do?** *He sent his Son to be the propitiation.* **What is that?** Perfect satisfaction to law and justice for our sins. Because of that great love God the Father had for us, what did he do? God sent his darling Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into this world to be a propitiation for our sins by offering up his soul and his body as a sacrifice to define justice to make reconciliation for our sin, to make satisfaction.

Now consider how God has provided a way of salvation, a way He can forgive sins and still be righteous and holy, but yet men don't want it. Yet the gospel commands and directs sinners to look one place. Look at **Isaiah 45**. You tell men about a salvation complete, full and free, accomplished at Calvary, and unregenerate sinners always come back. Well, what about this? Christ did everything. He saved you from your sin. Will you rest in that? I am telling you, to the natural man that is not enough. They have got to have some thing else. Oh, I have got to go to church. Well, yeah, you do need to go to church out of grace and gratitude to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, but your going to church doesn't make the difference. It is an evidence. It is a fruit and effect, but that is not what saves you. Christ saved you.

Notice here. Isaiah 45:20 - "*Assemble yourselves and come. Draw near together, you that are escaped of the nations that have no knowledge.*" That is the key right there. What do they not have? No knowledge. And since they have no knowledge what do they do? "*That set up wood of their graven images and **PRAY UNTO A GOD THAT CANNOT SAVE.***" Do you see that? They pray to who? **A God that cannot save.** In other words, a god who tries to, wants to, would if you could let him. **He cannot save.** Tragically that is the presentation of the god of this generation. Won't you let Jesus do thus and so for you? Our God hasn't ever wanted to do anything. Whatever God desires that does He. Our God, David said: "*Our God is in the heaven and whatsoever pleased him, that is*

what he does.” Remember old Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 4** after God humbled that self righteous fool and brought him down in the dirt and made him have hair like feathers on his back and claws like a bird and he came to his senses and he stood up and he said, “*All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing and he doeth according to his will among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his and none can say unto him, ‘What doest thou?’*” Now that is the God of the Scriptures. This thing is not up for your acceptance or rejection. Salvation, folks, is not an offer. It is not an appeal. It is not a plea. It is a command. God commands all men everywhere to repent. He doesn’t say, “If you will please repent,” He commands it.

And thank God he grants repentance to his people. But he says, “You are praying to a God that can’t save.” And notice. Here is the deception. See, God doesn’t leave it up for us to figure this thing out. “*Tell you and bring them near, yea, let them take counsel together. And who has declared this from ancient times? And who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me.*” **Tell us who you are.** “*A just God and a Savior.*” Is your God a just God? What does that mean? He isn’t overlooking one sin, not one. He is going to deal with every single solitary one of them and give them exactly what they deserve. God has not overlooked Richard Warmack’s sin. He punished them. He satisfied His law and justice’s demands in the person of His Son eternally.

Now. “*Look unto me.*” Who? I am not an English major. I tell them on Wednesday night all the time. I am not an English major, but I am smart enough that I remember in school that this phrase, “*look unto me*”, if you drew a line under it, what is that pointing back to? That phrase that went right before it – “*A just God and a Savior.*” Look unto this God, a just God and a Savior. And what is the result of looking to this one who is a just God and a Savior? “*And be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and what else? There is none else.*”

No other god on this planet is the true God unless he is a just God and a Savior. Is that the one you came to? See, God promises to save the very chief of sinners in a way that glorifies Himself. And He is not going to do it in a way that He is not glorified. And to do that He had to condition all of your salvation and my salvation somewhere. Now, where did He condition your salvation? On a suitable substitute, one who is both God and man. And the glory of his redemptive character demanded if there was any other way we could have been saved, don’t you think God would have done it? But because the only way it could be accomplished, what did he do? He had to send his Son. He had to become incarnate. He had to grow up in wisdom and stature before God and man and He had to satisfy law and justice. And because of His death God’s law and justice demands our salvation. And that gives God all the glory.

Let me close. God has done everything necessary to provide for the salvation of everybody who wants it. And God commands all who hear the gospel to seek and find salvation based solely on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, that righteousness established at Calvary and imputed. And thank God, God forbids any sinner to seek

salvation based on any other false hope no matter how noble it might seem and no matter how highly men might esteem it.

Now next Sunday we are going to come back and we are going to deal with the second part of verse 2. I would encourage you to come back. Next Sunday I am going to deal with the question that a lot of people have a lot of problem with today: For whom did Christ die? And we are going to deal honestly from the Scriptures next week with this subject. Who did Christ actually die for? And what did He actually accomplish?

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

Bart, if you would dismiss us, please.