

## 1 John 2:1-2 (NKJV)

**1 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.**

**2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

We cannot start this week without an encouragement. Look at how John addresses his audience. My little children.

John uses this 5 times in 1 John. But he is in good company. Jesus referred to the disciples using this term at least twice. The word means a little child. Now while this term is clearly endearing, it would have been **hard on ones pride** if one had **too much** pride. It is similar to referring to believers as sheep. While the terms assume that the one being addressed is **highly valued** and it also assumes that they are **clueless and needing protection and nurture that they cannot provide for themselves**. There is a sense of **dependency** included in the word.

So John is saying I love you and I am in the process of taking care of you. I value you, but you will not make it if you don't get this in your thick skulls. It is that sort of thing.

How humble are we really? Do you know a good test of humility? It is when someone treats you like you don't know much, when someone treats you like a servant, when someone treats you like you really need help. Then how do we respond?

How would we do if John referred to us, with all of our bible knowledge and years of experience as little children? If we are humble and wise, we would say, "preach it".

Then John says this- **these things I write to you, so that you may not sin**. Remember last week? We talked about the inevitability of sin in the Christian life. We talked about the fact that when we we **walk in the light**, part of what pops up is a revelation of sin.

Why? I found this quote this week.

**To walk in the light means to be open and honest, to be sincere. Paul prayed that his friends might "be sincere and without offense" ([Phil. 1:10](#)). The word *sincere* comes from two Latin words, *sine* and *cera*, which mean "without wax." It seems that in Roman days, some sculptors covered up their mistakes by filling the defects in their marble statues with wax, which was not readily visible—until the statue had been exposed to the hot sun awhile. But more dependable sculptors made**

certain that their customers knew that the statues they sold were *sine cera*—without wax.

It is unfortunate that churches and Bible classes have been invaded by insincere people, people whose lives cannot stand to be tested by God's light. "God is light," and when we walk in the light, there is nothing we can hide. It is refreshing to meet a Christian who is open and sincere and is not trying to masquerade!

To walk in the light means to be honest with God, with ourselves, and with others. It means that when the light reveals our sin to us, we immediately confess it to God and claim His forgiveness. And if our sin injures another person, we ask *his* forgiveness too.

Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - New Testament - The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 2.

So as we walk in the light we have to tell the truth about ourselves. We have to tell it without wax.

Now what would be the natural danger after hearing that part of walking in the light is seeing our own sin? The natural danger would be that we would **get comfortable** with our sin. We might accept it as something that is **ok**, something that is **acceptable**, something that is **no big deal**.

But that is not where John is coming from. He is not saying I write to you so you live in **peaceful coexistence** with your sin against God. He is not writing so that you have some kind of **excuse to sin**. He is not writing so that you accept your sin as **commonplace**.

No he says I write these things so that you stop committing sin.

He was not alone.

**Romans 6:12-14 (NKJV)**

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**

**<sup>13</sup> And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.**

**<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

There are so many good quotes about this that will help us I could not leave them out.

**Sin is the enemy. It removes the believer from the light. It prevents fellowship with God and it destroys fellowship with the children of light. The principle of sin as the power of darkness must be excluded from the believer's life, and individual acts of sin must be resisted. Where failure**

**occurs, the sin must be confessed before the Lord and the body if need be and then abandoned. And always the intent of the believer remains the same—not to commit sin!**

Expositor's Bible Commentary, The - The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Volume 12: Hebrews through Revelation.

Here is another quote.

**In his commentary on 1 John, Robert Yarbrough writes:**

**In popular Christian religion of modern times, the impression is sometimes given that sin is in the end not intrinsic to the person (“God hates the sin but loves the sinner”), or that sin is compulsory by God’s design (“that’s just the way God made me”), or that salvation alters the destiny of the soul someday but not necessarily the behavior of the body today (“Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven” ...), or that tolerance mandated by Scripture forbids ethical distinctions of any kind (“judge not lest you be judged”). While John would no doubt recognize the element of truth in some of these slogans in appropriate contexts, he would also decry their misuse. He writes to commend a higher road: liberation from the compulsion to believe, behave, and love in ways that fall short of God’s glorious and transforming light. He writes to commend a full, satisfying, and efficacious knowledge of God.]**

Reformed Expository Commentary - Reformed Expository Commentary - 1-3 John.

I am going to say what is obvious. Sin robs us of that which matters most. It never provides us **that which has value**. It always costs us **that which is most valuable**. The exchange rate on sin is always stacked against us.

If you could trade in your money in a way where you give your twenty dollar bills and exchange them for a penny, would you do it? Of course we wouldn’t? Ok will you worry or fear or lust or envy or gossip or waste time or hate or get drunk or get stoned or whatever when you face a **hard** circumstance or a **tempting** circumstance? Guess what? We are doing the same thing. We are dealing with an exchange rate that is designed to rip us off. The system is being run by the devil and he has a malignant hatred of us that seethes in every pore. He wants to destroy us. As surely as God loves us, the devil hates us. As sure as God has **good plans** for our lives, the devil has **evil schemes** to ruin our lives or to make us ineffective at least. And every temptation he puts in front of us is designed for our destruction. Maybe we want to justify our failure to obey God and trust God. But we are just getting ripped off. We don’t have to be. But we are choosing it. Because we are treating God as a liar and the devil as our best friend.

John is telling us we don't have to live that way. Right now, today, in whatever circumstance you are in, you have no reason to sin. None. Period. Ever. Don't believe yourself. Don't allow your fellow believers to believe themselves when they say they have a reason that they have to sin. It is a pile of lies that leads to the great spiritual ripoff.

John is getting in our face this morning. He is looking in our eyes and he is saying this to us.

**I write to you, so that you may not sin.**

Now, if we are dealing with each other and we are putting on a strong arm appeal not to sin, what do we know we have to do next?

We **do** sin. We are ignorant, apathetic, stubborn, foolish, arrogant, foolhardy, selfish children. There is no sense putting a better face on it, is there? We can be spiritual jerks. Are we making choices where we will not trust God, where we will choose to think what we want and do what we want? Then that is what we are acting like, a spiritual brat in the face of a loving Father. As we walk in the light we are quicker to call it what it is. It is not that we are not **capable** of obeying. We just **don't want to** because we **want what we want**. Yeah, that has a ring of truth to it that none of us like but all of us know is true. So we have got to know how to deal with that which we have **actually done** as opposed to that which we know we **should have done**.

**And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

When we sin we have an advocate.

What is an advocate?

one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant; an advocate

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

What John is pointing to here is a cosmic courtroom. It is a scene that transcends every tv courtroom drama. The issue is life and death for eternity. Now who are the characters in this drama, this **real** drama, this **reality of justice**?

God the Father is the Judge

Satan is the accuser

And we are the ones on trial. You and I are in this heavenly drama, this heavenly courtroom.

And the question is- how can you and I be set right given the crimes that we are guilty of? And that is a huge question.

R. C. Sproul writes,

**The doctrine of justification involves a legal matter of the highest magnitude. It involves a matter of judgment before the supreme tribunal of God. The most basic of all issues we face as fallen human beings is the issue of how we as unjust sinners can hope to survive a judgment before the court of an absolutely holy and absolutely just God. God is the Judge of all the earth. Herein lies our dilemma. He is just; we are unjust. If we receive from His hands what justice is due to us, we face the everlasting punishment of hell. ("The Forensic Nature of Justification," in Don Kistler, ed., *Justification by Faith Alone* [Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995], 24)** Remember we talked about how in 1 John **we learn doctrine without being aware of learning it**. This is a wonderful instance of this.

Here we stand as the defendants. And every single one of us is guilty. We have violated God's law.

**"are all under sin; as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one'" ([Rom. 3:9-10](#)), and "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" ([James 2:10](#)).**

And it just keeps getting worse and worse for us, for scripture tells us that **"for the wages of sin is death" ([Rom. 6:23](#)).**

If we are left alone at this moment, we are forever lost. But that is not the case, praise God.

We have an advocate. We have a defense attorney. If we are in Christ, we have Christ to stand for us.

And what does He declare. Does he twist technicalities in some way to get us off of the charges? Does he wiggle us out of the tough spot we are in?

No. He looks at the judge and he says, the accusations against my client **are true. He is as guilty as guilty can be.**

And we might look at our advocate with incredulity at this point. We might think, you are supposed to be my defense attorney, not the prosecution. But our advocate has never lost a case and He never will.

So what rabbit does He pull out of His hat?

It is not magic. It is justice.

Our lawyer does not point to us. He does not point to the law. He does not appeal for grace or mercy. He looks **justice** square in the eye and He makes His appeal.

And what is His appeal.

He points to Himself and He says that I have perfectly paid the penalty for what this person owes. He deserves to die. There is just no doubt about that fact. But I have taken upon myself His sin, His debt, His punishment. And I

have paid it. I had no sin. So I am the only one qualified to pay such a penalty. I am innocent. But I took upon myself their guilt.

"He... did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for [them] all" ([Rom. 8:32](#)) and "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on [their] behalf, so that [they] might become the righteousness of God in Him" ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)), God "justified [them] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Rom. 3:24](#), nkjv).

The result of the divine verdict is that believers, "having been justified [declared righteous] by faith... have peace with God through [their] Lord Jesus Christ" ([Rom. 5:1](#)).

John MacArthur said this:

The Father's predetermined design and acceptance of His Son's sacrifice as payment in full for their sins answers the dilemma of how He can be both "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" ([Rom. 3:26](#)). God's love and justice were equally satisfied when He accomplished redemption through Jesus Christ.

It is that divine courtroom drama that underlies the apostle John's thought in this section. Building on the glorious affirmation of [1:9](#) that God "is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," John explains that He can do so because His Son is both the believers' Defense Attorney and the Perfect Propitiation for their sins. That twofold truth is central to the gospel.

This portrait of **Jesus Christ** fits perfectly with John's legal vocabulary. We picture a courtroom. And Christ approaches the judge as our advocate. It is interesting that where John says "if anyone sins" he used very specific Greek grammar. It is a verb tense that means that there is a very strong probability that the thing will happen. It could be translated "**if anyone sins, and it will happen.**" Again we see what we were looking at last week. Believers do not have to sin. They can always choose not to commit a know sin that they are aware of. If we do not believe that about the choices we make in our minds we believe a lie. It is not complicated.

And right after He says that **they do not need to sin** He says that **they surely will.**

And in that context God appears seated at the heavenly bench judging everyone. And He is perfect at it. He is never inaccurate. He never bases His decision on faulty information. He wrote the law and He enforces the law. He is all branches of our government. And He alone has the power, not only to

kill the body, but to cast a person's soul into hell. Matt 10:28 tells us that is why we should fear God as opposed to fearing anyone else.

This is all true of our God.

But brothers and sisters, we do not need to fear judgment. Why? Is it because of our record? Is it because we have lived up to our codes? Is it because we have lived a good life? No. John has already destroyed that argument.

No. It is for one reason. You and I, if we are in Christ, have an advocate.

Now the word for advocate is parakletos. Now who is the paraclete? It is the Holy Spirit. The one who comes alongside. Well that is the the root of this word. Christ comes alongside.

And in this sense He comes alongside in this legal setting. He places Himself on our side.

We could stop here and bask in this truth for hours. How could He do such a thing? **Why** would He do such a thing. Look at what we have **done to Him**. He would not have had to die except for people like us who required it. We have got to get this **otherness of God, this love of God that simply passes our ability to understand it**. I know what I am. I would not die for me. I would be looking for someone more worthy to die for. Surely Christ could do better. But here he is coming alongside people like us to defend us from what we perfectly deserve.

Again John MacArthur comes up with a gem. He says-

**He accepts as clients only those who confess their guilt and their desperate need to receive Him as Savior and Lord; and He becomes for them the incomparable intercessor who always gains acquittal for those who trust in Him. In Old Testament language, He is their great High Priest**

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 1-3 John.

So we have picked up a real tidbit of good theology. And it goes on.

**<sup>2</sup> And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

The term propitiation is a theological word. It is the Greek word *hilasmos*, which means "appeasement," or "satisfaction." Christ's sacrificial death on the cross satisfied the demands of God's justice, thus appeasing His holy wrath against believers' sins.

I suspect there are plenty of churches that never talk about propitiation. They might think it too dry or too technical. Maybe it doesn't fit their application of "practical". But John did not hesitate to use the word and the concept.

Because it is descriptive of what the **Savior of our souls** actually accomplished for us.

Jesus Christ took upon Himself the full payment for the sins that we have committed. And it would be so good if it were just the sins that we committed **before** we learned about this wonderful Savior. But that is not the case. He has paid the penalty for the hideous things we have done **even after we knew how wonderful He was**. He has paid for the sins we did yesterday and the sins we will do tomorrow.

It almost seems wrong to even say it.

How could we possibly sin against a God who loves us so deeply and truly. And we might like to lie here and say we would never do such a thing. But we do.

You do and I do.

How? It seems inconceivable that we could be so hard hearted. But we seem to find a way. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life has a real appeal with us. A real inroad. It is inexcusable. But it is a fact just the same.

What was Christ worthy of this week? And what did we give Him? That pretty much says it all. Does he promise that every situation in our lives is working out for the good of His people? Is that not what He says? But how did we live? What did we think about? How did we respond to life's situations? Do we not believe what God says? Oh but we have wonderful excuses, we believe all kinds of things that let us off the hook. And **there stands our advocate** knowing full well what He deserves from us. There is the one who is our paraclete, the one who comes along side us. But we cannot admit that His grace and love are sufficient. We cannot because how we act shows that we really don't think it is.

When will we learn? When will we give to our God what He deserves? When will we call our failures to obey exactly what they are? Will we walk in the light. That is a humble walk.

We need to look at one more thing.

**not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

How adequate is Christ's propitiation? There are some who would say that Christ's death will eventually cover everyone who has ever lived. This is called universalism. And it is based on a concept of God's love that will win out in the lives of every person. I believe this goes contrary to much of what scripture says. There are some destined to punishment and some destined to glory.

But this is certainly a **global grace**. It is **for** the whole world. Christ's propitiation will have its effects in every tribe and people group across our planet. That is sure to come. It will touch the whole world. There are people from the whole world that will be saved. They won't just be Hebrew speaking. They won't just live in Israel. Likewise they won't just be English speaking and they won't just live in America. No. People across this whole globe will be saved. No group is left out.

I remember years ago being encouraged to pray for the 10/40 window. This is the area of the globe overrun by Islam. It was the least reached area of the globe with the gospel. No one could really see a way that it could turn around. Who would have thought that the terrorism efforts by Muslims would be the very thing that God uses to penetrate that area with the gospel? But God answered the prayers of those who prayed for that area of the world for years. And He did it in a way no one else would have ever considered.

The amazing thing is not that the Gospel **does not save everyone**. The amazing thing is that **it saves anyone**. Why? Why would God save someone like you or me? Why would he seemingly waste His time? But that is exactly what John is telling us. He died for you and me. He is an advocate to losers like us. He is the propitiation for sinners like us.

I think the song captures the essence here- amazing love, how can it be, that thou my God shouldst die for me.