

Study Guide



Community Groups

Life Happens Here!

1 John 2:1-2

Sin Less Not Sinless

September 11, 2016

Except for Jesus, there is no one who is sinless. Even if we know God's law and commandments, we still stumble and sin as believers. What remedy then is there for us when we have fallen into sin? In these verses, John provides the answer by pointing to Jesus Christ as both our advocate and our propitiation.

Walk Prayer & Missions

Calendar

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing prayer requests and talking about what the Lord is doing in your lives.

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This week, we suggest that you worship to *How Firm A Foundation*:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said—
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

*“Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.*

*“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy trouble to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not harm thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*

*“The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”*

Word (45 Minutes)

Commentary

Jesus Is Our Advocate (1 John 2:1)

The key term in this verse is “advocate,” which is a term unique to John and literally refers to someone who comes alongside to help. The term as used by John conveys the idea of an advocate or counselor (a lawyer), someone who pleads for the guilty. In this case, we have an innocent intercessor (Jesus) pleading our case before God (when we are anything but innocent). The reason we are to be comforted (as little children) whenever we sin, is because Jesus is pleading before God the father his own blood that cleanses us of all sin (1:7) and forgives us of all unrighteousness (1:9). This is the ground of Jesus' appeal as our advocate.

The very thought of this is intended to do two things. The first is that Jesus' role as advocate means that even now he is in heaven pleading our case for us. This gives us great confidence that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Can Jesus intercede for us before the father, only to be turned away? This will never happen. This is why Scripture teaches the so-called “perseverance of the saints.” We will persevere unto the end in faith because of Christ's intercession for us. The second reason is simply to cause us to consider the cost Jesus paid to free us from our sins. His blood was once shed to pay the penalty for our sins in order to reconcile us to God, but his priestly work is ongoing.

Jesus Is Our Propitiation (1 John 2:2)

John develops two thoughts in verse 2: Jesus' atoning sacrifice (propitiation) for our sins and the extent of this sacrifice. We shall consider the sacrifice of Jesus first.

Jesus' blood atonement “propitiated” or satisfied God's wrath (Romans 1:18) for our sins so that his holiness and justice were not compromised in forgiving sinners. God's righteous anger against sin needed to be appeased before sin could be forgiven and God in his love sent Jesus to satisfy God's holy anger against sin. In this way God demonstrated his righteousness, which refers to his holiness and justice. God's justice was called into question because in his patience had overlooked former sins. In other words, how could God as the utterly Holy One tolerate human sin without inflicting full punishment on mankind. The answer was the cross of Jesus Christ where the full payment for the guilt of sin would be made, and where Christ would die as the substitutionary atoning sacrifice for sinners.

The extent of Jesus' sacrifice as indicated by the phrase, "not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world," has been difficult to understand as it could be mistakenly understood to teach universal salvation which Scripture does not teach. Listed below are three possible explanations.

First, John may be stressing "the universal application of Christ's work." Since "propitiation" is a strongly Jewish term and something associated in Jewish minds with the blood sacrifice made by the High Priest for the sins of the Jewish people at the temple on the Day of Atonement, John may be saying "Jesus made propitiation for our sins, but not just the sins of us who are Jews, which we might think is a Jewish tradition, but for all peoples of the world from every tribe, tongue and nation. In this sense, he is a universal Savior."

Second, John may be stressing "the exclusiveness of the work of Jesus as the means of salvation." In this case, his words would mean something like this: "Jesus died for our sins, and not just for the sins of us Christians who have the wrath of God propitiated for us by his death, as if other people might have other means of having their sins propitiated. No, Christ is the propitiation for the sins of all the people of the world who ever will have their sins propitiated by Christ. There is no salvation outside of Christ."

Third, John may be stressing "the timeless character of the atonement." In this case, he would be saying, "Christ is the propitiation, not only for the sins of those of us who live in this present age, but for all who will ever be born into the world, until Jesus comes again."

Sermon Questions

What Does it Say?

1. What does John say is his reason for writing these things (in this letter)?
2. But, if anyone does sin what means has God provided according to John in verses 1b and 2?

What Does it Mean?

1. Looking at the last few verses in chapter 1 why might John feel the need to clearly make his statement in 1 John 2:1, "that you may not sin"?
2. What is the built-in tension between 1 John 1:8-9 and 1 John 2:1a?
3. Look at John 5:10-14 and John 8:10-11 and Matthew 7:21-23 to see some examples of Jesus' teaching on this subject. What did Jesus say to people after he had healed them or saved them? What did Jesus say would happen to people in the final judgment who claimed to know Jesus as Lord, but did not do his will?

4. Look at the teachings of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10 and the writer to the Hebrews in Heb. 12:14. Do these verses say that living a holy life saves you or reconciles you to God? Do these verses say that living a holy life will be the end result from being saved by God's grace?
5. Verse 2b says, "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This word, "sin" in this verse in the Greek is in the aorist tense which is used for a specific action in a point of time. Why is that important to understand what John is referring to in this verse?
6. We have an advocate with the Father. How does Jesus advocate for us with the Father? Does he say that we are innocent and therefore do not deserve punishment? Does he plead that we have merit and should be spared punishment? How does Jesus plead in our behalf before the Father?
7. What is the significance of the names of our advocate—Jesus, Christ, the righteous? Think about Romans 8:34 in connection with this phrase.
8. Notice that Jesus is an advocate for us before the Father and not before the Judge? What difference does that make?
9. The last part of verse 2 says that Jesus "himself is the propitiation for our sins." To propitiate is to absorb the penalty of God's judgment against sin. Look at Isaiah 53:6 and Matthew 27:46. How is Jesus himself the propitiation for our sins?

What Does it Mean?

1. What kinds of steps can you take or are you taking to fight sin in your life? Is this something you can do with sheer will power? Look at Romans 8:13 and Galatians 5:16-17 to spur your thinking.
2. How does it help you in your fight against sin to know that Jesus, the righteous is your advocate when you sin?

Walk (30 Minutes)

After enjoying times of fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. In addition to praying for, and encouraging one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "**neighbors and nations.**"

Here is a list of local ministries and the folks at Norris Ferry who are actively involved in those local ministries that can serve as a contact person for your community groups as you think and pray about becoming involved:

Ministries

Adoption/Foster Care
Allendale friendship house
Central America mission trip
Community Renewal
Crisis pregnancy center
FCA
First priority
Ghana medical mission trip
GriefShare
Heart of Hope
Hub/Purchased
Last Call Ministries
Luke's Lighthouse
NOLA church plant
Reach Global camps
Rescue mission
Samaritan counseling
South Sudan Mission trip
World Race mission trip
Young Life
Zion Ridge

Contact

Various members
Bob and Dianne Nida
Jared Clary
Paige Hoffpauir
Melody Roussel
Stephanie Springer
Jared Clary
Nicolette Rogers
Jan Crain
Alicia Lambert
Various members
Joe and Liz Spell
Ben and Lori Garmon
Jared Clary
Matt and Angie Johnson
Jerry Planchock
Wavely Cunningham
Jared Clary
Jami Williams
Luke and Kristi Johnson
Robert Smitherman

Model Answers to Sermon Questions

What Does it Say?

1. John says he is writing these things in his letter “so that you may not sin”.
2. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and Jesus is himself the propitiation for our sins.

What Does it Mean?

1. In the last few verses of chapter 1, John said that a person who says he has no sin is deceiving himself, and he said that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” John probably felt the need to not leave the impression that sin in a Christian’s life does not matter.
2. 1 John 1:8-9 provides a clear remedy for sins in the Christian life and these verses may be misinterpreted to give Christians license to continue sinning. However in Chapter 2, John clearly says Christians should not sin. This leaves a kind of built-in tension between these two trains of thought.
3. Jesus told the lame person he healed to sin no more, and he told the woman caught in adultery, “Go and from now on sin no more.” Jesus taught that there would be many in the judgment that would call him “Lord, Lord”, but he would say to them “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”
4. These verses do not say that living a holy life will save us or reconcile us to God. We are saved by grace through the gift of faith—not of works, so that no one may boast. We are God’s workmanship (by grace, through faith) “created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” We are not saved by good works, but we will walk in good works if we are saved by God’s grace. Likewise Hebrews 12:14 states that without holiness no one will see the Lord.
5. In this verse where John says “But if anyone does sin” the word “sin” here is in the aorist tense which refers to a specific sin that has already occurred. He is not referring to an ongoing lifestyle of sinning. He means if anyone who has committed isolated, specific sins for which he is seeking forgiveness, we have an advocate with the Father and a propitiation for our sins.
6. Jesus pleads on our behalf because he has suffered the punishment for our sins in his own body. He has already suffered the punishment that we deserved. He does not plead that we are innocent, because we are not. Nor do we have merit within ourselves.

7. The name “Jesus” refers to his humanity—he came as a man named Jesus. The name “Christ” is the name meaning Messiah. “The righteous” refers to his sinless life on this earth which made him qualified to be a perfect sacrifice for us when he died for us on the cross. “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” Rom 8:34

8. We are already part of the family if we have been saved. In that case Jesus is advocating for us before our Father who loves us and not before a Judge who has no relationship with us.

9. According to Isaiah 53:6 God has laid upon Jesus the iniquity of us all. We see evidence of that in Matthew 27:46 when Jesus cries out on the cross, “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” Here God turned away from his Son when he was bearing our sins on the cross. Jesus, himself, is the propitiation for our sins. He absorbed the judgment and wrath of God by taking our sins upon himself.