

The Sinner's Advocate

Sunday, July 20th, 1986

1 John 2:1-2

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

I want you to listen to my text carefully if you will; I am speaking from 1 John Chapter 2:1. The subject is: "THE SINNER'S ADVOCATE."

John writes in 1 John Chapter 2:1, *"My little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."*

All true believers in Christ have many things in common. First of all, I would say this about them; they know, reverence, fear and worship the living God. Our Lord and Saviour said this; *"This is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."* Every believer, every person who knows Christ, knows, fears, reverences and worships the living God.

Second: There is something else that all true believers have in common and that is that they love the Word of God. They believe and they love the Word of God. As David said, *"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."* Again, he says; *"Thy Word O Lord is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."* Believers love the Word of God and they believe the Word of God.

Third: I would say that all believers have this in common; they cast themselves by faith on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. I like Peter's reply when our Lord asked the disciples, *"Will you also go away?"* Peter said, *"To whom shall we go; Thou hast the Words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

We believe that and we have that in common. We are sure that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners. We have cast ourselves without reservation upon God's mercy through Christ, through His righteousness and through His sacrifice to find acceptance with the Father.

Fourth: I would say that all believers have this in common; they all have an understanding (at least to some degree) of the person and work of Jesus Christ. As John said, *"That the Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we might know"*

Him that is true and that we are in Him that is true: And this is eternal life and this is the true God.”

So, we have some understanding of who Jesus Christ is. Jesus Christ is very God of very God. All believers have some understanding of what He did as our Representative and Surety in fulfilling every requirement of God’s Law, God’s Covenant and satisfying God’s justice on behalf of all who believe. We know what He did and why He did it. He did it that God may be just and justifier that God may show mercy and yet be righteous in His dealings with sinners.

We know where He is now; He is at the right hand of God. Every believer has this in common with other believers; they understand to some degree, the person and work of Christ. They see in Him *“both the power and the wisdom of God.”* They see not only the power of God to save but they see the wisdom of God in saving in such a way as to be true to His attributes, His justice and righteousness.

Fifth: I believe that all believers have this in common; they love one another. Our Lord said that, *“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another. How can a man love God whom He hath not seen if he does not love his brother whom he has seen?”*

So, they have this in common. True believers do love one another and they do seek to walk in paths of godliness, integrity, honesty and holiness. That is their aim and that is the bent of their will. That is the tenor of their lives. They want to walk before God in the spirit in righteousness and truth.

In the last place; all believers have this in common; listen carefully; they have a struggle and a conflict with sin; they have a struggle and a conflict with the flesh and with the old nature. Paul said in Romans 7:21, *“I find then, a law, (a rule) that when I would do good (or I am doing good and that is my aim, my objective and my desire), when I would do good, evil is present with me.”*;

In the last place; all believers have this in common; listen carefully; they have a struggle and a conflict with sin; they have a struggle and a conflict with the flesh and with the old nature. Paul said in Romans 7:21, *“I find then, a law, (a rule) that when I would do good (or I am doing good and that is my aim, my objective and my desire), when I would do good, evil is present with me.”*; For I delight (that is, the new man delights, the new nature delights) in the Law of God. *“I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.”*

But, *“I see another law;”* I see something else in me; I see something else happening in me. *“I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.”* Paul says,

“O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from (from this battlefield, from this conflict), this body of death?”

He wrote again, in Galatians 5:17, when he was talking about the believer; *“Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh for the flesh lusteth (warreth) against the Spirit.”* The old nature warreth against the new nature and the Spirit warreth against the flesh. These are contrary one to the other; the old Adam nature can do no good.

The new nature created in Christ Jesus can do no wrong because it is born of God. *“These are contrary one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would.”*

My friends, I want you to listen very carefully today; I am going to tell you the truth from the Word of God. The person who is saved, genuinely born again, regenerated, quickened and brought to knowledge of Christ Jesus is still a sinner. A person who is brought to faith in Christ, who in his heart loves Christ and believes Christ and loves God, is still a sinner; he is still a sinner.

He is a sinner saved by God’s grace. Nevertheless, he is a sinner. It doesn’t matter if you despise that statement or if you cannot reconcile that statement or you wish to clarify that statement; do what you will. The believer, no matter how long he has been a believer, no matter how strong a believer he is; he is still a sinner and he does sin. Believers (people who love Christ and love God) who walk with the Spirit of God and in the Spirit of God do sin.

John said in 1 John 1:8; *“If we say we have no sin, (if that is what you say), we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His Word is not in us.”* Paul said in Romans 3; *“There is none righteous, (there is none perfectly righteous), no not one. There is none that doeth good and sinneth not, no not one.”*

The believer is still a sinner. The believer does not love sin; he hates sin. He loves holiness but he still is in the flesh. A believer grieves over his sin and he repents of his sin and he would rather not sin. A believer would rather be perfect and he would rather be without sin. He would rather be like his Lord. He does not excuse, deny or justify his sin but it is still sin.

Every believer knows that he is a sinner. He knows that he is not perfect in thought, in imagination, in attitude, in spirit, in word, in deed and in himself. He knows that before God he is not perfect. You know that and I know that. Even people who claim to be perfect know that in their hearts.

The believer's righteousness is not his own righteousness. It is the righteousness of Christ the Lord. He knows that "*in his flesh dwelleth no good thing.*" He knows that "*in the flesh, no man can please God.*" No man in the flesh can do that which is acceptable to God Almighty, for God demands, requires and must have perfection.

Now, there is a striving after holiness in this flesh. There is a striving for perfection right now by a person who does not have an understanding of the nature of sin and who does not have an understanding of the holiness of God. If a person does not know something about the righteousness of Christ, it will do one of two things; it will make a Pharisee out of you, (a lying Pharisee) or else it will drive you to despair, depression and overwhelming guilt.

What did you just say, preacher? I said this, there is a striving after holiness, righteousness and perfection in this flesh without an understanding of the holiness of God and what God requires. There are people without an understanding of the true nature of sin and what sin is and what this flesh is. They have no understanding of the mercy of God in Christ and the righteousness of which we have in the Redeemer. This will make you lie about your condition, and many people do that.

They are striving after holiness; they will just out and out lie about it. They will lie to God, lie to themselves and lie to others. Or else, knowing that they don't have what they are trying for, it will bring them under guilt, an awful guilt, depression and despair. I've seen that so much!

But, we must have a good understanding of the righteousness of God in Christ. All that God requires of us is met in Christ; it is supplied in Christ and it is fulfilled in Christ. Sure, God demands perfection and the believer has it in his Lord. Sure, God demands full and total obedience to His holy Law. We have that in Christ.

Sure, God demands that the "*soul that sinneth shall surely die.*" In Christ we died. When you have a true understanding of that and when you have a true understanding of God's love and God's mercy and God's grace to sinners in Christ, then you will find some peace. When you have a true understanding of what sin is, the true nature of sin, and you look to Christ, you can find some peace. You can find some rest. Even in this life you can find some assurance and confidence.

You know; Paul said in Philippians 3:3; "*We are the true Israel.*" Here is the true Israel, the true circumcision; "*we are the true people of God who worship God in the Spirit and in the heart,*" in the inner man or in the soul.

Second: *“We rejoice in Jesus Christ.”* He is our only object of rejoicing. He is our only cause for rejoicing.

Third: *“We have no confidence in the flesh.”* We have no confidence in ours, yours or anybody else’s because there is no good in the flesh. *“In the flesh no man can please God.”* There will never be any perfection as long as we are in this flesh.

How is the believer still a sinner? I want you to listen to me and listen carefully; do not leave me. How is the believer still a sinner?

First of all: There is the imperfection of his nature. My friends; sin is not just an outward act; sin is a nature; sin is an attitude. Sin is a principle within the heart and the mind.

Listen to the Scripture; *“The thought of foolishness is sin.”* Just the thought of foolishness, that crossing your mind is sin in God’s sight. That is falling short of the perfect glory of God. Listen to this, *“To offend in one point of the Law, (one little jot or tittle of God’s Law), is to be guilty of the whole Law.”* Listen to this, *“To know to do good and to do it not is sin.”*

Sin pollutes the best thing that you do and the best thing that I do. The highest degree of goodness to which we can attain has so much flesh and creature infirmity as to merit God’s eternal wrath. Did you know that?

Sin mars our repentance. Our repentance needs to be repented of. Even our repentance would not be acceptable to God without Christ. Sin mocks our tears. Sin corrupts our faith. Sin even invades our prayers. A believer is still a sinner in the imperfections of his nature, his attitude and his spirit at all times.

Second: The believer is still a sinner through his own personal infirmities. One man’s strength is another man’s weakness. Let me ask you this, is not pride sin? You might say that you don’t drink, you don’t curse, you don’t smoke, you don’t dance, you don’t play cards, you don’t gamble and you don’t go to roadhouses.

Wait a minute! Is not pride sin? Is not shortness of temper sin? Is that sin when you are agitated and get angry? Is not that sin? Isn’t unbelief sin? It was unbelief that kept Israel out of Canaan. What about envy; is not envy sin? Is jealousy not sin? Is not anger sin? Is not selfishness and self-centeredness sin?

When you get a group picture, school picture or your company has a picture made, who do you look for first? Well, you look for yourself. You are self-centered. Somebody might say, "Is that a good picture of your company?" You might say, "It is a terrible picture." Why did you say that? The reason is because your picture was bad. Is that not sin? Is not covetousness sin? Is not lust sin? Are not evil thoughts sin? What about pouting? What about laziness?

What about exaggeration? Do you ever exaggerate? Do you ever add an inch or two to the fish that you caught? Do you ever add a few people to the crowd that you preach to? I asked a fellow the other day, "How many were present at your service?" He told me but I asked the preacher how many there were and he doubled it.

Is not greed sin? My friends, you listen to me now; if any man out there or any woman tells me that he or she lives a single day; (I almost said a minute), without a thought of sin, without a word of sin, without an attitude of sin, without an act of sin either in commission or omission, I will tell you this; you don't know yourselves and you never knew God. Believers know and confess and admit that "*in the flesh dwelleth no good thing.*"

As I said, that old nature, that old Adam it does no good. That new nature cannot sin that is born of God. The fact that a believer is still a sinner does not deprive him of a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some people have the idea that if you commit a sin you are lost again and you have to be resaved again. That is not what the Bible says; the Bible says here in my text in 1 John 2:1; "*If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.*"

It does not say, if any man sin he is lost and has no Advocate. It doesn't say if any man sin he has forfeited his Advocate and lost his salvation. That is not what that says; it says, "*If any man sin he has an Advocate.*" We have an Advocate with the Father.

It does not say, if any man be righteous we have an Advocate. That is what most people think. If any man be holy he has an Advocate; that is not what it says. If a man is perfectly holy he doesn't need an Advocate.

Sinners need an Advocate. Sinners need a Lawyer. Sinners need an Intercessor. Sinners need a Mediator. It does not say, if any man be prayerful he has an Advocate; it says, "*If any man sin he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.*" It is the sinner that needs a Saviour.

Actually; the Lord loved us when we were sinners. *“He commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* He chose us when we were sinners. He died for us when we were sinners. He called us to faith while we were sinners and the gift and calling of God are without change; therefore, He loves me now, though I am a sinner.

I will tell you this; if my right to glory and to heaven rested in any way on my works, my deeds or my holiness either before I was converted or after I was converted, it would have been gone a long time ago and yours would be too.

Our right to glory does not rest in any shape, form or fashion on anything we have done, are doing, or will do; it rests on the merit and work, the doing and the dying of Jesus Christ the Lord. That is where righteousness is. If you look anywhere else you have missed salvation. The Lord is our Righteousness. *“Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

I will tell you that if any man tells me that he lives a day without a thought of sin or an act of sin or an attitude or word of sin, he is a *“liar and the truth is not in him.”* He doesn't know himself and He never knew God. Until the Holy Spirit shows him that he is a sinner, he will never know God.

Who is this Advocate? The Scripture says, *“If any man sin”* (call it what it is, sin), *“The thought of foolishness is sin.”* Sin is a transgression of the Law of God. Sin is coming short of the glory of God. Sin is to know good and do it not.

You might say that it is just sin. It is (s-i-n), sin. Don't be tagging a little light word like mistake, bad attitude or something like that to take the sharpness away. Let it stay where it is; it is sin. *“Christ died for sinners. He is the friend of sinners.”*

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Who is this Advocate? Well, the text says; *“If (the word really is when) any man sin.”* He is going to sin and he does. You will sin right now. We have an Advocate. He is already there. He has always been there.

He is a man of God's own choosing. He is the Lamb, the Surety. *"If any man sin we have"* (not shall have or ought to have or wish we had we have by God's direction, anointing and appointing) *we have an Advocate*" and He is there.

What is an Advocate? An Advocate is a Lawyer, one who pleads your cause or your case, an Intercessor. An Advocate is one who mediates with the Father. I will tell you this; His intercession is not just based upon His Words, but upon His presence. It is where He is. He represents us and pleads our cause and He is *"already entered within the veil into the Holy of Holies."* He is there and He is an Advocate. "

He is with the Father. That's interesting; *"If any man sin he has an Advocate with the Father."* He is not down here in a temple. He is not down here in a cathedral. He is not down here in a booth somewhere. He is not in a tabernacle. He is not even in the *"holy place made with hands."*

He is in *"Heaven itself."* He is with the Father. Do you see the significance of that; *"Within the veil, on the right hand of God?"* If any man sin, this Advocate that we have is with the Father and is seated on the right hand of God.

Not only is He with God, the Scripture says; *"He is God."* Who is He? He is Jesus. This shows His purpose. The angel said, *"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* He will save whom? *"He will save His people from their sins."*

Yes sir, that shows His purpose. He came to call sinners. This Advocate is not only Jesus but He is Jesus Christ. What does Christ mean? That is His office; that shows His authority. He occupies the office of Christ. He is the anointed and the chosen of God.

"No man takes this office upon himself but He that is called of God." Jesus Christ is our Advocate. He is man in the flesh, identified with us who came to save. He is Christ the anointed, the one promised, prophesied and pictured in the Old Testament. He is the Emancipator. He is the Deliverer. *"He is the Lord our Righteousness. He is the Branch; He is the seed of David and He is the Christ."*

He says, *"He is Jesus Christ the Righteous."* The what? *"The Righteous."* Oh, how important that is! *"He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification (holiness), and redemption."* Who is your sanctification? Christ is our sanctification. *"He of God is made unto us wisdom; (He is the truth), righteousness, (holiness), sanctification."*

It is not a resolve on your part to never do anything else wrong, because you would be a fool to make such a resolution. Christ is our Righteousness and our Sanctification and He is our Redemption. *“He is Jesus Christ the Righteous.”*

“He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ says this, “Yes; that man is a sinner. He is unrighteous but I am his Substitute. I am ordained as his Substitute. I stood in his place and kept the Law. Yes, as a man in his stead, I obeyed perfectly the Law of God. I went to the cross and bear all of his sins. I cleansed him and washed him and covered him completely from head to toe with the perfection of My doing and dying.”

I have given him the righteousness of God Himself and I will never, ever, forsake him.

“That soul that on Jesus
Hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not
Dessert to its foes.

That soul though all hell
Should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never
No never forsake.”

“If any man sin,” do you sin, have you sinned, will you sin? Thank God we have an Advocate with the Father, *“Jesus Christ the Righteous.”*