

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 9- Jesus Christ, our Advocate and Propitiation

Let's begin by reading our text today- **1 John 1:8 – 2:2**

We are continuing our discussion of sin and last week we concluded verses 8-10 of chapter 1. In these verses we learned that we all “have” sin because of Original Sin, and to say you don't have sin, or that you have never sinned, you are a liar and the Truth is not in you. And remember there is a big difference between “having sin” and being a “slave to sin”. We see John make this point throughout the entire letter. We must be committed to God and His Righteousness and not committed to sin, 1 John 2:29.

And last week we learned what it means to confess our sins to Jesus Christ our High Priest. This is humbling ourselves to our Savior. Coming to Him as a sinner, knowing that we need a Savior to redeem us from our wretched humanness. And thank God, Jesus Christ is a merciful High Priest, who is faithful and Just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And as we learned last week, there is a onetime event called Justification, when our spirit is redeemed from sin forever through His work on the cross, but there is also a continual cleansing. A continual forgiveness that sanctifies our soul as we walk through this sin filled life. We were bathed in Justification, and we who are perfected forever because of our justification are being continually cleansed, **Hebrews 10:14**. Our feet are being washed from the filth of this world as we continue to have fellowship in Him. So, as we saw last week, we, as humble faithful Christians, continually confess our sins, and He, as our faithful and merciful High Priest is continually forgiving our sins, expelling sin away from our soul, not allowing it to have dominion over us, and He is continually cleansing our soul from a guilty conscience so we can continually take part in Him, abide in Him and have fellowship in Him.

Now as we enter into chapter 2, John is still talking about sin, but he goes deeper to tell us why Jesus is able to forgive and cleanse us. Lets read verses 1-2...

1 John 2:1-2¹ 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.

There is one reason we are forgiven and cleansed of sin... That one reason is Jesus Christ. He is the reason why we have eternal life. He is our Savior. And in verses 1-2, John explains why Jesus is our Savior, why and how we have our sins forgiven and why we can have everlasting life in Him.

The short answer to this is, “Jesus died for my sins”. But what does that really mean? John reveals this to us in two ways: 1) we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous... and 2) He Himself is the propitiation for our sins. Understanding these two statements, explains the question, how are we saved?

Lets start unpacking these next two verses...

2:1 *My little children, these things I write to you,*
Τεχνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν,

John reminds us of who he is writing to and why. “My little children”, *Τεχνία μου*. This is a letter to the family of God. John is an old man by the time he is writing this letter, so everyone is a little child, and you can hear John's tender heart as he writes this letter. These are not only his flock in Ephesus, but the children of God, 2:12, 18; 3:1-2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21

2:1 *...I write to you, so that you may not sin...*

ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν, ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε

From 1 John 1:6, John has been showing us the proofs of one who is in fellowship with Him: walking in the Light as He is in the Light, fellowship with the brethren, the blood of Jesus cleansing our sins, and rightly confessing our sins are all proofs of being in fellowship with Him.

John is writing these things, “so that we may not sin”. This is a letter of sanctification and as we walk in these proofs, they make us more aware of sin. As we abide in Him, and His Word abides in us, we have fellowship with Him, we are keeping His Word, and His love is perfected in us, 1 John 2:5. As you walk in sanctification, you see sin the way God sees sin and you hate sin. Its repulsive to you. Things that you used to enjoy, are now hideous to you. This is what Paul was saying in Gal 5:16, “walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”

John is not saying that we will stop sinning. We just read in verse 7 that blood of Jesus is continually cleansing our sins. And verse 9, we are continually confessing our sins. But as the blood of Jesus expels and cleanses sin away from our soul, sin no longer has a hold of us, and we will not sin as much. The faithful, confessing Christian is not sinless, John made that clear in verses 8 and 10, but the faithful Christian will “sin-less”. And this is why he continues by saying: *And if anyone sins...* because we will sin.

Therefore, he is writing this letter to us so that we 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...*

In this letter, John can be overwhelmingly blunt sometimes, but aren't you so glad he said this? This is one of the few exceptions in this letter. But he has to say this, because this is the heart of the gospel. These are the most pivotal verses in the letter because everything hangs on this fact, that we have Jesus Christ as our Advocate, and He is the propitiation for our sins. These two verses give the believer the full assurance of everlasting life. These two verses are why the gospel is called “good news”

^{2:1} ...And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον.

² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins

² καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

Jesus is both our Advocate, parakletos, παράκλητος, the one who is called to speak on our behalf and assist us, and He is our propitiation, hilasmos, ἱλασμός, our means of appeasement, the satisfying sacrifice of atonement for our sins. The atoning sacrifice that satisfies our payment owed because of sin.

For the remainder of our time today, we will be understanding the good news of what it means that Jesus is our Advocate, parakletos, παράκλητος, and our propitiation, hilasmos, ἱλασμός.

John is the only writer who uses this word, parakletos, παράκλητος. He uses it once here and four other times in his gospel, namely in chapters 14, 15, 16. In his gospel, he uses this word referring to our Helper, the Holy Spirit. When William Tyndale translated the New Testament for the first time into English in 1526, he translated parakletos, παράκλητος, in 1 John 2:1 as “advocate”. But the four other times related to the Holy Spirit he translated as “Comforter”. In English, an advocate is defined as one who pleads the case of someone else in the court of Law. That thinking can certainly be implied in this verse, and many good teachers have taken this verse down that road. And there is nothing wrong with that, in fact we are going to be talking about God's Righteous Judgment today. But I believe John had a different view in mind, more in line with how Jesus used this word in his gospel as our Helper and Comforter not necessarily our advocate in a court of law. The root meaning of this word has the sense of being a helper or comforter. parakletos, παράκλητος comes from, parakaleo, παρακαλέω, which means to come alongside, to exhort, comfort, help, support, admonish, entreat.

In John 14:16, 14:26; 15:26, and 16:7, John records Jesus using this exact word, parakletos, παράκλητος. Go to John 14:16 to look at one example. Notice Jesus says “another” Helper, parakletos, παράκλητος, implying that Jesus is a Helper, and He is sending “another” helper because He is going to be with the Father. In this age of grace, we have

two parakletos, *παράκλητος*, one in heaven and one on earth. Jesus is in Heaven with the Father and the Holy Spirit is on the earth and dwelling within all those who are born again.

So how is Jesus “helping” us in heaven right now? What is His role in heaven during this age and for all the ages to come? What is His role toward us now that He has been raised from the dead? He is our eternal High Priest and “He ever lives to make intercession for us”, Heb 7:25. Jesus is, and will be forever, interceding on our behalf to the Father as our Mediator of the new covenant, John 14:6; Heb 7:16-17; 9:15. Jesus as High Priest is the parakletos, *παράκλητος*, the advocate, the helper that John has in mind in this epistle. He is the One who stands in our place on our behalf toward the Father. Remember the analogy in Exodus 33. We are hidden in the Rock, who is Jesus Christ, so that we can stand with Jesus in the face of God’s Righteous glory. That is the role of Jesus as our parakletos, *παράκλητος*. Now let’s see what it means that He is our propitiation, our hilasmos, *ἱλασμός*,

^{2:2} *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins...*

² *καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.*

And He Himself, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the parakletos, *παράκλητος*, is also the propitiation, hilasmos, *ἱλασμός*, the means of appeasing, the satisfying sacrifice of atonement for sin. He is the sacrifice that satisfies the Righteous Holy Judge. John identifies Jesus in these two ways because they go completely together. Jesus is the propitiation, the final sacrifice for sin that satisfied the debt of sin AND Jesus is also our High Priest who administered the propitiation, His blood, to the Father, **Heb 9:11-12, 24-26**; read Hebrews chapters 5-10.

Only John uses this word hilasmos, *ἱλασμός*, as a noun, 1 John 2:2; 4:10, but Paul/Luke use this as a verb hilaskomai, *ἱλάσκομαι*, Heb 2:17; **Luke 18:13** (Pharisee and the tax collector parable). This word depicts the act of mercy because hilasmos, *ἱλασμός*, is an appeasing sacrifice on the behalf of someone else. The wrath of sin is appeased because the penalty for sin was completely satisfied by a qualifying substitute and therefore Mercy can be shown to the guilty. That is what Mercy is. Mercy is the very fact that God gave us a substitute to pay for our sins and he counts our sin as paid, he accounts us as righteous because of the propitiation that He sent for us. God’s justice on sin is completely satisfied and His wrath passes over us. That is Mercy. We don’t deserve it. We can’t earn it. It is a gift because He loves us so much, He allows our debt of sin to be paid by someone else. Who is this substitute? Who is this propitiation? His name is Jesus Christ, **1 John 4:9-10; Romans 5:8-9; Eph 2:4-9**.

To better understand this word, propitiation, hilasmos, *ἱλασμός*, another word closely related is hilasterion, *ἱλαστήριον*, the place of propitiation or the place of mercy. Usually translated Mercy seat in the Septuagint. We see this first depicted in Exodus 25:17-22 and Leviticus 16:11-16 as the place where once a year on Yom Kippur, the blood was sprinkled on the Mercy seat to give atonement for the sins of the people. This of course was a foreshadowing of Jesus’ sacrifice and His blood being shed for the remission of sins. I want to point out the analogy that God depicts here in the Old Covenant. Because God is very specific and tells Moses that the Mercy seat, the hilasterion, *ἱλαστήριον*, is to be placed above the ark. And what was in the ark? The Law of God that was written on tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments, Heb 9:2-5. The Mercy seat is the place of propitiation, the place to satisfy the Justice of God. Every sin is judged according to the Law, and there is not one sin that will not go unpunished. All have broken God’s Law; all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This is no surprise to God, and in anticipation of this He established a place of mercy, a place of appeasement where His Righteous wrath could be appeased toward the sinner. In the Old Covenant, this was the Mercy seat located just above His Law. But notice what is between His Law and His mercy, the blood. In the Old Covenant it was the blood of animals, which could do nothing to appease God’s wrath, but was only as a type to foreshadow the blood of the One who would appease God’s divine justice, the blood of Jesus Christ, Heb 10:4; 9:11-14. Therefore, Jesus is our propitiation, the One who appeased and satisfied God’s Righteous Judgment concerning sin so that He could then administer His mercy on all those who broke His Holy Law. Now, in the New Covenant we have full access to His Mercy anytime because of His blood, **Heb 4:16**.

Romans 3:24–26²⁴ *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,* ²⁵ *whom God set forth as a propitiation,* [the hilasterion, *ἱλαστήριον*, the place of mercy], *by His blood, through faith,*... mercy is granted to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And if we are in Christ, if we are abiding in the place of Mercy, God’s justice is satisfied by the blood of Jesus, and we are granted forgiveness and eternal life.

Verse 25... God did this... ²⁵ *...to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed*, Why is God able to pass over our sins? Because Christ offered Himself as the propitiation, the sacrifice that appeases His wrath and satisfies the payment of sin. Therefore, God's Righteous wrath passes over those who are in Jesus, verse 26... *to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*.

How does passing over our sins demonstrate God's Righteousness? Because His Righteous Judgment was placed on our substitute, Jesus Christ who is the propitiation for our sins. And we are then declared Righteous, justified because He paid our debt to sin.

Jesus offered Himself as our substitute, taking on the punishment for sin in our place, satisfying God's wrath on our sin. God didn't just look the other way concerning our sin. No, He dealt with it Righteously by crushing Jesus, **Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12**. This is why it pleased the Father to bruise Him, because through this one offering of sin, He can now grant mercy to all of us who believe, and God can have His everlasting family reconciled to Him through His Son, **2 Cor 5:17-21**.

Every sin is recorded in what Revelation calls "books", Rev 20:11-12. This is a record of every transgression against God and His holy Law. But what happens to those written records of sin for those who believe in Jesus? Go to **Col 2:13-15**. They were nailed to the cross and paid for. When Jesus yelled out, it is finished, tetelestai, **Τετέλεσται**, our debt to sin was paid for in full. His sacrifice appeased the debt owed for sin and we are made free, set free from the bondage of sin and death.

^{2:2} *...and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*
² οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

The promise of the gospel is universal and available to all who believe.

John 3:16- *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Romans 3:22- *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe...*

Romans 10:12- *... for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.*

Acts 10:43- *... whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.*

1 Timothy 2:4- *[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

There are some people, namely Calvinists, who believe that our eternal fate is predestined by God. That man does not have free will and cannot choose eternal life unless God grants it to Him, but in 1 John 2:2 it says that Christ is the propitiation *not for us only, but for the whole world*. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he cried out, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*", John 1:29. The Gospel and His grace is universal to everyone.

Jesus paid for the sins of the entire world. His blood was shed for all, because *God desires that all men be saved*, 1 Tim 2:4. Jesus did all the work, the only thing He requires in return from us is our humble heart. That we have faith in Him as our Lord and Savior and then, through His mercy, He will administer His New Covenant in His blood to us and give us grace and eternal life in Him.

Let's read our text with what we have learned today. 1 John 2:1-2- ¹ *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins [because we will], we have an Advocate, with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous [our Eternal High Priest who always lives to make intercession for us, granting us mercy from the wrath of God because]* ² *He Himself is the propitiation [the satisfying sacrifice of atonement to appease God's Righteous Judgment] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world [to all who would believe in Him].*