

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2: 1 and 2; “The Advocacy of our Lord”, Sermon # 4 in a series entitled –  
“Behold What Manner of Love”, A Communion Sermon Delivered  
by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017,  
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Here John tells us here in verse 1, of chapter 2 that he wrote the things that he did in chapter 1, “so that we may not sin.” This is one of the great goals in your living your life to God. It is that in growing up in the knowledge of Christ; in coming to know Him better as a Christian, you will sin less. So, in order to make progress in holiness you must come to see Christ as your Advocate. The apostle John, in writing these things, would have you to have fullness of joy. He would have you come to have the same fullness of joy which he and the other apostles had; a joy which fills your heart, knowing that, as you now have saving faith in Him, all of your sins are forgiven you for Jesus’ sake. John, in the first chapter, verse 8, told us what the deceiving nature of sin was like, even after a person becomes one of God’s saints by faith in the Lord Jesus; the tendency to think that because you are Christians that the in-being of sin has been removed from you altogether when you first came to Christ. Not so, he says.

It is because we as Christians still have the remnants of the Old Nature within our heart, that we will have a continual on-going battle with sin. And this battle is compounded by the temptations of the evil one. This is where we must take up our study this afternoon. A true Christian will at times find themselves mightily struggling against sin, and against Satan. And if they should fall into sin, what should they do? Most certainly they should mourn over it, and have dealings with God concerning it; to confess it, and ask for forgiveness for it, and to repent of it. But there is something more that they will need to know if they are to have a conscience which will not be repeatedly condemning them. They will need to remember that they have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Before we partake of the Lord’s Supper, let me speak to you about the Advocacy of our Lord. I want to make mention, 1<sup>st</sup> of all, of the tenderness of Christ’s Advocacy. Then 2<sup>nd</sup> – Of the continual power and sufficiency of His Advocacy. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – Of the gracious extent of His Advocacy. May the Lord help me to set forth to you the greatness of the love of Jesus Christ in the defense of His people and His preserving of them unto eternal life.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – I want to make mention of the tenderness of Christ’s Advocacy.**

John says here in verse 1 – “My little children”. Why does He speak to us in this way? I believe that he does so because he wants to convey to us what Christ had conveyed to them as apostles; their realizing as He was teaching them, that they had many things to learn experientially, even as a child does from their parents. But He also wanted them to know His love for them. He was their Friend and their Brother, as well as their Lord. Now John speaks to us today, in this epistle, as one of our fathers in the faith. He uses this expression, “my little children” 12 times in this letter alone, and so it is meant to convey to us a great truth; the tenderness of our Lord’s Advocacy. “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.” “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.” John had known the Lord for many years, and he himself had once been a babe in the faith. He had experienced many things which had taught him the truth of how to become more mature and discerning, in the Christian faith. He had learned over time, to grow up in Christ. He learned to overcome the evil one. He knew that those to whom he was writing would face similar testings. They would over time, come to realize the greatness of the spiritual battle that they were involved in. He knew that in their experience the Lord would be leading them into many situations where their faith would be tested. They would have to prove for themselves, the Lord’s powerful working in

their lives in order that they might grow up into the truth of what it meant to be one of God's saints, one of His holy ones.

But they would also need to know the reality of the truth that they were adopted sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God; and sons, then heirs with Christ. Since we are His adopted children, His tender loving care is over you, dear Christian. And the Son, because He is your great High Priest, is One who can sympathize with your weaknesses. He will be showing you the tenderness and the patience that it will take to defend you and to bring you to a greater obedience to our God. John knew this, and so he wanted to convey to us the tenderness of our Lord's Advocacy; that it was the purpose of the Lord Jesus from the beginning of His ministry to undertake to be our shield and our defender. He knew that if he could show us just how great our Lord really is, in His wisdom, and power, if he could just portray for us His ability to protect, defend, and preserve us unto eternal life, it would be a great encouragement to us. And it would be a great incentive for us not to sin.

When we as a child realize how greatly our earthly parents love us, it makes us much more reluctant to sin against their commands and not think about their expectations, even if we are not yet saved. How much more so, then, when a person is saved, and they know that God loves them, and that Christ is their Advocate, tenderly considering how He will be their defender from the accusations of the enemy, and the sorrows of a guilty conscience. Believers know, or they should know, that they are not under the rigors of the law of God. They are moved and motivated to obedience by love to God; knowing that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, not to condemn them, but that they might be saved. But they also know that this is no excuse for them to keep on sinning. They hate the sin that they have fallen into, as a Christian. And their purpose of heart and their striving with all of their strength, is the way that they show their love for their Lord. They remember what He has done for them, and so they go about to keep His commandments.

John's aim in writing was to keep us from sinning, not to assume that we would have to fall into sin over and over again. He is not saying that it would be possible for us to never sin. But he is saying that Christ's grace is great enough and powerful enough that you may not sin. This statement of John's shows us that our heart must be directly involved in the whole matter of making progress in holiness and righteousness. If we are resigned to sin, we will not fight against it. But you and I are called to fight against it and to learn to overcome temptation. And it will help us very much to know and to come to realize in our experience, that in this great battle of trying not sin, that we have Jesus as our Advocate on our side. John remembered that the Lord Jesus had often called he, and the other apostles, little children. And he knew how greatly it had helped him in his battle not to sin. And so, he would use these same words with us.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to speak to you of the continual power and efficacy of Christ's Advocacy.**

“And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The progress that the Christian makes against sin depends in a large part in understanding that he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The word Advocate in an earthly sense means a defense lawyer, one who undertakes in a court of law to show that his client is not guilty in regard to the charges brought against him. He can do this in one of two ways. Either he tries to prove that the defendant did not commit the crime that he is charged with, that he has an alibi; he can show that he was not present at the time when the crime was committed. Or, the advocate can attempt to prove that the defendant had a right to do the deed that was committed. And having proved it, he can then make an appeal to the judge that he should not be punished. He could state that it is not right, for example, to punish a man who was only trying to defend himself against someone trying to kill him, and in the process of his defense he killed the

attacker. If his client is found guilty of the crime that he is charged with, the earthly advocate's responsibility is to see that he will be treated in a right way under the law. He would attempt to stand by him and see if there are any circumstances of his age, or sex, or former service, or bodily heath that might lessen whatever punishment is coming to him.

But the Advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot, and does not, proceed in this way. In the first place, God knows that we are guilty of whatever sin we have committed, and He can prove it. Our Advocate, our Lord Jesus Christ knows this as well, and so He is not trying to establish our innocence, or vindicate us from the charge and the guilt of the sins that we have committed. It is too late for that. He does not apologize for us, He does not deny the fact of it, or minimize the guilt of it in any way. He does not try to show that we had a right to do it, or any good excuse for doing it. Instead he appears in the presence of God for us, to show that what He has done for them, the sinning saint, in His righteous life, obeying God's Law to perfection, can be imputed to them and thus God's righteous demand for perfect obedience can be satisfied on their behalf. And furthermore, by His sacrificial death, the punishment for any or all of the sins that we have committed, may be forgiven, because the efficacy of His blood, which is applied to our conscience, is of infinite value because He is the Son of God. And thus He sets forth, in heaven, in the presence of the Father, the truth that His finished work of redemption and atonement has satisfied, and will continue to satisfy, all aspects of God's justice.

Where Christ's advocacy and intercession is especially seen, as our text implies, is when we sin after we have become a Christian. "If anyone sins", we have an advocate. The word "anyone", or "any man" is not referring to all and every man in the world; believer and unbeliever alike. It is referring back to the "little children". God knows, that by all rights, a Christian who sins, should not be forgiven for sins committed after conversion, seeing what Christ has already done for us, in dying for our past sins. And our repentance from all sins, at the time of our conversion, means that we are turning away from all sin. The point is, that God knows that our repentance is not perfect, and indeed, the same kind of sins that took place before conversion, may sometimes take place following conversion. God knows that there is a great difference. The difference is that sin, which had ruled as a king in the heart of the unbeliever, in the believer it has been dethroned. Its dominion has been taken away. It is true that there are remains of corruption still existing in the Christian's heart, and as long as there are these remains, the flesh will lust against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. And therefore there may be, and occasionally will be, sins still committed.

Our Lord Jesus continues to plead the merits of His blood and His righteousness before the Father, on the basis of His faithfulness. What He expects us to do is to continue to confess our sins, and on the basis of the sincere resolve that we have, to confront, put to death, and forsake all of our sins, He then unceasingly represents our case and concerns, before God, as our Advocate. We have no excuse for any of our sins, or for our continuing in them. But thanks be to God, we have this Advocate, who sits at God's right hand, and who ever lives to make intercession for us. He ever lives to prove to the Devil and to our troubled conscience, that has fulfilled all of the law's righteous demands for obedience, and He has borne all the punishment related to our disobedience. He recommends Himself continually to the Father, that the Father look to Him and be satisfied. And even when it is determined by the Father and the Son that there is a need for the chastening of any son or daughter, for their insincerity at points, or their not confessing or forsaking their sins in a timely fashion, all of this is an integral part of what Christ died to be able to give to us. I would now ask that you come down front, and gather with me there, so that we might together partake of the Supper.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – I want to speak to you of the gracious extent of Christ's Advocacy.**

Verse 2 says – "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." What a great salvation we have been given! Christ's work as an

Advocate will not allow us to abuse the privileges of grace that He died to purchase. And yet He is our Advocate with the Father, when we do sin. He will help us to confront every sin in our lives with His help. An “Advocate” here in the Greek is Παράκλητος (Parakletos). In John 14 you find the word translated as “Comforter”. But here it actually means “Helper” or “One who aids” us. Christ is our helper in leading us on to a righteous life. And He helps us on to our overcoming temptation and sin in a mighty way, by His interceding for us with the Father. He Himself is the propitiation for our sins. In other words, He is the wrath-removing sacrifice in a definite sense, for all of our sins as Christians. And, He is the propitiation, or the mercy seat, not for our sins only, but also for the whole world. This is a very difficult wording for those who believe in the doctrine of particular redemption, because it appears to extend the definite benefits of the atonement to the whole world of men.

It should, in my mind, be understood in this way. His wrath removing sacrifice and the benefits of it, should not be confined to just the Jews, but also will be applicable to an immense number from every tribe, tongue, people, and language. In other words, the whole world. The extent of the atonement’s influence will be the whole world. John 1: 29 says – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’” This is how this verse ought to be interpreted. How does Jesus actually take away the sin of the world? It is that Christ is set forth by the gospel preacher, as the Savior of sinners to the whole world. He actually takes away the sin (the whole body of the sins of every elect person) of the world. The intent of God in regard to the atonement’s application, will be particular to all those whom He has chosen in His electing love.

It is God who applies all the benefits of what Christ has purchased by His body being broken and His blood being shed. The free offer of the benefits of Christ’s death is not held back from any person or group of people in the whole world. But those in particular who have been predestined, will be effectually called. Those who have been called will be justified, and those who are justified will be glorified. They alone will come to have the benefits applied to them effectually in salvation. This view does not do violence to God’s love to the whole world in the offer of the gospel, or to His redeeming a particular people to Himself, His Elect, to whom those benefits will be effectually applied. As we partake of these elements, let us rejoice in the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ died to purchase for us, a complete salvation, which is applied most definitely and effectually to every one of God’s elect people; sinners whose minds were opened to see their need of a Savior, and saints who need an Advocate with the Father.