

1 John 2:1-2

“Jesus, Pleads our Case”

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: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

Introduction

Last Wednesday evening we began by looking at the purpose John states for writing what he has written (V.1a “that ye sin not”). What John has said about forgiveness and what we are about to study in these two verses were not written to excuse our sin or soothe our rebellious consciences, but instead to motivate us to live holy. If that is the purpose, then what John writes next is the promise. John writes, “And if any man sin.” The word “and” can also mean “but.” Stated that way it would read, “These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin.” John MacArthur writes:

“The Greek grammar of the phrase if anyone sins is instructive. The verb is an aorist subjunctive third-class conditional that conveys the strong probability of actual occurrence. John’s expression could be translated “if anyone sins, and it will happen.” Immediately following his emphasis in the first part of verse 1 that believers do not have to sin, the apostle acknowledges that they definitely will (cf. 1:8, 10). (The pronoun we encompasses the apostle with the “little children,” also referred to earlier in verse 1, showing that the apostle has to be referring to the sins of true believers.” John MacArthur, 1–3 John, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Accordance electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 2007), 45.

The promise is that when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, and our advocate is Jesus Christ the righteous! If Jesus is our advocate, what does that mean? What is an advocate? What does an advocate do? How does that benefit the believers John is writing to and how does it affect us today? Let's spend our time tonight looking at the *activity* of our advocate in this text!

The first activity of our advocate is that our advocate represents us.

1. Our Advocate Represents us

One of the best ways to understand an advocate is to think about a courtroom setting. In a courtroom you have a judge, the accused, and the prosecutor. There is someone else that is involved in a court hearing and that is someone called a lawyer or an attorney. An attorney is an advocate, an advisor, and a counselor to the clients they represent. One of the attorney's jobs is to represent their client in the courtroom. One lexicon I read says that, "In general, then, *paráklētos* (advocate) means a helper in court who might speak on behalf of those who are accused."

Notice who is being represented. "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And/But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Who is the we in this verse? This is we who walk in the light (v.7). This is we who have fellowship with one another (v.7). This is us who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus (v.7). This is we who confess our sins (v.9). This is us who are cleansed from all unrighteousness (v.9). This is John's little children. The we in v.1 is referring to genuine believers. True Christians. This does away with the idea that Christians don't sin. If Christians didn't sin then why would they need an advocate? Because they do!

In his commentary on 1 John, John Stott quotes B.F. Wescott as saying, 'The thought is of the single act (*hamartē*) into which the believer may be carried against the true tenor (habitual condition or character) of his life, as contrasted with the habitual state (*hamartanei*, iii. 6, 8, 9, v. 18)' (Westcott). John R. W. Stott, *The Letter of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 19; IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 84-85.

So, it is the believer who has sinned who has an advocate with the Father. What is sin? It is to miss the mark of God's Holy Law. It is to err. It is to commit a wrong. It is to disobey God's Word. So, when we do that, John says we have an advocate! We have a representative. This is not an excuse to sin or permission for us to throw caution to the wind. That would completely contradict everything John has said to this point. Those who are unrepentant. Those who live in sin habitually. Those who have no concern for God's holiness and God's word are not promised a representative before the Father. No, they will stand before a judge and be condemned.

But if we are walking in the light, if we are confessing our sin, if we are characterized by obedience and not walking in darkness or disobedience, then we are promised an advocate who represents us to the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous is speaking on behalf of those who are accused. The accused are those of us who have sinned, and it is for those who are the true children of God that Jesus speaks for!

What does He speak? What is His plea? "***Christ's intercession is the continual application of his death to our salvation***" John Calvin. Although we sin, we are represented by the only offering that God has ever been eternally satisfied with; Jesus Christ the righteous! As the blood of Abel cried out for vengeance, the blood of Jesus speaks better things. It speaks of mercy, grace, and forgiveness!

Without an advocate we would lose our salvation the very nanosecond we committed a sin, but because our advocate has been eternally accepted we are eternally secure! “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” (Hebrews 7:25). “For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus is the one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement and reach a common goal! He settles the dispute by standing in our place and pleading our case! However, as you have seen we have no case whatsoever. We are guilty, and yet He takes our place as the righteous one and pleads His righteousness and His obedience on our behalf!

The second activity of our advocate is that our advocate restores us.

2. Our Advocate Restores us

Christ not only represents us before the Father, He restores us with the Father. Yes, He can settle the dispute, but He is also able to reconcile both parties! If you remember the word advocate can mean “helper.” When we think of helper we think of someone giving assistance or offering their support, but there is a deeper meaning here. Another dictionary I read says this about the word advocate. “A term such as ‘Helper’ is highly generic and can be particularly useful in some languages. In certain instances, for example, the concept of ‘Helper’ is expressed idiomatically, for example, ‘the one who mothers us’ or, as in one language in Central Africa, ‘the one who falls down beside us,’ that is to say, an individual who upon finding a person collapsed along the road, kneels down beside the victim, cares for his needs, and carries him to safety.” “παράκλητος,” L&N, 142.

Our advocate is not simply representing us in the courtroom, Jesus is restoring our relationship with our heavenly Father. What a helper He is! Jesus told His disciples that He would send another “comforter” (John 14:16). That is the exact same word that we find in our text translated advocate. He was a helper and He sent another helper! We have both a heavenly helper and an earthly helper.

Remember, this is about when we sin! Our advocate comes and finds us, gets down where we are, takes care of us, nurses us back to spiritual health, and carries us back to the path of righteousness! Our advocate is active in righting our wrongs, healing our wounds, and when we have strayed putting us back on the right path! Through Christ our eternal Judge has pardoned us and through Christ our heavenly Father forgives us! Our relationship with the Father is not secure by our faithfulness, but by the efficiency of our advocate! Our restoration is not accomplished because we walk back into the right way, but because our advocate brings us back into the way of righteousness! One evidence of salvation is that your advocate brings you back! If you can stay in sin, live in disobedience, and walk in darkness then you have no claim on the promise of Christ’s advocacy. But if He is coming after you, rejoice that He will finish what He has started! Rejoice that He is restoring your relationship with the Father! Rejoice that your sins are forgiven. Rejoice that you are cleansed from your unrighteousness by the blood of Jesus because your advocate is your helper!

The third activity of our advocate is that our advocate relieves us.

3. Our Advocate Relieves us

If this is true of us what relief Christ has given us! We have an advocate with the Father and our advocate is not some smug lawyer, but Jesus Christ the righteous! He is a man like we are except without sin. Not only was His life unspotted by sin but Christ walked in perfect obedience to the Law and commands of God. He is righteous! As Hebrews said, He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners! This is the one representing us! He is the one who restores us! If He is the one doing that what peace is given to the child of God!

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33–34).

A lot of times in court cases the prosecutor or even the defense will bring out some hidden piece of truth that the person on the stand didn’t know was going to be brought up and that piece of information will prove to settle the case. There will be no hidden charges brought in, there will be no accusations that stick, and there will be no sin on the account of even one of God’s children! Why? Christ has justified and He is at the right hand of God making intercession for you (represents).

We can live in freedom without fear because Jesus is our advocate. When you sin you can repent without wondering if God will receive you. When you sin you can remain confident in your standing before God all because Christ is your advocate!

Conclusion

Father, please forgive us for when our attitude toward sin is cavalier. May you use the work of Christ to relieve us from trying to earn our standing before you and to motivate us in our

Series: Fruit of Faith

Sermon: 10 (Part 2 of 2:1-2)

10.10.2018

obedience to you. May you use Christ's advocacy to cause us not to sin. Deliver us Oh Lord!

May our lives be characterized by our obedience to your Word and our conformity to Christ's likeness. Thank you, Jesus for taking our place before the Father's judgment bar. Thank you for restoring us when we fall. Thank you! Amen.