

Christ Our Advocate

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[0:00] I'm going to give you the answer.

Do you ever wake up, though, at 3 in the morning it's going to be answered tonight because there's actually somewhat of a drama that's occurring within the throne room of God that is somewhat reminiscent of an American courtroom.

I'm very familiar with American courtrooms. In our judicial system, there is a judge and a prosecutor and a defense attorney and the accused.

In the heavenly courtroom, there is also a judge and his name is God the Father. There is a prosecutor who is the old serpent, the accuser of the brethren, Satan.

There is a defense attorney and that is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. So this begs a question then, who are the accused? And the accused are every follower of Christ who is alive at this very moment on planet Earth.

[1:31] Which means we're all part of that accused. And what is the prosecutor, Satan, accusing us of before the throne of God? He's accusing us of sin. And in all likelihood, in most cases, certainly in my case, he's not lying.

He didn't have to lie. The Bible says we all sin. We all fall short of the glory of God. And we even, we will say, and maybe say especially, after being born again or born from above, we continue to do battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And in our flesh, we often succumb to sin. Now, this evening, I want to focus just for a few minutes on 1 John 2, verses 1 and 2.

Now, we all know that the Bible never endorses sin. And we're going to bear that in mind throughout our little devotion this evening.

Nowhere in the Bible did we find permission to commit sin. John did inform us in chapter 1 of 1 John that all men, and ladies, I'm including, that's generic, I'm including you all, all men and women, sin.

[3:05] There's no mistake about that. In fact, the Bible is very clear. And when you come to 1 John, a great book of the Bible, by the way, in verse 6, if we say that we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

And then in verse 8, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. And then in verse 10, if we say we have not sinned, we make Him, that's God, out to be a liar and His Word is not in us.

How do we make Him out a liar? He said we sin. If we say, no, we don't, we're calling God a liar. I had a relative one time, we left church and the traffic backed up and he said, I wish that a preacher would quit preaching on sin.

And then he used a couple of expletives and said, I never sinned. And I thought then, boy, we're going to, you know, this is not good. The danger, though, is in adopting an attitude that concludes that since sin is inevitable, it must be permissible.

The Bible says that's not so. central to salvation is the fact that the sins of Christ's followers are forgiven. But we have to be on guard for any attitude that assumes that since sins are forgiven, past, present, and future, we possess a license to sin.

[4:38] Poor Lloyd Schmitz, or loved Lloyd, he's with the Lord. Lloyd struggled, though. He said, I understand all my sins were forgiven to the moment of my salvation. But what about the future sins?

I said, Lloyd, when Jesus was on the cross, all your sins were future. That was 2,000 years ago. Some have gone so far as to argue that if we sin more, God is free to forgive more, and therefore, he receives the greater glory.

Now, that thought is revolutionary, but it is revolutionary blasphemy. The Bible doesn't teach that. No honest person can read the Apostle John, and we'll throw in Paul and Peter and the others, and conclude any license to sin at any time for any reason.

And it just doesn't happen. In fact, the opposite is true. In the first part of verse 1, chapter 2, we read this, My little children, I love that.

Techna in the Greek. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And again, God does not want us to sin, and true believers are no longer slaves to sin.

[5:54] We have been given the spiritual tools necessary to have victory over sin. Sin for the believer is a choice. And quite frankly, a choice that I make all too often.

It is true because, as a believer, we all have a new nature. Unbelievers still live in their sin nature, and absent Christ do not have the ability or even the desire to escape from it.

But that is not true with the redeemed. Those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Listen to what the Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 6. He says, Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. Now, the law of God makes demands upon humans.

But remember this. The law of God, and I'm going back into the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, the Mosaic law, and all that. The law of God never provided a means by which it could be kept.

[7:24] it was the taskmaster, it was the schoolmaster, the schoolteacher, it was the mirror that we look into and our sins are reflected back.

The law condemned, but it was powerless to save. The law was intended to drive us to the one person in the universe that could keep it and did keep it, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

A lot of people think, well, the Old Testament believers were saved by keeping the law, New Testament by grace. Folks, no human has ever kept the law for one second.

What's the greatest commandment? Love God with all. No one has ever kept it. We live in a continual need for a Savior that kept that.

And we need to be in Him. We need to be in Him. Over against the demands of the law, we find the grace of God expressed by the life of Christ.

[8:27] Believers are drawn to that grace by the unmerited favor of God. We don't deserve the grace. We cannot earn the grace. It is a gift of God.

It is based solely upon His mercy. John chapter 9 says He will have mercy upon Him. He will have mercy. Can God do that? Sure. Sovereign.

There is a paradox in all this because in 1 John 1.9 we have the absolute assurance of forgiveness. If you're going to memorize a verse of Scripture, memorize 1 John 1.9 and go to it several times a day.

If we confess our sins, and that's to name them, not to me, to God, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That is what we are commanded to do. Through the avenue of confession, God will forgive us and cleanse us of all the filth and unrighteousness that permeates our life.

[9:31] He'll not only cleanse us of the sin that we confess to Him, but all unrighteousness, those are the sins we've picked up and have forgotten. We've picked them up. Great expression, that's the foot worship.

Peter said, you're not worshiping my feet. He said, don't wash your feet and you don't have any part of me. He said, I can't wash my whole body. I don't have to wash your whole body. Your whole body's already been washed, Peter. It was washed at Calvary, although that was still future.

It was washed at Calvary, but you are picking up the dust of the earth. The sins that we pick up every day, that's what you need to be washed on. We are washed by 1 John 1.9.

When we commit a sin, go to the Lord, confess it, it's homologos, name the sin to the Lord and see it with His eyes and He will forgive it.

The true believer then is never free to sin because he does possess the tools of forgiveness. So should we sin? God forbid, Paul says.

[10:32] That's the strongest Greek word in the Greek language. Should we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. It is the undeserved forgiveness that we receive that makes us desirous of not

sinning against so great and kind and merciful a God as ours.

There's a story told about Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse, a great man now with the Lord. And he would meet with the young men in his church who were struggling with past sins.

And he told this story to be helpful. There was a young man who while unsaved fell into deep personal sin. He became involved with women of the street, with alcohol, and after living a life of sin he was converted, marvelously converted.

He described it as a miraculous rescue mission on the part of God. He met a woman in the church, fell deeply in love with her, wanted to marry her, but felt it necessary to explain to her his past life without Christ.

His great fear was that one day he might be drawn back into that lifestyle. So he described his failures to, I'll call her his wife, because they didn't marry him, and she kissed him and said she understood her Bible and she understood the workings of Satan.

[12:03] She knew that her husband was thoroughly converted, but also knew that he, like all true believers, still had a sin nature with which to battle. She explained that Satan would often attack him at his weakest point.

She told her husband, you need to expect temptations to come your way, and she went on to say there could be a day in our life together when you will succumb to a particular temptation.

She said, I'm going to pray that you will not, but I know that it could happen. And then she went on and she said, if that day ever comes, Satan is going to try and convince you that all is lost and your life is totally ruined.

And then she went on to tell him this. What a marvelous Christian woman. She said, if you fail, Satan will also convince you to hide that fact from me.

But remember, this is your home. I'm your wife. This is where you belong. And she concluded by saying this, I grant you full pardon and forgiveness in advance for any evil that may come into your life.

[13:16] Wow. Dr. Barnhouse used that very example many times in counseling situations. and I think most would conclude by stating that if anything would keep a man on the straight and narrow was having a wife with that level of love and forgiveness.

That is the principle really of what we're studying this evening. God has forgiven His elect children for any sin that may come into their lives in the future. But He gave that promise so that we might not sin.

Not so that we would have the license to. And we can't measure the height, depth, and breadth of that love. He tells us of His love and grace that we might not sin against Him. And He strengthens us that we might not fail Him.

But sometimes we do fail Him, don't we? Well, what then? Well, the best advice I ever heard, go to the cross. Remember the cross.

Well, what then? We approach the Father on the basis of the finished work of Christ. John puts it this way in the second part of verse 1 and 2. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

[14:35] And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins and not ours only, but also for those of the whole world. So John starts out by saying, if we sin, and I know there's several in here that notice that phrase, if we sin, is in the aorist, subjunctive, third class, conditional tense.

Now, I didn't pick up on that, and that means nothing to me, but for the Greek scholars in here, they know that reads, if anyone sins, and it will happen.

That's what it says in the Greek language. If anyone sins, and it will happen. God has said, we don't have to sin, but we will. God understands the power and attractiveness of sin even to those who have been given a new nature.

Even to those given a new nature. It didn't take Adam and Eve long, did it? Even to those given that new nature. And God understands that power.

Paul dealt with that in the entire chapter, seventh chapter of Romans. Romans. Remember that great chapter? I'm doing the very things I don't want to do.

[15:50] I know I'm not supposed to do them, but I do them anyway. I'm leaving undone those things that I want to do. I know I'm supposed to do them. I even want to do them. But I don't do them. What a wretched man am I who will save me from this bondage of death.

And the answer comes back to Paul, and this is not King James, this is my translation, but in Romans 8.1, it is as if the Lord is saying, Paul, I know. You're not doing what I want you to do. You're doing what I don't want you to do. You're in this battle and you're losing many, many times, but I'm making a legal declaration that because of who you are and you're in me, therefore, there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.

No condemnation. The Lord knows the fight we're in. Pre-Romans 7 this week. Now, in the passage I just read in 1 John, the operative word there is advocate.

If anyone sins, and you will, we have an advocate. It is a legal term both in the Greek language and in English.

[17 : 01] It means literally one called alongside of or one who speaks in our defense. The actual word advocate only occurs in John's writings.

Only in John's writings. We often refer to an advocate as a defense lawyer. That is a good analogy, but it does fall short in what the Spirit of God is trying to convey in this epistle.

The lawyer in American courtroom defends his client based upon what he feels is the merit of his case. The lawyer tries to convince the jury or judge that his client is an honest man and can be believed.

Now, I will say this, and I'm basing this on nearly 45 years of experience. They lie. I don't want to be harsh, but lawyers lie in court.

They lie to judges and they lie to juries. That won't work. The human analogy of, well, my client's so nice and, yeah, he may have killed his wife, but he was married before.

[18 : 13] He didn't kill that one and if he gets married again, he's not going to kill that. I mean, that's how they do it. This doesn't hold water to the biblical analysis.

Jesus, the lawyer or advocate who is Jesus Christ, he's the only advocate in the universe, presents his defense not based on my merit or your merit.

He presents his defense based upon his merit. See, that's a huge difference. The matter is believed by the judge who happens to be the father of the Lord Jesus because the judge is intimately aware of and trusts in the merit of the advocate, Jesus, his son.

He knows his son is incapable of lying. He knows that his son is capable of taking upon himself every sin that that person, the accused, has committed.

The judge knows that. So it's not the lawyer making his client look meritorious. It's drug dealer and murderer and everything else. It's the fact that the advocate is meritorious.

[19 : 26] The father knows this about the son. The son is always motivated by holiness and righteousness. John tells us that the name of the advocate is Jesus Christ the righteous or the righteous one.

And his advocacy is motivated by his character. Unlike human lawyers, the righteous Christ does not have to lie or to mislead.

He presents his case faithfully and with perfection based on who he is and what he has accomplished on the cross. Not based on what Tom Holland is.

Well, I hope it's never based on who I am. The scripture also tells us Jesus is our propitiation. That is a word used in the King James. It is not a word we use a lot.

I mean, Mike, I doubt today you've told us a lot. You know, you're, you've, have you, have you propitiated, have you propitiated, use it in a sentence. Have you propitiated for me today? It means that Christ Jesus is our atoning sacrifice.

[20 : 31] That's what it means. Propitiation was originally used in pagan literature to describe the appeasing of angry gods. Now, the God I'm describing is not angry, but he's loving and gracious.

The actual concept of propitiation is a critical Bible doctrine essential to the Christian faith. In theological terms, it means an appeasement or a satisfaction.

Very important. Well, what was appeased? What was satisfied? You can search the universe for that answer, but there's only one answer. There's only one answer.

God's wrath was satisfied. God sees the blood applied to the accused and he is satisfied.

My son took his sins. Satan, you can't, you can't prosecute him. It comes from the Greek word *heliesteron*, meaning to, to the sacrifice of atonement required to placate God's holy wrath.

[21 : 41] As fathers of Christ living in the age of grace, we don't think often of God's wrath, do we? Sin, we know, was introduced into the human race in the Garden of Eden.

When that occurred, the scriptures tell us, enmity was introduced, enmity broke out and existed between God and humanity.

Well, what is that? Enmity is a war. A war broke out in the Garden and existed between God and man and everything that flowed from the wellhead of our original parents has been tainted with enmity, tainted with sin.

That war goes on to this day and most people are victims of it. I guess we could say all of us are, but we've been forgiven. We're at peace with the Lord.

God designed a way of peace for fallen mankind and it is the cross of Christ on which the Savior died. There are many types or symbols in the Old Testament.

[22 : 50] The prophets of old spoke of the mercy seat on which the propitiation system in the days of old occurred. all of that was a portrait looking forward to Christ.

Every bit of it. The mercy seat was actually the lid on the Ark of the Covenant. Everything I know about the Ark I learned from Raiders of the Lost Ark. The mercy seat was the actual lid or the cover. It existed between the Shekinah. I have written down the Shekinah glory, but that's like saying glory, glory. It's the Shekinah cloud above the Ark and below that Shekinah cloud are the tablets of the law inside the Ark.

The priests once a year would sprinkle blood from the sacrifices on it and by that act appropriate forgiveness for the sins of the people for the year. But the cross is now the mercy seat.

The cross is the mercy seat. The cross look at the cross as a peace treaty signed between the Father and the Son and it is signed in the blood of Christ.

[23 : 59] It is a peace treaty. We can have peace because of the cross and what Christ has done. Propitiation or appeasement or satisfaction was necessary because of sin.

Sin offends God and atonement must be made. The Bible says without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

I've had people object to that. I don't like that. I've had people accuse Highland Park of preaching a bloody religion. If anyone ever said to you you'd say yeah we do. But it's not our blood. It's the blood of Christ.

People say well I'm offended by that verse without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Take that up with management someday. We're just labor. Take it up with high management.

Christ offered perfect blood and an eternal atonement was provided. There is now no other sacrifice necessary or possible.

[25 : 01] And people say I'm looking for something else to get the glory. They're going to find it. And there's not 15 paths up the hill to heaven. There's one and it's a bloody path the one Jesus Christ.

Sin is horribly egregious to God. It must be atoned for. And there's two ways to do that. Either the sinner without Christ must spend eternity in hell paying for even one sin because one sin will separate us from God and we must spend eternity there without Christ and we will not reduce by one second the amount of time we have to spend there if we're there a thousand million millennia the way we measure time down here it's not going to reduce it any or the sinner must repent and receive the merit of Christ that satisfies for all time the wrath of God the Father.

By the way we're Baptists we call that being saved. That's the name of it. Christ alone is worthy of being received by the Father.

Those cloaked in Him may enter in through the blood covenant He has established. Stay cloaked in Christ. And before I close it we must deal with this phrase Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.

That phrase has been the subject of much debate over the centuries. Let me begin and try to explain this by stating this. Whomever Christ has died for will be with Him in eternity.

[26 : 45] If Jesus died for them they're going to be in heaven. The sacrifice of Christ alone is sufficient to bring a person spotless before God.

Now we know this phrase is not a verification of universalism. It does not teach that one day every man and woman will be in heaven.

Many hold to that wishful thinking but that's not true. In fact the scriptures teach that there is a hell Jesus talked more about hell than it did heaven and there are people in there right now tonight and others that are going.

And so that is not what that's saying. Another explanation that is far from satisfying is the idea of atonement makes salvation possible but it doesn't save anyone.

Actually save it just makes it theoretically possible. It opens the door to eternal life but then you got to have the good sense to walk through the door. That sounds appealing but it falls apart upon examination.

[27:51] The death of Christ went beyond potential salvation. His death actually saved people. He had people in mind.

When he was on the cross you were on his mind. I've been working on song with that. It already exists. It reminds me of the passage that says all that the father gives to Christ will come to him and those that come to him he will never cast out.

So there are actual individual people in mind here. Christ died for sinners of whom I am chief. And the depth of his love for us should compel us to a life of holiness.

And so that begs the question what is Jesus doing right now in heaven? He is right now speaking to the father on the behalf of his children.

Hebrews 7:25 says this, he ever lives to make intercession for us. That's what he's doing right now and that's what he's doing at three o'clock in the morning. Making intercession for us.

[29:02] And today at this very moment Christ is doing that. That is his role as the advocate, our defense attorney. Picture right now in heaven there's a trial in progress, the father is the judge, Satan is the prosecutor accusing us of sin, and asking God to condemn us.

Christ our advocate is there and he pleads before the father upon our behalf. There's a beautiful picture of all this, two of them actually. whenever Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin, and if you don't know what that is, that's important.

That's the Supreme Court, the President, and the Senate and House of Representatives of Israel in ancient Israel. It's the whole ball of wax.

Well, Jesus appeared before the high priest Caiaphas, that evil man, and Caiaphas was trying to get him to talk, and Jesus was silent. Finally, Caiaphas put him under oath, and said, tell us, are you the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God?

And I think there was this pause. I really believe that. I think Jesus looked up and made eye contact with Caiaphas, and he said, I am. And I know he said that's in the word.

[30:22] And hence forth, you will see me seated at the right hand of the power of God. You're going to see me, Caiaphas, seated. Well, what is that? What is that?

Let me read you another verse or tell you about it. Stephen, we call him the first martyr. Stephen's being stoned to death. He's within seconds of death.

And over hand in the corner is a guy holding a bunch of coats. Remember his name? Paul. The great apostle. He was Saul then. The apostle Paul. Hey, pick up a bigger rock.

Get closer. You've got to really nail this guy. And Stephen's within seconds of death and he looked up and he said, I see heaven opening.

And I see Jesus standing before the Father. Jesus said, Caiaphas, you're going to see me seated. Stephen says, I see Jesus standing. What is it?

[31:21] Seated at the right hand of the power of God is the seat of judgment. God. Jesus is going to judge Caiaphas.

Probably already has. And we'll again at the great white throne. That's judgment. What did Stephen say? He's standing. That's the advocate. He's standing before the judge, his father, saying, Stephen's going to be here in about three seconds, Father, and he's one of mine.

We can let him in. I died for his sins. Big difference. Are you going to see Jesus sitting or standing? That's what you need to ponder.

Is he going to be my judge? Is he going to be my advocate? Thank you.