

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 John 2

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this very personal and practical letter that the Apostle John wrote to every believer.

It is a letter to remind us of the reality of who God is.

The reality of who Jesus is.

And the reality of what it means to be a Christian.

For the past few weeks, as we looked in depth at chapter one – John laid the foundation for the exhortation and encouragement that he is planning to give us through the rest of the letter.

He has provided for us these tests to evaluate whether or not we have true fellowship with God.

Remember John doesn't want us to be self-deceived

He doesn't want us get trapped into thinking we have something that we don't.

There were people who thought that they had fellowship with God who were not.

This was one of the false teachings that was going on in the early church – and the teaching was that it really didn't matter how the Christian lived – because God only cared about the spirit.

So these Gnostics were going around telling everyone that it was possible to walk in the light and walk in the darkness at the same time.

It was possible to have fellowship with God and still hold on to sin.

But John wants us to make sure that we have real fellowship with a real Savior

He wants to make sure we have a real relationship and fellowship with our Heavenly Father – truly understanding that He is holy, truly understanding that He is just, that He is faithful, and He wants to have meaningful real fellowship with you and me.

And in order to have fellowship with Him – we need deal with our sin –

And so far – John has given us two ways to deal with our sin.

[1Jo 1:7 NKJV] 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

So the first step in walking in the light – is walking away from sin.

Jesus delivered us out of darkness into the light – so we don't bring darkness with us.

We don't cling to darkness – we don't continue to walk in habitual sin

And as we walk in the light – the light will expose the darkness – and then we come to the next step –

And that step is confession -

[1Jo 1:9 NKJV] 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In our text this morning – John is going to provide us with a third way of dealing with sin – so that we may continue to have fellowship with God and with each other.

Let's pray...

[1Jo 2:1-2 NKJV] 1 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.

So at the beginning of the chapter – John makes it clear that he is writing to believers –

These are his spiritual children – those who are born again.

And John is writing this to balance out something he said earlier in his letter –

John doesn't want his word twisted – remember, he wrote

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

He knows that there will be people who will hear that and make an argument like this –

Ok, I am going to sin – so, I might as well not even bother trying to be holy.

And John – responds with – don't twist my words.

I am writing this – so that you won't sin

We are to set our sights on holiness, motivated by God's love

Yes – we will stumble along the way – but God has made provisions for that when we are honest with Him and each other.

So that you may not sin -

What John is saying here is that we will try to stay away from sin

That we will avoid it

That we will refuse it

And many will ask the question, "So why is it that we continue to sin?"

It is an important question and it is a reasonable question.

Why do we continue in sin?

Because according to John – we have not yet been made perfect.

This is something that we are going to see John speak of later on in his letter.

[1Jo 3:2 NKJV] 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Yes, we are perfect in Christ

But we have not been made perfect in the sense that we have not entered into His glory.

The truth is - we have been saved from the penalty of sin and we are currently being saved by the power of sin – as we continue to abide in Him / as we continue to fellowship with Him / as we continue to walk in the light – and one day we will be saved from the presence of sin.

You see church,

What John is saying here is that we are in a spiritual struggle.

That the truth is – that we are sinful but, we also shouldn't sin

We have a sinful nature

We live in a sinful world

Therefore, John is encouraging us to resist sin and fight against sin

The problem that many believers face is that they will make the decision not to resist sin or not to fight against sin

So what happens if we do sin?

John reminds us that we have an Advocate with the Father

The word for Advocate here is the word para kletos

It refers to -

“Someone who is willing to stand with you”

“Someone who is willing to come alongside with you”

We’ve seen this term used by Jesus to describe the Holy Spirit,

[Jhn 14:16 NKJV] 16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--

The “another Helper” or Comforter is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus being the first Helper / Comforter.

The reason that this is important is because this battle that we fight everyday against the world, against our flesh and against the enemy – the Lord wants to help us with this.

Not only do we have the Helper living inside of – guiding us and leading us and convicting us when we rebel against God –

We also have a Helper who stands on our behalf before the Father in Heaven.

Keep in mind what sin does –

John has reminded us what sin does –

In this context, it breaks our fellowship with God, it takes away our joy, it takes away His light.

Why is John reminding us of this –

So that we can have fellowship with God.

[1Jo 1:3 NKJV] 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

This entire letter is an invitation to have fellowship with God.

It is an invitation to have fellowship with one another.

To walk in His light

To walk in His love

Sin undermines all these things.

I don't want us to lose sight of what the Apostle John is telling us here in verse one.

He is telling us that sin is real – everyone here this morning is fully aware that sin is real.

However, he is also telling us that forgiveness is real.

We stumble and fall every day.

Yet the possibility of forgiveness is made available.

God is just

God is love

God wants fellowship with us

God wants us to know Him – so that we can make Him known

But God also knows -

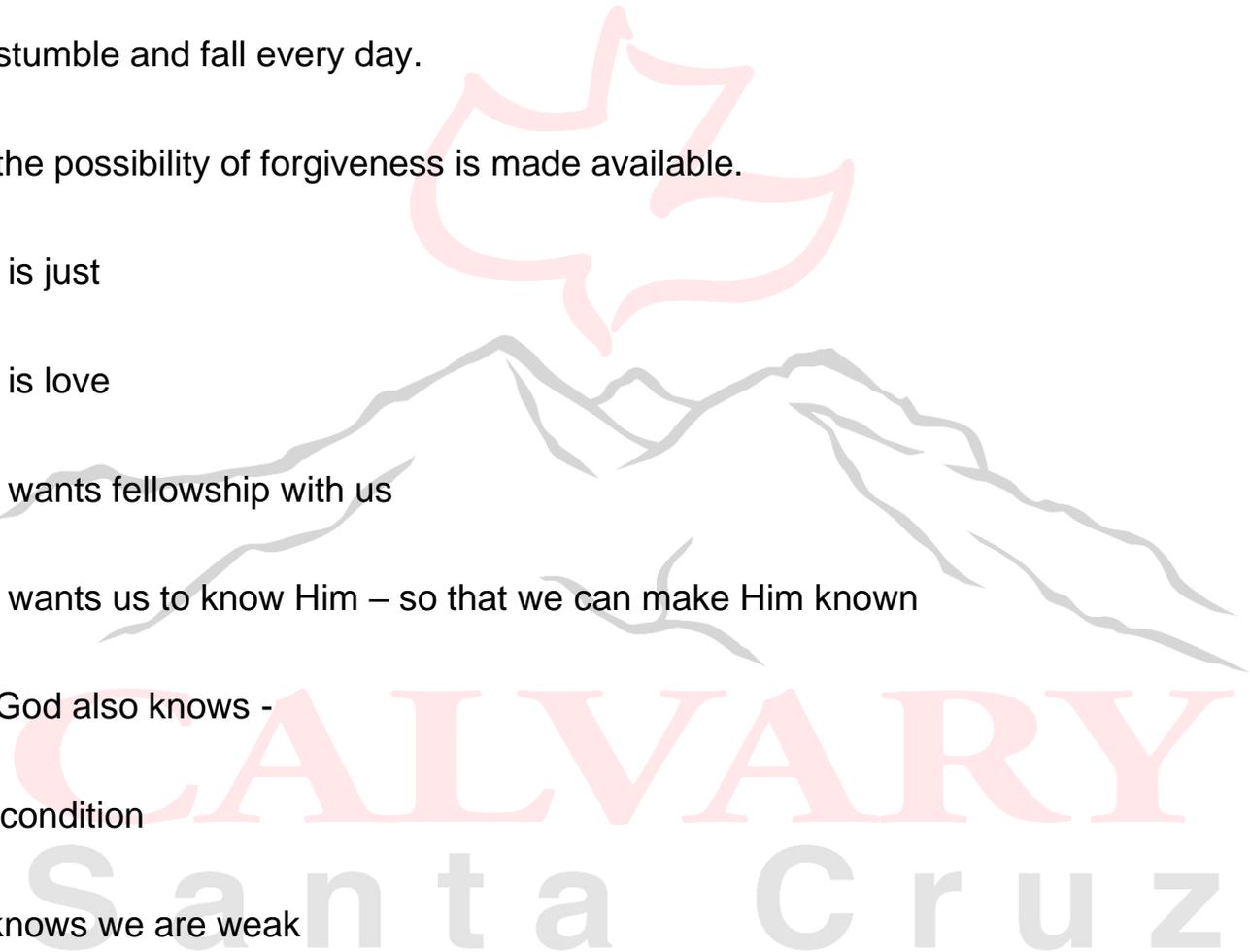
Our condition

He knows we are weak

He knows we are damaged.

He knows we are sinful.

So God sends His own Son to die for our sins



And then He appoint Jesus as our Advocate on our behalf.

What gives Jesus the right to be our Advocate?

He is the Righteous One.

Not only is John referring to His character – as Jesus lived a sinless and perfect life.

He is referring to the fact that Jesus is the only one who could stand before our holy and righteous God.

Church – understand this – only a perfect person can stand before God's presence –

This is why we must approach God through Jesus – there is no other way.

Jesus alone is perfect and righteous.

Jesus alone can stand in the court of God.

Jesus alone can plead our case.

This is the advocacy of Jesus – reserved for sinning believers.

You and me.

You see church –

Jesus is more than just our perfect Savior.

The moment that He ascended into heaven – He wasn't done with us.

He cares about us – personally and individually.

He loves us

He continues to bear our burdens (Psalm 68:19)

He is still talking to the Father about us and for us.

He is still pleading our case

The picture is that of a courtroom in heaven.

God the Father is sitting up in the place of the judge.

Our defense attorney, Jesus, is sitting by our side.

I want us to have that picture in our head as we go to verse 2 -

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

So again, courtroom setting.

The prosecuting attorney – the accuser is on one side (by the way, who is the accuser – Satan)

And our Advocate is on the other side.

Here is the thing to understand what makes this courtroom setting different than those we watch on TV or in the movies.

In heaven, the Lord doesn't plead that we are innocent.

He doesn't try to tell the Father the following – “There are extenuating circumstances I think You should consider.”

– he was poor, he lived in the bad side of town, he had a bad childhood, he hung out with the wrong crowd.

None of that happens in heaven.

Jesus pleads guilty.

He agrees with the charges that are brought up by the accuser against the believer.

And then He offers His death upon the cross as grounds for our acquittal.

Jesus doesn't plead the reputation of the believer.

Jesus doesn't plead the good works of the believer.

Jesus doesn't plead the personal righteousness of the believer.

He doesn't plead that the believer did the best that he or she could do.

That is not what is happening.

Jesus pleads His own righteousness and death.

So if we are thinking about what our Advocate is saying on our behalf – it might come as a surprise that it has little to do with us and it has everything to do with Him.

It has everything to do with who He is and what He has done

I had you make a note of the word propitiation –

And in order to help us understand the meaning of it –

I want us to turn to Hebrews 9

Here in Hebrews 9 – the writer of Hebrews describes for us the Ark of the Covenant –

[Heb 9:1-5 NKJV] 1 Then indeed, even the first [covenant] had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first [part], in which [was] the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which [were] the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Now the reason that we came here to Hebrews is because the word that is translated propitiation in 1 John 2:2 – the noun form is used here in the Greek for the mercy seat that sat on top of the Ark of the Covenant.

In the ark of the covenant were the tablets of the Law.

The Law condemns all men – because no one was able to keep the law, but on top of that was the Mercy Seat and God could look at man, not because He had fulfilled the Law, but because of the blood that was sprinkled on that Mercy Seat.

When the High Priest would come in on the Day of Atonement, he would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on that Mercy Seat and immediately God said, "I will meet you right there. I will fellowship with you in the blood at the Mercy Seat."

This lid, then, was the place of propitiation, the place where the wrath of God was turned away from His people.

Now – turn to Romans 3

[Rom 3:23-26 NKJV] 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 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.

To summarize what Paul is saying in Romans 3 – he is saying that Jesus is our mercy seat.

He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.

Now, I want us to think about sin in two ways.

I want us to think about the stench that sin produces in the nostril of God

After all – that is what is described in Isaiah 3:24 and 65:5 –

Sin stinks

Now, imagine if we had giant cans of Lysol that we could use to cover up the smell or at least mask the smell at least temporarily.

Would God be able to smell beyond the Lysol? Yes

Would the Lysol be able to remove whatever is causing the odor to begin with? No

So God has to do two things –

He has to figure out a way to satisfy Himself

And then He has to figure out a way to make us clean.

That is what this word means

God figured out a way to satisfy Himself and at the same time make us clean.

It is through Jesus that any guilt from past sin and our defilement from present sin are removed.

It is through Jesus that our fellowship with God is first restored and then maintained.

All because He is our propitiation

God has been satisfied with the sacrifice of His perfect Son

Remember, God is just – we talked about that last week.

He cannot simply look away at sin – that would make Him unjust

God has to execute justice.

God must judge sin

God must condemn sin

And there is only one way that God's holy character can be satisfied in every way – a perfect and ideal man has to accept the guilt and the punishment for sin.

And that is why God sent His Son

This is why God accepts Jesus and His death

- As the sacrifice for our sins
- As the covering for our sins
- As the satisfactions for our sin
- As the payment for the penalty of our sins
- As the appeasement of His wrath for our sin.

The bottom line for you and me is that the God of Heaven is satisfied.

God is completely satisfied with Jesus

And because He is completely satisfied with Jesus – that means that we don't have to worry about us being the satisfaction.

And at the end of verse two – John is pretty clear – that Jesus' propitiation is for the entire world.

How far does God's forgiveness reach?

How far does the cleansing go?

John makes it clear that Jesus died not only for his sins and not only for those who are reading his letter – but for the entire world.

[2Co 5:19-21 NKJV] 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore [you] on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God made provision for the whole world to be made right with Him, and we now have been entrusted with getting that message out to people, that if they are willing to receive it, God has the free gift of salvation to offer to them.

Each person has to come to Christ and trust Him

Jesus is the only One who has the right to stand before God and plead our case

In Luke 18 – Jesus gave the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

And in the parable there were two prayers -

[Luk 18:11-13 NKJV] 11 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise [his] eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

The word that is used for “be merciful” is the word for propitiation.

He was praying for God to be his covering

He was praying for God to be the satisfying solution

What the tax collector was saying in his prayer –

“I have no real way to come to You”

“I have no way to be accepted by You”

To which Jesus makes the announcement in John’s gospel.

[Jhn 14:6 NKJV] 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

If we understand what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, we will not take advantage of it by sinning more.

Rather, as we think about God’s amazing grace shown to us, who deserved His wrath and we think about His love that sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins it will make us hate sin and strive to live to please the Savior.

Which is exactly John’s message in our text.

Amen.

Let’s pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, “I am a sinner.”

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Some of us may not recognize the name John Newton –

But we easily recognize the amazing song that he wrote.

Amazing Grace

And one of my favorite quotes of him -

I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

John Newton recognized that the place where I came from is different from where I am and even the place where I am is still not the place where I want to be.

The question we have to ask ourselves – Can we make the same claim?

Because that is the mindset of the believer who has real fellowship with His real Savior.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace!

