

Series

Title: **CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE**

Text: 1 John 2:1-2

Subject: *Christ's Advocacy for His People*

Date: Sunday Evening — April 15, 2012

Tape # 1 John #10

Readings: *Darin Duff and Ron Wood*

Introduction:

The Apostle John presents us with the clearest and most emphatic testimony possible of the full and free forgiveness of sin. He declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. But he does not stop there. He also says that, "*if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.*" It is evident from these words that John was not afraid of doing harm by stating this truth too broadly. On the contrary, he makes this statement for the purpose of promoting the sanctity of his "*little children.*" Some time ago I read that it is possible to overly state and exaggerate the advocacy of Christ. But I reject that idea altogether. I am here to preach in the plainest and fullest manner possible the blessed truth

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contained in our text. My subject is — **CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE.**

The object of John's bold statements concerning the love of God to his sinning children is "that ye sin not." This is an inspired and triumphant answer to that grossly untruthful charge that is urged by those who reject the doctrines of free-grace. We often hear that the doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness. John was not of that opinion. In order that these little children should not sin, he actually declared to them that doctrine which all Pharisees and legalists call licentious! Those who think that God's grace, when fully and plainly preached, will lead men into sin know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Jude says that they turn the very grace of God into lasciviousness!

It is contrary both to nature and grace for men to find an argument for sin in the goodness of God. Human nature is bad, corrupt, and depraved. And far be it from me to flatter that leprous criminal, that reeking mass of corruption. But even a natural

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conscience revolts at the base idea of continuing in sin that grace may abound. Shall I hate God because he is kind to me? Shall I curse him because he blesses me? I dare say that very few men reason in such a way. Man has sought out many inventions. But such thoughts as these are so evidently abominable that very few are so perverted as to tolerate them. Corrupt as the human heart is, it seldom turns the goodness of God into a reason for sin. And, surely, those who are renewed by grace can never be guilty of such infamy! Yet, I find this argument frequently raised against the glorious gospel doctrine of free-grace by many who profess to be preachers of the gospel.

Those who believe in Christ reason in a far different manner. Is God good? Then I must not grieve him. Is he ready to forgive my transgressions? Then I ought to love him and offend no more. Gratitude has bands that are stronger than steel. Do not think, my friends, that the Christian needs to be beaten into virtue by the whip of the law! Do not suppose that God's children hate sin because of the

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hell which follows it! **C. H. Spurgeon** put the case very well — “If there were no heaven for the righteous, the sons of God would follow after goodness, because their regenerated spirit pants for it; and if there were no hell for the wicked, from the necessity of his new born nature, the true Christian would strive to escape from all iniquity.”

We are loved of God; therefore, we want to love him in return. — “*The love of God constraineth us.*” Being richly and freely forgiven of God, we feel that we cannot live any longer in sin. Since Jesus Christ died to purge from us all uncleanness, we feel that we cannot crucify our Lord afresh, and put him to an open shame. Could a wife sleep with the knife that killed her husband, when he was defending her from a cruel assailant? So, neither can a redeemed sinner clutch that dagger, sin, to his heart, by which our Immanuel was slain!

Nobler and more excellent arguments cannot be found to lead the children of God to thorough consecration to God’s cause and an utter

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abhorrence of all evil than those drawn from the free-grace of God in Christ. To be sure, some men will pervert this great doctrine and wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. But shall we for that reason keep back the truth from God's own? Shall we withhold bread from the children for fear that the dogs might get some crumbs? Shall we withhold the health restoring drugs for fear that some fool may poison himself? Shall all the trees of the forest be cut down for fear that a buzzard may build a nest in them? Shall the sea be dried up because sharks swim in it? Shall the pure truth of God be condemned because some fiends of hell have abused its character? God forbid! We must never blush to declare the whole gospel and preach the full forgiveness of sin in the boldest and plainest terms. **The naked truth of God is its best armor. It needs not the protection of human reason and prudence.**

Now, as God the Holy Spirit enables me, believing the gospel doctrines of God's free-grace, infinite love, and complete forgiveness will lead his little children not to sin, I intend to preach them to you.

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Proposition: In these two verses of Inspiration the Apostle John teaches us that the children of God are sinners in need of an advocate, and the Lord Jesus Christ is our all-sufficient Advocate with the Father.

Divisions: I will draw three lessons from our text. They are lessons that each of us must learn. May it please the Holy Spirit, whose words we now read, to apply them effectually to each of our hearts.

1. All of God's children, at best, are still sinners.
2. Our sins do not deprive us of our interest in Christ.
3. God has provided his Son, Jesus Christ, as the Advocate for his sinning people.

SINNERS STILL

The *first* thing set before us in this text is a lesson we all need to learn, be reminded of often, and remember constantly. — **All of God's children, at best, are still sinners.** — “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin...*”

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John uses a very affectionate term to address God's beloved people. — **“My little children.”** Many of those to whom he wrote were converted under his own ministry. And, now, the old pastor assures them of his fatherly love and care for them, letting them know that all that he said was designed for their good. **And he incidentally reminds them of their weakness.** They were but children in the world. He would tenderly destroy every false notion of pride and self-sufficiency.

When John says, *“these things write I unto you, that ye sin not,”* he is simply saying, “All that I have said about our fellowship and communion with God, and about our cleansing and forgiveness through the blood of Christ is designed to keep you from sin.”

But, now, he says, **“If any man sin.”** Write the “If” in as small letters as you like in this text; the supposition is a certainty. — *“And, if any man sin.”* The gentle hand of the beloved disciple uses mild and tender terms, putting it as a matter of supposition. He

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writes as though it were an astonishing thing that we might sin, after experiencing so much love, mercy, and kindness. Yet, John very well knew that all saints do sin. He has already declared that, — *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

My friends, though we are washed in the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, all of God’s children, without exception, are still sinners. To be sure, the grace of God has brought about a remarkable, miraculous change in our hearts and lives. And we will note that change. But he who grows most in the grace of God grows most in the knowledge of his own sinfulness. When Paul was a young convert, he confessed that he was less than the least of all the apostles. When he knew himself a little better, he wrote that he was less than the least of all the saints. But just before he entered glory, he testified that he was the chief of sinners. If you would grow in grace, you must come down. But, with all of that, there is a great difference between true believers and other sinners.

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The child of God no longer loves sin. He no longer regards sin as a trifling matter to play with or talk about lightly. Sin is the greatest horror of his soul. Though sin is not ejected from our nature, it is despised. Sin fights for dominion. But it can never again sit on throne. As **Bunyan** might put it, “Sin haunts the town of Mansoul, and lurks in the dens and corners to do mischief; but it is no longer honored in the streets, nor pampered in the palace. The stump remains; but Dagon’s head and hands are broken before the Ark of the Lord.

The believer cannot sin with the brazenness of which the unregenerate are guilty. Others wallow in iniquity. They glory in their shame. When the believer falls, he is vexed and mournful. Sinners go to their lusts with unshamed faces. But sin always brings shame to a saint. His heart is broken within him. His sin causes him pain.

The believer does not transgress with the fullness of deliberation belonging to other men. The

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ungodly may devise and plan their transgressions for months. But the Christian cannot. He may take the poison into his mouth in a moment of weakness; but he cannot roll it like a sweet morsel over his tongue.

Again, God's children do not, we might say, chew the cud of their sins. Sin may have been sweet in its act; but it becomes bitterness to our souls; and we would do anything to get rid of it, once we have tasted its bitterness.

Unlike all other men, the believer does not find the enjoyment that the unbeliever does in his sin. He cannot sin like others. His conscience pricks him. His heart condemns him. Believers do sin. But there is a half-heartedness in the believer's sin. He loves the righteousness that he finds no strength to perform; and he hates the evil that he does.

There is also this difference: — The child of God is not in the habit of sin and rebellion to God. The ungodly man is in the habit of sin. Rebellion is his

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regular routine. Whereas, the child of God falls into sin. But it is contrary to his nature.

Example: — You may drive hogs and sheep together into the same mire. They both fall into it. They both stain themselves. But you soon detect a difference in them. The pig wallows in it. He loves it. But the sheep escapes as soon as he can. It is loathsome to his nature.

So it is with a child of God. He falls, he falls perhaps often into sin. But soon he is up again. It is not his nature to wallow in sin. He abhors the evil.

Still, I must return to what I said in the beginning. Beloved, at best, we are still sinners. There are great differences between the sins of the believer and those of the unbeliever. We are new creatures. We belong to a holy nation. We are a peculiar people. The Spirit of God is in us; but we are, nonetheless, only poor sinners. Such we must acknowledge.

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We know ourselves to be sinners from the imperfection of our nature. Such is our nature that we cannot avoid sin until old Adam is destroyed. And that will not take place until we are freed from this body in death. Sin, by nature, pollutes everything we do. — *“We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.”* The best faith, or the highest degree of sanctification to which a believer ever attained on earth, considered in itself, is worthy of eternal hell.

What is more, my friends, **we must acknowledge that we are constantly encumbered with sin in the every day tenor of our lives.** We usually think of sin only as overt acts; but there are sins of omission as well. — *“I was thirsty, hungry, naked, and imprisoned, and you ministered not to me.”*

- Any man who says he lives without sin, even for a moment, is a liar.
- The child of God is a person with two natures.

There is that old man that loves sin. Of this Paul spoke when he cried, — *“O wretched man that I am.”* And there is a new nature, planted within by

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divine grace, which cannot sin. It is born of God. **We are men at war with ourselves.** Between the old man of sin and the new man of grace, there is no possibility of peace. The old man must die.

There are **certain peculiar infirmities** about us all which betray our sinfulness.

- Some of are short tempered.
- Some of us are proud and high-minded.
- Some of us are slothful and lazy.
- There are some who are despondent and unbelieving. They always look at the black shade of things. They cannot enjoy a walk in a green valley for fear that an avalanche might crush them

And we all demonstrate our sinfulness by our weakness in resisting sin. The temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, the trials of life far too often prove to be more than a match for us, because we are all sinners still.

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APPLICATION

1. Realizing our own sinfulness, let us be sympathetic toward our brethren. A man may be a true child of God, and yet be compassed about with many infirmities.
2. Knowing ourselves to be sinners, let us love God our Savior all the more, because of his unchanging love for us.
3. I have said all of this about our sinfulness, not to excuse our sin, but to urge us to guard against our sin, and to show us that we have great need of an Advocate in heaven.

I do hereby acknowledge myself to be a sinner, a wretched man in whom dwells no good thing. Sinner is my name. Sinner is my nature. But thanks to Christ my Advocate, I am a saved sinner!

NO CHANGE

Our *second* lesson will be briefly considered, but it is full of comfort. — **Our sins do not deprive us of**

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our interest in Christ. Read my text again, — “*If any man sin, we have and Advocate with the Father.*” Yes, beloved, we have him though we do sin. We have him still. **The text does not read,** “*If any man sin, he has forfeited his Advocate.*” It says, “*We have an Advocate,*” sinners though we are. All the sin that a believer ever did, or can be allowed to commit cannot destroy his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. We may fall into dreadful, sorrowful transgressions. But these cannot, by any possibility, tear us from the Savior’s heart.

Repeated crimes awake our fears,
And justice armed with frowns appears,
But in the Savior’s lovely face
Sweet mercy smiles and all is peace.

Hence, then, ye black despairing thoughts;
Above our fears, above our faults,
His powerful intercession rise,
And guilt recedes, and terror dies.

In every dark distressful hour,

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When sin and Satan join their power,
Let this dear hope repel their dart,
That Jesus bears us on His heart.

Great Advocate, Almighty Friend,
On Him our humble hopes depend:
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads, and must prevail!

There are certain characters by which our Lord is revealed, which I can claim only as a sinner.

- Only as a sinner can I claim Christ as my Advocate.
- It is only as a sinner that I can claim Christ as my Redeemer.
- It is only as a sinner that I can claim Christ as my Savior.
- It is only as a sinner that I can claim Christ as my Righteousness.
- It is only when I realize that I am a sinner that I will trust Christ as my Sanctification.

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I tell you plainly that Jesus Christ will not forsake His wandering sheep; He will not leave His erring child. God forbid that we should sin. But when we do sin, he still declares, — *“I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”* — *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”*

- I am a sinner, but Christ is my Brother still. He said, — *“Go tell my brethren,”* even though all had forsaken him.
- I am a sinner, but Christ is my Husband still. Hear the Word of the Lord, — *“Israel hath gone a whoring from me, but return, return for I am married unto thee.”*
- I am a sinner, but I am still a member of the body of Christ, my Head.

Blessed be God, when the members of Christ’s mystical body are diseased with sin, he does not amputate them; he washes and heals them. He says, — *“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.”* But all who are in him are washed by him.

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Mark it down, children of God, as a solid pillar of Gospel truth, that notwithstanding all our sin, we are perfectly justified in Christ. Let men of perverse hearts abuse this doctrine, if they will. But I shall not for that reason decline to preach it.

- We are perfectly justified in Christ.
- We are perfectly accepted in the Beloved.
- We are perfectly pardoned through his blood.
- We are perfectly sanctified in his Person.

If our first acceptance in Christ depended on the covenant of works, then, we would fall as soon as we failed in any good thing. But such was not the case. Our blessed Redeemer loved us when we were as vile and corrupt as we could be.

He saw us ruined by the fall,
Yet loved us not withstanding all.

He **chose** us when we were sinners. He **bought** us when we were sinners. He **called** us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. And though we are sinners today, he loves us still! O sons and daughters

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of God, in spite of all our faults and failings, wanderings and backslidings, we are the children of God. He will be our God to all eternity.

NOTE: Sin may mar our enjoyment of Christ; but it can never mar our saving interest in Christ. David lost his joy, but not his Savior. Peter wept in bitterness, but Christ soon dried his eyes.

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But how can these things be? *“We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”* Here is our *third* lesson – **God has provided His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Advocate for His sinning people.**

O my soul, rejoice in the mercy of God! — *“He, being full of compassion, forgave our iniquity, and destroyed us not: yea many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up his wrath. For he remembered that we were but flesh; a wind that*

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passeth away, and cometh not again” (Psalm 78:38-39). **Here is our great source of comfort: — Jesus Christ is the sinner’s Advocate.** God knew that we are weak, sinning people. Therefore, he gave us an all-sufficient Advocate.

What is an Advocate? — An advocate is one who is called along the side of another, for his comfort and help. He is a lawyer to plead our cause in the court.

- The Judge with whom our Advocate pleads is the Father, his own Father and ours. — He who is the Judge of the law is our Father in the gospel.
- A crime is argued against us, deserving the sentence of death. — It is the place and work of an advocate to plead the cause of his client.

Who is our Advocate? —John encourages our hearts by telling us that our Advocate is “*Jesus Christ, the righteous.*” With such an Advocate to plead our cause, we are assured that he will succeed. — “*This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore, he is able to*

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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, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7:24-27).

Our Advocate is Jesus the Savior, one in our own nature. — *“We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

Our Advocate is Jesus Christ, God’s anointed One. He has authority to plead, because God appointed him. He is qualified to plead. Being a man, he knows our needs. Being God, he knows how to prevail with God.

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Our Advocate is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Here is the blessed thing John is driving at. We are charged with sin and unrighteousness. Our Advocate cannot plead our innocence. He cannot plead the extenuating circumstances of our transgressions. But he does plead his own righteousness. Behold the work of our Advocate in the court of heaven.

- He pleads for the non-imputation of sin.
- He pleads continually.
- He pleads a point of strict justice.
- He pleads effectually.
- He pleads for me!

Children of God, do you see the Advocate now?

There he is in the court of heaven pleading your cause.

Arise, my soul arise!
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears:
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written in his hands.

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He ever lives above,
For me to intercede,
His all prevailing love,
His precious blood to plead:
His blood atoned for all his race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me.
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die.

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed one,
He cannot turn away,
The presence of His Son:
The Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled,

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His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father cry!

Do we have any assurance that God will accept our Advocate? — Indeed we do. — “*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” Here is the ground of our assurance before God. Jesus Christ is the satisfactory propitiation for our sins.

NOTE: The word here translated “*propitiation*” is only used three times in the New Testament; here, Romans 3:25, and Hebrews 9:5, where it is translated “*mercy-seat.*” In each place there is a distinct lesson for us.

- Jesus Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice by which God and sinners are reconciled (Romans 3:25-26).
- Jesus Christ is the place of mercy between God and sinners (Hebrews 9:5).

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The Ark of the Covenant contained the broken law of God. Over it there was a mercy-seat upon which the high priest would sprinkle the blood of atonement. When the broken law was covered by blood, standing between us and God there is his broken law. And nothing but the blood of Christ can bring the two together.

- It is the propitiatory sacrifice which our Mediator pleads with God as the grounds of our acceptance in heaven (1 John 2:2). — Jesus Christ is the satisfaction of our sins before God. — He is the satisfaction of sins for the sins of God's elect throughout the whole world.

NOTE: The term “*the whole world*” does not mean every person in the world. It refers to believers in every part of the world, not just the Jewish believers to whom John was writing. This certainly must be the meaning of the text.

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- Christ is set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood. It is only to those who receive him by faith that he is a propitiation.
- All of those for whom Christ is a propitiation are pardoned, forgiven, and justified. Therefore, it cannot be said that he is a propitiation for every single person in the world.
- Christ is an Advocate for those for whom he is a propitiation. He prays for those whom he redeemed. Yet, he plainly states, “*I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me*” (John 17:9).
- Once more, if John by the term “the whole world” means every single individual in the world then his argument in the text is useless. The purpose of the apostle in these words is to comfort his little children with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin, assuring them of forgiveness and urging them therefore not to sin. But how could this purpose be gained if some of those for whom Christ is an Advocate and propitiation suffer forever in hell?

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Yes, blessed be his holy name forever, Jesus Christ is the sinner's Advocate! If any man in all the world owns himself to be a sinner and trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, it is a promise of God in the gospel that the Son of God will take up his cause effectually as the Mediator of the Covenant.

APPLICATION

1. Since we have such a loving and merciful Redeemer as Christ is, let us ever seek to honor him, striving against sin.
2. When we do sin, let us never fail to remember that we have an Advocate with the Father. He prays for us even as he did for Peter.
3. Be assured of this: If Christ is our Advocate, we shall never perish.

Amen.