

THAT YE SIN NOT

TEXT: I JOHN 2:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

1. First John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Our Lord would not command us to do something we were incapable of doing.
2. The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (I Cor. 15:34).
3. Jesus healed the impotent man and then said to him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).
4. Our Lord told the woman taken in adultery, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). He would not have told her that unless she was capable of obeying His command.
5. The Bible plainly says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14), but apparently many Christians do not understand or they do not believe it.
6. L.E. Maxwell told the story of the man who reported to his commanding officer, "I have taken a prisoner." His commander said, "Bring him along with you."
7. "He won't come," complained the soldier.
8. "Well, then, come yourself," replied the officer.
9. The soldier then said, "I can't. He won't let me."
10. We laugh at a silly story like that but it is a good illustration of the power of indwelling sin.

I. GOD'S PERFECT STANDARD ("that ye sin not" -- 2:1).

1. There is no need for believers to sin. W. H. Griffith Thomas said, "Christian people are not expected to sin, for the plan of the Gospel is intended to meet such a contingency...there is a real distinction between sin and sins, between root and fruit, between character and conduct, between principle and practice. The root exists and abides in us (1:8), but it need not, and should not, bear fruit. This is the message of the Apostle" (*I John*).
2. First, we see God's perfect standard – "that ye sin not" (2:1).
3. There are sins of commission, and there are sins of omission. James 4:17 says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

4. Because God is perfect, His standard for His people is absolute perfection. God cannot condone sin in the least degree, and so He sets perfection before us as the goal.

II. GOD'S PERFECT PROVISION ("we have an Advocate" -- 2:1).

1. After God's perfect standard, we see God's perfect provision – "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1b).
2. There is no need to sin, but on the other hand, if any one should sin, God has made ample provision. "There is no need to sin, but, assuming the actuality of it, its results can be met" (Thomas).
3. First, God gives us His perfect standard, at the same time, God knows all about us and so He graciously made provision for us in the event of failure.
4. An "advocate" (2:1) is one who comes to the side of another person in time of need in order to help. The word translated "advocate" is *parakletos* and is translated "Comforter" in the Gospel of John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).
5. These are the only five times it appears in the New Testament – only by John. Notice we have an advocate "with the Father" – we are God's children, and He is our Father.
5. The devil is "the accuser" of the brethren (Rev. 12:10) but Christ is our advocate, our "defense attorney."

III. GOD'S PERFECT PROPITIATION (2:2)

1. "Propitiation" (2:2) means God's wrath has been appeased, and God is satisfied on account of Christ's death on the cross. It means the removal of God's righteous judgment against sin by means of sacrifice, i.e., Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.
2. First John 2:2 does not say, "His death is the propitiation," but that "He is the propitiation." Christ is our propitiation. It is the person of Christ who gives efficacy to his work on the cross.
3. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says the word "propitiation" "is Latin and brings into its English use the atmosphere of heathen rites for winning the favor, or averting the anger, of the gods. In the Old Testament it represents a number of Hebrew words...which are sufficiently discussed under *atonement*, of which propitiation is one aspect...Propitiation needs to be studied in connection with reconciliation...In Septuagint *hilasterion* is the term for the 'mercy-seat' or 'lid of the ark' of the covenant which was

- sprinkled with blood on the Day of Atonement. It is employed in exactly this sense in Hebrews 9:5."
4. "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (Hebrews 9:5).
 5. In our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the publican smote upon his breast, and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner."
 6. The *Scofield Study Bible* says that the word translated "merciful" in this verse, Luke 18:13, is the word "used in the Septuagint and N.T. in connection with the mercy-seat (Exodus 25:17, 18, 21; Hebrews 9:5). As an instructed Jew, the publican is thinking, not of mere mercy, but of the blood-sprinkled mercy seat."...His prayer might be paraphrased, 'Be toward me as thou art when thou lookest upon the atoning blood.' The Bible knows nothing of divine forgiveness apart from sacrifice."
 7. *ISBE* points out that the word "propitiation" was used by the heathens to mean winning the favor, or averting the anger, of their gods. Archaeologists have found ancient documents where the word "propitiation" meant the appeasing of an angry god.
 8. This is seen in Shakespeare's play, *Titus Andronicus*. As the play opens, we see the triumphant return of Titus Andronicus, who has defeated the rebellious Goths. Titus brings with him his surviving sons (two of Titus's sons have died in battle) and his captives, including Tamora, Queen of the Goths, and her sons.
 9. Upon arrival in Rome, Titus sacrifices Queen Tamora's eldest son as a propitiation.
 10. Shakespeare's play illustrates the pagan concept of propitiation.
 11. The necessity of appeasing an angry God is something most religions have in common. In ancient pagan religions, as well as in many religions today, the idea is taught that man appeases God by offering up a sacrifice.
 12. However, the Bible teaches that God Himself has provided the only means through which His wrath can be appeased and sinful man can be reconciled to Him.
 13. In the New Testament, the act of propitiation always refers to the work of God and not to any sacrifices offered by man.
 14. This is because man is totally incapable of satisfying God's justice except by suffering eternal damnation in hell.
 15. There is no sacrifice that man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice.
 16. The only propitiation that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile sinful man to a holy God had to be made by God. It is for

- this reason that God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or reconciliation for the sins of the people (cf. Hebrews 2:17).
17. Under Romans 3:25, Scofield says, "There is no thought in propitiation of placating a vengeful God, but of doing right by His holy law and so making it possible for Him righteously to show mercy."
 18. We saw last week that "fellowship" is the theme of I John. Propitiation makes fellowship with God possible. Propitiation restores the sinner to God by removing every barrier to fellowship.
 19. Christ is the propitiation for "the sins of the whole world" (2:2). This means that the atonement is unlimited and inexhaustible.
 20. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "And yet it is important to remember the distinction between redemption and salvation. All have been redeemed, but all will not be saved. Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for the whole world, but only efficient for those who are spiritually united to him" (*I John*).
 21. Christ is "the propitiation," because He died as our substitute and expiated (removed) our guilt by the vicarious punishment which he endured.

CONCLUSION:

1. Right now the Lord Jesus Christ is our advocate (2:1).
2. He is up yonder in heaven interceding for us. Hebrews 7:25 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."
3. But when sinners reject Him, they will have to face Him -- not as their advocate, but as their judge.
4. John 5:27 says God the Father hath given the Lord Jesus authority to execute judgment.
5. Revelation 20 describes the Great White Throne Judgment, with all lost sinners standing before God; and they are going to be judged according to their works.
6. Revelation 20:15 says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
7. Back in the horse and buggy days, a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The little boy grew up to be a bad man, a good for nothing outlaw. One day this

criminal stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the same man who saved his life years ago. So he pled for mercy on the basis of that long ago incident. But the judge was not moved. He said to the outlaw: "Young man, then I was your saviour; but today I am your judge and I must sentence you to be hanged."

8. Today, Christ is saying to lost sinners: "Come to me and I will save you.." But some day it will be too late and He will say: "I was your Saviour but you rejected me. Now I am your judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."