

Encouragement For Struggling Saints

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 April 2013

Preacher: Arden Hodgins

[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn to 1 John. Chapter 1, verse 5 is where we will begin our reading.

! And we will read through chapter 2 and verse 2. 1 John 1, verse 5. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you, God is light.

In him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. In the blood of Jesus, his Son purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in our lives.

[1:20] My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. Amen. Again, it's our pleasure to have Pastor Arden Hodgins with us. Brother, come preach the word to us. It's a pleasure to be here today.

The last time I was here in Bremen was the last time you had, you hosted the GA, and there's a dispute between John and me what year that was. I'm looking at you, Gordon.

Oh, too. John was right. I remember the hospitality shown. I also remember thinking it was very strange to be served Chinese food in Napanee by Amish people.

[2:38] And the name of the restaurant was Chiam. I suppose you're Chiamese if you work there. I think it's been changed in name since then. The hospitality shown to myself and some of you others as well already has proven to be very delightful.

Thank you, John and Josie. And I told the men last night that I had two great fears on this trip. My first fear, of course, is preaching to other preachers.

I think that's a stumbling block for many preachers. I can't think of a better preparative, however, than the Sunday school lesson today by our brother Doug.

My second greatest fear was doing my own ironing. And it's another reason why I should have brought my wife. At this time, I'd like to bring to you ten encouragements.

And these encouragements are for particularly struggling saints. And they arise from the text that was just read for us. In fact, the text we're going to be looking at specifically is chapter 2 of 1 John, verses 1 and 2.

[3:53] And I'm going to read it again because I'll be reading from a different translation. I'm reading from the ESV. And Jason read from the NIV, I presume. And that's fine because the way they translate a certain word is very helpful in understanding the text.

But I'd also like to draw attention to the fact that there is a key word in these two verses around which all of these encouragements flow. This passage is dealing with the ongoing work of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of his people.

He made atonement for our sins. He was the propitiation for our sins on the cross. But that doesn't mean that the effects of that atonement or the effects of that propitiation are in the past.

They continue all throughout eternity as Jesus represents us before the Father, represents his atoning work on our behalf and pleads the merits of his own obedience.

Well, I'd like to read then the two verses that we have in front of us. 1 John chapter 2, verses 1 and 2. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin,

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

[5:17] He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The key word, as you may have guessed, is the word advocate.

The NIV translates that one who speaks or stands in our defense. And that's appropriate translation. It's accurate. There is, however, another aspect to that word that I would like to highlight today by way of introduction.

There's two things we want to say by way of introduction. First of all, paint something of the context here in 1 John chapter 2. And then look at that word advocate and define it, not just in terms of how we understand it theologically, but also in terms of how John understood it in his own day.

It was a technical term during that time. And he is using it not just with reference to the Christianized version of advocate, as we all are well familiar with, the high priestly work of Jesus, but also he was nuancing the meaning of that word in his own history and context.

So let's look at the context of this passage first by way of introduction and then the word advocate. John is dealing here with attention.

[6:38] Attention. You know what a tension rod is? It's the thing that always falls down in the bathroom every time you try to pull the towel off of it because the tension is not strong enough.

But a tension rod goes both directions, pushing out in both directions. And there are tensions like that in the scriptures. There is the tension, of course, that we commonly think of between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

How can God be sovereign and man still be responsible? They seem to be almost contradictory to one another and yet they're not. It's a tension. Both are true. And we have to throw up our hands and say, God knows.

I just know that I'm not in a position to question either doctrine. I must embrace both. There is the tension, of course, of the unity of God and the diversity of God, that he is one and yet he is three. The tension of the humanity and deity of Christ, he is both, fully. And so we have to embrace these tensions in order to maintain biblical integrity, doctrinal integrity.

[7:45] Well, the tension that John is dealing with here is what I'm calling idealism versus realism. The tension between what we ought to be, the ideal, and what we know we actually are in our practice, the real.

So there's the ideal and the real. The ideal is Christ-likeness. The ideal is mentioned by him in chapter 2, verse 1. I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

That's the ideal. Now, I wonder how many of us take that seriously. We have been properly schooled, I think, from the pulpit that perfectionism is a myth, at least on this side of glory.

And so when we read something like that, we might immediately assume that, well, of course, that's impossible, so I'm not going to really take it seriously. When I wake up tomorrow morning, I'm not going to necessarily be thinking to myself, I'm not going to sin today.

But really, I think, in order to take it with its full force, we should make it a priority, even though we know in the back of our minds we cannot do anything without sinning, without the taint of sin.

[9:03] Everything we do, even our best things, are tainted with sin. We should still determine in our hearts as a goal, as the ideal, not to sin. That's the ideal.

But then there's the reality of it all. You have those who take that commandment seriously, who understand the extent of the law of God and its application to our hearts, who struggle with sin every day, and it seems as though they're more sinful now than they were when they were first converted, because the light of God's word has shone in their hearts even more, uncovering the dark places, and lifting up this stone and that stone, and you find things in yourself you never knew that was there before, and you become discouraged.

The realism of the Christian life, the Romans 7 experience, I detect in Paul's words there in Romans 7 a kind of frustration.

He's not angry at God, but he is frustrated with this already and not yet situation. I'm called to be a saint. I am a saint set apart unto God.

I'm a holy one. That's my calling. I'm going to be perfectly holy one day when Christ returns, but right now I have this tension, the ideal and the all too real.

[10:30] And so John is dealing with something of this here when he is constantly emphasizing, not only in chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, all the way through the whole book that he who says he is in the light but doesn't walk according to the light is, God's not in him, he's deceived, he doesn't know God,

he's dealing with people who are living lives with no evidence of grace.

Having changed them, he is telling them they're self-deceived. So you have others who are true Christians reading passage like that, taking sin seriously as they ought, looking at themselves and thinking, what do you mean John?

He who is born of God does not sin. Whoa. Does not, even if you take it to mean, which I do, that does not live in sin, wallow in sin, continue in sin as he used to, still I see so much sin in my life, John, I feel that I might be in the category of those who are deceived.

believed. So John is having to do two things in this book. He's having to unsettle those who have a false assurance, but he's at the same time having to do what our Lord did, and that is not to quench the smoking flax and overly discourage those who do take sin seriously, who have repented of it and have come to Christ with their sin.

So he encourages them also. And it's all, it's John, the way John writes is he's always circular. He's saying the warnings and then he gives the encouragements and the warnings and the encouragements.

[12:11] And that's what he's doing here. So he is on the one hand saying be perfect, be sinless, don't sin, be like Christ.

If you're not like Christ, you're not one of his. But, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

He's the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The context therefore, as I see it in 1 John chapter 2 verses 1 and 2, is a context of encouragement. He is seeking to not bruise, not break the bruised reed and not quench the smoking flax. He is attempting to show that it is not sinless perfection that marks us out as the people of God, but who we go to with that sin when we see it.

So there's something of the context there. Now, the word advocate, this is also by way of introduction, the word advocate that's used here is the same word that Jesus uses with reference to the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room discourse, paraclete.

[13:27] He says, I will send to you another, another of the same kind, paraclete, another comforter like me, another helper, another paracletos advocate.

Now, in John's day, this was a technical term, and so I can't believe that he would use this term completely divorced from the history of that word.

word. It means so much more to us as Christians because we understand it to mean, in a sense, the high priestly work of Jesus and the intercession of Christ on our behalf.

But in John's day, an advocate was anyone who would take up your cause, whether in a squabble or in a court of law, but it would be more than just a paid person that you would go to to hire his services.

It would be more than just some court appointed lawyer or barrister that you would go to in order to have representation before the judge. It was somebody that knew you and cared for you.

[14:31] An advocate in those days was, as the word means, pericallly, to come alongside, is someone who would be a help to you, a comfort to you, and would represent you the best he could, not just out of your interests, but out of his own interests, which were tied up in yours.

That is, he was a friend and cared for you. Now, you can imagine, in a court of law, for example, being on the defense and having a lawyer that was just simply provided to you by the court, you would never really be assured if that lawyer was putting his whole heart and soul into your defense, because he's just a hireling.

He's just paid to do it. He might even be doing it reluctantly. And this is not what advocate means. So it's not bare advocacy.

It's not just a lawyer that is being referred to here by John. It is someone who knows you and cares for you, and his interests are also yours. And that will come into play as we look at these ten encouragements that arise from this text.

So, what are those ten encouragements? The first one is this, the encouragement of solidarity. The encouragement of solidarity.

[15:56] Notice that John switches from the third person, where he says, if any man or anyone sins, to the first person plural, we have an advocate with the father.

I find that an encouragement. If John the apostle were here, if Paul the apostle were here today, if Peter the apostle, well, not Peter, because we always look at Peter and think he had a lot of

failures.

John, not so many that are recorded. But if John were here, if Paul were here, we would look upon them as the paragons of godliness among us, and we would think to ourselves, I am so different than they are, and they're so different than me, than I in.

There's a great gulf fixed between us. But John, in a very humble and honest way, says we have an advocate with the father. In other words, apostles need the advocate just as much as ordinary Christians.

There is a kind of solidarity then that brings encouragement. When you come to church, and perhaps today you came here with a guilty conscience, with struggling with lustful thoughts or corrupt motives, maybe you had a squabble or an outburst of unkindness this morning at home, which tends to happen a lot, especially in a house with a lot of girls fighting over the curling iron. [17:17] These kinds of things happen, and we come to church sometimes feeling very unworthy to be here, which is true, you are, in and yourself, and you feel as if perhaps there is this broken fellowship between you and the father.

Well, we can find some encouragement in knowing that we are not alone. And when you look over and see your brother or sister singing with what appears to be great joy and delight the hymns, and you look up to them as the paragons of godliness, they are struggling too, just like you.

If you're a true saint and you're not struggling with sin, well, you're not a true saint. The struggle is part and parcel of what the Christian life is all about in this already and not yet existence that we live in.

The spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh lusts against the spirit, and that's not just once in a while, that's all the time. So, I'm not saying this to encourage anyone to go out and sin, and neither is John.

I sin, you sin, we all sin, so, what's the big deal? No, John says, I'm writing these things to you so that you will not sin, but we, if anyone does sin, we, that includes me, John, have an advocate with the Father.

[18:37] We're all in the same ship. Maybe that's where fellowship came from. We're all, that word, we're all in the same ship, we're all struggling with sin, all of us have a horrendous track record, and we're all doing battle.

people come up to me before and ask me, Pastor, how did you know what I was struggling with this week? How did you know to say those things or those things?

And of course, I don't have any bugs in their home, or hidden cameras, or anything. I can't see into their hearts. The Lord knows their hearts. But usually my response is, I know that you're struggling with things, because I struggle with the same things.

I know what goes on in my heart to some extent, and being a firm believer in the homogeneity of mankind, I would assume that you're struggling too.

No matter how well-dressed you are, and no matter how smiley you might appear, and no matter how eloquent your prayers, you're a struggling saint.

[19:44] And we're all in this together. So there's the first encouragement of solidarity. Now the second encouragement is the encouragement of constancy. The encouragement of constancy.

John says, if any man sin, we have an advocate. He doesn't say, we used to have one, but may not still. He doesn't say, we will have one maybe in the future.

He says, we have. We have an advocate now, and always. If, indeed, we have repented of our sins and come to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, cast the weight of our souls and our destiny upon him, then, we have an advocate in him, always, and forever.

He ever lives to make intercession for us. And so that is a great encouragement to us, especially when we have a wounded conscience and we have sinned over and over again in the same ways. And we think to ourselves that when we come before him now, he's just going to say, you again, that same sin again, I am tired of you. But we need to be encouraged to know that the Lord Jesus Christ does not operate that way.

[21:08] He makes intercession for us even when we've had the worst day of our lives with struggling with sin. And he makes intercession when we've had the best day.

He makes intercession whether we go to him and pray or not. His intercession on our behalf is steadfast and stubborn and constant. That's the kind of advocate that we have.

We have an advocate. There is an advocate with the Father. All of our hypocrisy and dishonesty and ingratitude, our broken promises, our repeated offenses, these do not in any way subtract from the vigor and the zeal and the love and the passion of Jesus Christ's intercession on our behalf. He's not a hired lawyer. He's not like a lawyer who's dealing with a client who's lying all the time. He says, you know what, if you're going to lie to me, I remember a Perry Mason episode kind of like this.

If you're going to lie to me, I'm not going to represent you. His representation of us has nothing to do with how well we're doing. It is constant.

[22 : 25] A third encouragement is the encouragement of amity. Amity just means friendliness or friendship. The encouragement of amity.

Now, this traces back to what I already said in the introduction. The advocate that we have with the father is not our enemy. He's not our prosecutor. He's our friend.

If we are in Christ and he's our advocate, he's our friendly advocate. He has our best interests in mind. He's not a prosecutor. He himself said when he came into the world, I didn't come into the world to condemn the world.

The world's already condemned. I came into the world to save the world. And when we come to him in faith, he's there before the father, pleading on our behalf, not prosecuting us, not accusing us, not kicking us.

He is the good shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine, goes after the one straying sheep, and what does he do when he finds that straying sheep? And we've all been there.

[23 : 32] Does he kick him all the way home? You rotten sheep, you really inconvenienced me. You really shouldn't have done that.

And he just chides us and kicks us. No, the good shepherd picks up the sheep, puts him on the shoulders, and rejoices all the way home. And this is a revelation of the heart of Christ.

The father in the prodigal son is not the father in the trinity. The father in the prodigal son parable is Jesus. He is demonstrating to all of those why he is a friend of sinners who come and repent of their sin.

And he then shows his own heart. He falls on the son and kisses him and embraces him and welcomes him back. This is how Jesus then acts as our advocate.

He is our friend. Now you might have voices and I'm not talking about those voices that would wind you up in an insane asylum.

[24 : 34] But you may have the voice of conscience condemning you. And conscience serves a purpose. But its purpose is allied with the law. And so your conscience is in a sense the voice of the law of God.

And it condemns you. And when you've sinned it condemns you. And there's only way to get your conscience to stop condemning you and that is to trump your conscience with the gospel.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. It is God that justifies. So conscience, I have laid my sin on Jesus, so shut up.

Well, that's how our consciences get cleansed in an evangelical manner. despair. But we also have a great accuser, Satan, who often tempts us as the hymn goes before the throne of God above. He tempts us to despair and causes us to doubt whether we're even one of God's people because we see sin and we're struggling with sin. When in reality, it's the very struggle that shows that the Holy Spirit has begun a work and is within us.

[25 : 44] But he is an accuser. And then there might be people around you, perhaps in your workplace, who are ready to say, aha, as soon as you do something wrong or say something that you shouldn't have said, and so you can get beaten down with all of these accusers.

The voices of condemnation. But I can assure you, according to the truth of Scripture, that if you're in Christ, those voices of condemnation are not coming from heaven.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. So we have here the encouragement of amity.

We have an advocate who is a friend. We feel ashamed of ourselves because of our sinfulness, but when we come to him, we're going to be tempted to think we need to clean ourselves up a bit more before we come to him in order to be more acceptable, so that he won't be so angry with us.

But that is not the way in which Jesus Christ portrays himself with respect to his people. When we truly see the nature and the heinousness of our sin and come to him in faith, he embraces us.

[27:02] He yearns for us to come home and he takes delight in showing grace and mercy. So we have the encouragement of amity. The fourth encouragement is the encouragement of family.

we have an advocate with the father. Now that's important. It doesn't say we have an advocate with the judge. Now ordinarily you would think that if the word advocate is being used, this must be something of a courtroom setting.

So you have a lawyer, an advocate, and then you have the judge. Well, however true that might be in the sense that God is our judge, God the father is our judge in some sense or another, we have in Christ a new relationship with God the father by virtue of being adopted into his family.

He is now our father. Now, talking to a lawyer in our church about these things, he said to me, you know, what it's really like is you're in the seat of the accused and the whole court is stacked in your favor.

And that's what it's like to be a Christian. as strange as that appears, the whole court is stacked in your favor. And he says, a good lawyer knows his client.

[28:18] A better lawyer knows the law. And the best lawyer knows the client, the law, and the judge. But it goes even more than that.

Our judge is our father. And the one who is representing us. is also the beloved one of the father. The court is stacked in our favor. And it's all done righteously. It's no kangaroo court. It's all done righteously because God has expended all of his wrath to the very last drop upon his son.

And therefore, we can be declared righteous and forgiven of our sins in a legal manner, in a just way. You've ever wondered why 1 John 1:9 says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, we oftentimes think, well, I don't understand that.

I could understand he's faithful and gracious to forgive us our sins, but it says he's faithful and just. It's only the righteous, just thing that he should forgive us. Why? He must forgive us because Christ died for us and punishment God will not twice demand, first at our shorties hand and then again at mine.

[29:39] God is not unjust that he would punish sin twice. If Jesus paid for your sin on the cross, God will not mete out judgment upon you. So the court is stacked in our favor.

The judge is our father. And I have a feeling that there are many Christians who never seem to get past viewing the father as a judge. they never seem to get past the idea that the father is stern and austere and Jesus is the voice of love and Jesus pleads as if pleading means begging which it doesn't, it's a legal term, as if he's twisting the arm of the father to show mercy to his people.

That is not the case. It was the father's initiating love that sent the son into the world in the first place to redeem a people. And Jesus and the father both our advocate and the judge both deeply and infinitely love us in a way that we cannot understand or explain.

And so this encouragement of family is one that we need to remember that when we come to God, he may be angry with us in a fatherly way but not in the way of a judge.

judge. I don't know, maybe this isn't new to you, but do you realize that God the father does not punish his children?

[31:09] He chastens them. And there's a huge difference between the two things. God the father does not punish us in the punitive sense, in the sense that there's an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a pound of flesh, for a pound of flesh, out of justice.

No. His chastising is not punishment. Jesus suffered punishment on our behalf on the cross. The sufferings that we experience below, the corrective discipline, if you will, that we have from God and through his word and through providence, is that which comes from a loving heavenly father.

He's concerned with rehabilitation. He's, which our prisons, by the way, should not be. Our prisons should be all about punitive justice, but of course everything's upside down these days.

But God is into conforming us to the image of his son. So nothing that comes to you by way of God's wrath is punitive wrath.

All of that fell on Christ. He is a father and he accepts us in his son and when he does chasten us, it's out of love and to good ends.

[32:24] So that's the fourth encouragement of family. Fifth encouragement, the encouragement of deity. Notice it says we have an advocate with the father.

The word with is the Greek word pros. It's the same word that John uses in John chapter one and verse one. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

God. It means toward. It doesn't mean alongside of. It means toward. It means face to face. And most theologians that have commented on that word in John one one have pointed out that it is a term that would be referencing Jesus's equality or not Jesus's in the human sense but Christ's equality, the son of God's equality with the father, that they were face to face from all eternity, one infinite mind and another infinite mind, intimately equal in dignity and essence.

Well, this pros, this word pros is the same word used here. We have an advocate with the father, face to face with the father. This is a reference to his deity, his equality as was already spoken this morning from Philippians chapter 2.

That's an encouragement because, as I've already said, the best lawyer doesn't just know the client, know the law, but he knows the judge, and the judge knows him, and there's an affinity between the two, and it's precisely that love that exists between the father and the son and that equality and dignity that gives us great encouragement.

[34 : 17] In one sense, I'll give an example, is that everything that we come to him for, he has the power to effect. Everything that he wills for us for our best, he has the power to do it.

Not only that, but he has the ability, by virtue of his deity, to hear our prayers, and to hear thousands and millions of prayers all over the world at any given time.

God. This is what I like to tell Roman Catholics who pray to Mary and the saints. Why do you have to do the whisper down the lane thing when you can go directly to the God appointed mediator who is indeed Godness in himself?

Why do you need to go to Mary? She doesn't have more sympathy than the perfect God-man Jesus Christ. Why would you want to go to the saints? Go to the one who is the righteous one, perfect, and equal with the Godhead.

And so therefore, we have an encouragement from his deity. Now, you're probably expecting this. In the sixth place, there's the encouragement of humanity. We have an advocate with the Father, that's deity, Jesus, that's humanity, a reference to his identity as the incarnate word.

[35 : 37] He is fully God and fully man. He is the days man that Job spoke of that puts his hand on God and on man and brings about reconciliation. And because he was a man, and because he humbled himself and became a servant, because he was made poor that we might become rich, because he underwent sufferings and temptation and persecution and loneliness and discouragement, and all of those things that come with life in a fallen world, yet without sin, he can sympathize with us in a way that no other king or priest could ever do.

He knows exactly where we're at. He gets it. He understands. And that's a tremendous encouragement. The author to the Hebrews says, we don't have a high priest that can't sympathize, because he's been tempted in all points like we are.

There's nothing new that you're experiencing that he hasn't experienced in one sense or another. And furthermore, he knows exactly what you need. He knows exactly what grace to give you in your time of need.

So be all the more encouraged to come to him just as you are, realizing that he feels for you. And it's not just that he feels for you like Clinton felt the pain of America.

Jesus had something Clinton doesn't have. He has the power and the pity joined in one. He feels for you but can also accomplish what is best for us.

[37 : 23] And then the seventh encouragement is the encouragement of responsibility. Now this is one that I think I'm going to have to explain a little bit so be patient until I can get to the point where I actually tell you what I mean by that.

But the word Christ, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. Christ is the reference to his mediatorial role as prophet, priest, and king.

And of course in this passage it's more of his priestly role that is being emphasized. Christ means anointed one, the Messiah. Messiah. The anointed offices of the Old Testament were prefigurements of Christ who would be all three in one person and perfectly.

Ultimate prophet, ultimate priest, ultimate king, a prophet to reveal God to us, and a priest to make atonement for our sins and reconcile us to God, and a king to rule over us and protect us.

And so we have Christ, our advocate, with these three offices. Now when you see in the Old Testament those three offices described, you find that no one takes upon themselves, upon himself, these offices.

[38 : 49] God must install a man into those offices. God must give a man the responsibility of being a prophet, or else he's a false prophet.

He must give a man the responsibility of king. He must be anointed. He must be given the office of priest. And in fact, the author to the Hebrews says, no one dare take upon himself the office of high priest.

God must call him and appoint him. And we read in the Psalms that the father did do so. He speaks to his son and he says, I have appointed you, I have anointed you, I have installed you to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

This was a job, this was a responsibility that the father placed upon his son. And the whole existence of this mediator, prophet, priest, and king, is all for sinners gain.

You realize that? It's all God, God who is transcendent above all of us. It's all of him saying, basically, just simply by creating those offices of mediator, saying, I would have a relationship with man.

[40:10] And since man cannot commune with me apart from a mediator, I create these offices and I install my man, my son, my man, the God man.

And so there is a job given to Christ to be our high priest, our king, and our prophet. It's his responsibility. Now, you might think, well, how do I apply that and what does that have to do with me and how can that encourage me?

Well, brethren, let me try to say this without being irreverent. If you feel weighed down with that struggle against sin and your recidivism rate is high and you are constantly feeling like you're falling again and again into the same things and you feel like surely any lawyer would have given up my case by now, if you are thinking to yourself, how can I go to him after this because he's going to be so irritated at me that I'm coming to him again for the same thing again, I'm too ashamed to come. Well, let me say it reverently. It's Jesus' job to receive those who come to God by him.

It's his responsibility. You see, it's more than just that he loves you and embraces you because you've come to him and trusted in him and you were one of those whom the father gave you.

[41:57] It's more than just that. It's also that he as a servant as the son is very much concerned about pleasing his father and fulfilling the role of mediator which he was installed in.

It's his responsibility then to receive sinners to himself. That's his job. I hope Matthew Brennan's not here because I'm going to pick on Ireland right now for a second. On one of my trips to Ireland I noticed that in the grocery stores all of the cashiers all of the clerks sit while they're swiping your items over the scanner.

That just didn't sit well with me at all. In America you don't see people just sitting there doing that.

It's almost as if why did you even come here today? You're bothering me. You're an imposition.

I'd rather be home in my easy chair. In America where there's more of a customer focus people are up standing ready to go but even in America you've been in places where you walk in and nobody greets you nobody cares about you and they act like you're an imposition to them.

And we would call that sin because whatever your hand does you're to do it with all your might to the glory of God right? God doesn't just require you to do!

[43:21] Don't you think Jesus does that in his calling as a high priest?

Do you think he does his job reluctantly? Do you think that when you come to him with all of your sin he says to you I don't feel like receiving you or listening to you today?

He would not only be untrue to his own affection for you but he would be untrue to his own father who called him to that responsibility it's like going into the doctor's office you've got some kind of sickness and the doctor takes you back into the room and you say doctor I'm sick and then he says you're sick get away from me I don't want to have anything to do with you get out of my office what are you doing here well I thought it was your job to help sick people what well that's silly you may run across a doctor like that but the great physician our Lord Jesus Christ takes his responsibility seriously and willingly and he is just the person we go to with our sin sick souls and we can have the confidence that he will embrace us not just out of love for us but out of a sense of obligation to a covenant that he made with his father before the foundation of the world and he will do so with all delight it's not a chore to him now in the eighth place we have an eighth encouragement and that's the encouragement of integrity we have an advocate with the father

Jesus Christ the righteous the righteous one there is the encouragement of integrity now in John's day when he refers to advocates here of course he's referring to our Lord Jesus but in general advocates of that day when they would represent somebody would normally argue the merits of the one they are representing sort of weighing the good and the bad and showing the judge and pleading with the judge to have mercy After all this guy may have stolen a loaf of bread but he was

doing it to provide for a hungry family member Jean Valjean perhaps and so we plead mercy of the court because in all other respects he's a fine upstanding citizen and so you should have mercy in light of his merits remember something though you might start to see things in yourself that you never saw before

God saw it already and Christ knew about it when he died on the cross so it doesn't it's not taking him by surprise it's taking you by surprise and that's the problem a lot of Christians get themselves unsaved because they figured if it takes me by surprise it must!

[46 : 49] have taken! him by surprise it's not the case he argues his own merits not our merits he is Jesus Christ the righteous this is why we pray in Jesus name because all of the blessings we pray for we know we are in and of ourselves unworthy of and we pray in Jesus name because the father will not say no to whatever his son who has earned those blessings for us requests in the ninth place we have the encouragement of efficacy the encouragement of efficacy there is a word propitiation there and I know the NIV says atonement or atoning for our sins and that's fine but the word doesn't go far enough propitiation is a long word with a lot of syllables and distasteful to a dumbed down society however it is the perfect word for what is being described here it means the satisfaction of

God's holy wrath God had anger in his heart God had wrath in his heart sin must be punished or else God cannot be just sin deserves punishment and if God just sweeps it under the carpet then God is unjust he cannot do that but at the same time this angry God who is filled with wrath towards sin and sinners who commit those sins also desires and yearns to reveal his grace and to embrace in love many of those same sinners sinners so how can he be just and the justifier and the answer to that of course is the marvelous ingenious scheme of the cross of Christ so God pours out his wrath on his own son on behalf of his people the wrath of God is fully absorbed by him and when he's raised from the dead it's a vindication that

Christ was everything he said he was and that the propitiation that he was the offering of sin that he of himself that he offered up was accepted by God all our sins past present and future were all laid on him paid for over and done with there remains now no more sacrifice for sins and so that is propitiation the satisfaction of God's wrath he is our propitiation so that is an encouragement to us because simply this we cannot if we're in Christ we cannot be damned and I'm going to sound antinomian right now but it's the truth of the gospel and my intent just like John's is not to encourage you to go out and sin that grace may abound but I'm telling you those of you who have repented and come to Jesus in faith no sin you commit today tomorrow this week next month in all the years of life you have left not one sin will ever separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus not one sin no matter how heinous will cut you off from the intercessory love of Jesus there's no wrath reserved for you it's been all expended upon Jesus he's the propitiation for our sins now we want to be careful that we examine ourselves and not go to heaven sinning in an uncaring fashion but I'm referring to those that John is encouraging those who take their sin seriously they're not the ones who walk about and say I have no sin those people who say I have no sin either have redefined sin or they're just simply blinded to the true state of their souls they're self-deceived he's encouraging people who know all too well that they're sinners your sin won't condemn you it condemned

Christ now lastly there's the word of capacity or the encouragement of capacity he says we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous verse two he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world now I realize that there are those who use this passage as a proof text for universal atonement that Jesus died for the whole world and the way they define the word world oftentimes is every man woman and child that has ever lived or ever will live and so they say see here John is saying that well John is not saying that he's not saying that because the word propitiation would prevent that interpretation if God indeed satisfied his wrath toward every man woman and child who has ever lived and ever will live then why are there any in hell why

[52 : 11] God punished sin twice he doesn't do that he's a just God double jeopardy doesn't exist in his courtroom if he punished his son on behalf of a person that person is set free and is not under condemnation so it can't possibly mean every man woman and child has ever lived or ever will live John usually uses the word world ethically love not the world evil world system or ethnically he's the propitiation for the sins of a people from every tribe kindred tongue and nation not just one nation but all over globally but to be honest brethren I don't think that Calvinism versus Arminianism or any

term you want to call those two things was even in John's mind at this time if you look at this I realize it's a hotbed of controversy for two sides of thinking on this matter of the atonement but if you take it in its context of he's trying to be an encouragement to

Christians who are struggling with sin it's not some sort of battle between universalists and particularists he's saying a couple things here he's saying first of all Jesus Christ is the only propitiation for sin that the world has he's the only propitiation that there is there's no way other than Jesus Christ that your sins can be paid for and forgiven so if you're knocking at his door you're knocking at the right door to whom shall you go who else has the words of eternal life who else can make propitiation for your sins there's only one name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved that's the first thing he's saying and the second thing he's saying is this don't ever think that your sin is something too big for him to forgive don't think that your sin as large as it is looming in your own imagination that somehow that sin is something just beyond the pale of Christ's reach you're not a new case to him you're very similar to many other cases that he's taken on and he's never lost a case don't ever think that you're going to be bringing him some new sin some depth of depravity that you've discovered in your heart he's seen it all Saul of Tarsus says this is exactly why God converted me this is one of the reasons!

he converted me because if he can convert me a murderer and a persecutor of the church then he is setting me up as an example to all of you that where sin abounds grace does much more abound this is not a Calvinist Arminian battleground here this is simply in context a way for John to say he can handle your sin all of it as Scott Wesley Brown said in a Christian song from the 70s!

If he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders I'm sure my brother he can carry you and so there's the encouragement then of his capacity he is able his arm is not short that it cannot save his blood is infinite in its power and enduring well there you have it ten encouragements are you encouraged I close with a quote from Spurgeon does your heart condemn you what are we to do we're to lay our hearts before Christ and confess with Charles Spurgeon sinner as I am I yet know that if any man sin we have an advocate with the father and I black foul and filthy more foul and filthy than I ever thought myself to be put my case into the hand of my advocate and leave it there forever amen let's pray our father we thank you for this encouraging passage we would not take your grace for granted and sin that grace may abound and yet at the same time we often find ourselves plummeting into the slew of despond wondering whether we are even one of yours or not we pray that this passage would be a strengthening of the faith of those who are your people and that they would once again be brought to see the glory and the wonder of the work of the

[57:20] Lord Jesus Christ both past present and future we thank you for him we thank you for his stubborn and incessant intercession on our behalf we thank you for the love that both the father the son and the holy spirit have for us unrequited love in so many ways we long for the day when we will be free from sin and in the meantime we rest our souls in the in the good keeping and the sure keeping of our advocate we pray that the joy that we may experience from being encouraged in these passages would be our strength for you have said the joy of the Lord is our strength we pray that that would be the case today may your word not return void for we ask it in Jesus name Amen