

Children of God and Sin

1. Illustration:

- a. In my managing career, I spent 10 years learning managing principles, and one of the things you are trained in as a leader is that when you want to praise an employee, Somebody who reports to you, a great thing to do is to praise them in front of everyone, to take their achievement and put it in a public setting, In front of their peers to praise them and congratulate them for their good work. Another thing you learn is that when you need to discipline or coach or talk about an area that needs improving that conversation needs to be very private kind of a setting, it is a setting where you bring the employee into your office and close the door. And you have a 1 on 1 Conversation, it's a very close conversation. It's not open to anyone else. It's specific to that individual. And because it's sensitive, you have to have it in a more private and personalized setting. This truth or this concept is true anywhere you go. So if you are a teacher for example, you will praise a student in front of the classroom for the good works that they've done. But when it's time to talk about grades or talk about serious behavior issues, you're not going to generally do those things in front of everybody. Usually you bring in the parent when you're gonna talk about grades and serious behavioral issues. A more private conversation is necessary. If specific individuals need to be there, and only those individuals need to hear that information. You make the circle of listeners smaller, and then you tell that sensitive information only to those individuals period same thing. We understand the need to have public conversations and private, more intimate conversations .
- b. The reason I bring this up is because Jesus himself had a discussion which was very private with his disciples that differed from the discussions he had out in public when Jesus spoke to his disciples privately it was always more intimate and very specific and it arose because Jesus expected a change and because of the closeness of relationship. One of those instances that's recorded is recorded in the book of John the gospel of John from chapters 13 through 17 it's 5 chapters of Jesus having More intimate conversation with his disciples. There's some things that Jesus talks about here that he doesn't talk about anywhere else what we're going to do over the next 5 weeks is listen to John the disciple talk to his church in that same kind of intimate way that Jesus spoke to the disciples in the upper room so if you have your bibles with you let's turn to 1st John chapter 2.

2. Text

2:1 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. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

3. Connection between 1 John and Upper Room Discourse

- a. In 1 John, John the apostle writes to a local church that he is the elder of. John writes to them and addresses them as "little children" or, "teknia" in Greek. The ESV translates this as "little

children” and this term is meant as an endearing term. It expresses John’s affection towards this church.

- b. This is the word that will drive our passages over the next 5 weeks. This word shows up 7 times in the book, but we picked 5 of them. There are other generic words for children such as:
 - i. “Teknon” is generic for children as well that’s used in chapter 3
 - ii. And “paidion” and it’s used in this letter in 1 John 2:13. “Fathers, young men, children”
You can see that here it’s in a group so not a specialized term for titles.
 - c. However, teknia is an endearing term. The last time John uses teknia is the only time when Jesus uses this term. And Jesus uses it when He is intimately addressing his disciples in the upper room during the Last Supper in John 13.
 - i. It states **John 13:33 “Little children (teknia), yet a little while I am with you.”** This is an intimate address.
 - d. This book of 1 John then is an endearing intimate command to close followers which follows the intimacy of John 13-17. In John 13-17 Jesus is having the last supper with His closest disciples. Jesus had many disciples, but during the last supper He gives some unique and specific commands.
 - e. Examples
 - i. **The Commandment of Loving each other (John 13:31-35 and 1 John 3:11)**
 - ii. **The Command to abide in Jesus (John 15 and 1 John 2)**
 - iii. **The Coming “advocate” of the Spirit and Jesus as advocate (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7 and 1 John 2:1)**
 - iv. **The discussion of laying one’s life down for our brothers (John 15:13 and 1 John 3:16)**
 - v. **The teaching that “the world” will hate us (John 15:18-19 and 1 John 3:13)**
 - f. “teknia” / “Littler Children” creates a sense of intimacy that was there in the Last Supper. Additionally, much of what Jesus says is because there has been such a depth in relationship. The words of Jesus from that intimate setting come from the fact that Jesus has been with them for a while.
 - i. **John 14: 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?”**
 - g. So what I want to do with you today is connect that sense of intimacy. From Jesus to John in an intimate way, To John and his church in an intimate way, from that church to ours in an intimate way.
 - h. The invitation then is to hear these word as if we were in the upper room with Jesus hearing his very last set of instructions.
 - i. We are intimately with Jesus here today. We are the teknia
 - i. First because church is where Jesus’s presence is uniquely manifested here at church
 - ii. second, because Jesus is present together while we’re eating The Lord’s Supper. Every Sunday we are uniquely together in this intimate way. So Jesus can address us intimately. We are therefore, the intimate audience so we are invited to hear these words in the same kind of intimacy that John wrote them in and in the way The Holy Spirit inspired them.
4. Let’s now go line by line through these verses
- a. **2:1 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.**

After John begins chapter 1 with a summation of the historical events that grounds his faith and our faith, his first instruction is to not sin.

- i. As John launches chapter 1 of this letter with a recap of events of what happened in the life of the ministry of Jesus and his witness to it he starts chapter 2 with a reason why he's writing all of them and the first reason who's writing on all of them is the reason is to not sit that's the reason he's writing this intimate letter in an intimate be heard in an intimate setting with this specific instruction to not sin. What is John saying in intimate setting? John says dear Christians do not sin
 - ii. But while John says this, he says that Christians do sin. And John quite clearly puts himself in the list of sinners. He says "we" have an advocate in Jesus. In the next verse he says it's "our" sin that Jesus died for.
 - iii. He calls Jesus the advocate. This is the same word used in 5 times in the NT it's the word Jesus uses to describe the Holy Spirit in that upper room conversation. Jesus too is our advocate, he too is pleading our case in the courts of heaven. Jesus is constantly interceding for us now in heaven, and The Spirit is interceding for us now on earth. All this intercession is necessary because God is still just and the courtroom of heaven is still quite active.
 1. This a huge important historical distinction. Consider that this is a largely formerly Jewish audience. They would have been reading the OT and in the OT they would be reading that in heaven, there are spiritual beings in heaven and then there is another character in heaven, one of them being an "accuser". This is satan himself and "accuser" is where we actually get the name for satan since that's what 'accuser' is in Hebrew. John is saying that in heaven now, satan is no longer there. He fell like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). Meaning, instead of an "accuser" in heaven, we get "an advocate"! Instead of a prosecutor in heaven, we get a defense attorney who is the son of the Judge.
 - iv. So, do not sin is the instruction because of the work of the whole Trinity. That's the first command in this letter: do not sin.
- b. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- i. This verse is here to relieve us from the depression and despair of knowing that we sin. This advocate that we have in heaven, is the "propitiation" of our sins and the sins of "the whole world". So lets now move on to the understanding of this word propitiation. There are 4 senses of this word, so let me use both of them, since I think both apply
 1. First, it means "placating" or satisfying the wrath of God. This is how the Greek historical context uses this word. But God isn't arbitrarily angry, we have broke all of His laws. And God isn't randomly punishing someone else for the sins, He's providing the thing that will satisfy His wrath. God Himself provides the sacrifice, and for us He provides His own Son!
 2. Second there's a sense in the OT that this simply means forgiveness.
 3. Third, there is a sense that this word when used in the OT removes sin through the use of blood. In Levitical sacrifices blood is the detergent used to clean up the stain of sin. This is the same word for "mercy seat" in Greek. The mercy seat is

the lid of the ark, where the high priest would sprinkle blood for everyone in Israel.

4. Fourth all of this rites of the priest are used to make atonement. The “Day of Atonement” in Greek uses this same word.

- ii. Who does this apply to? Let me explain why I don’t think propitiation for the whole world means literally “every person who’s ever lived on our planet”. The sense of the word for “world” is the generic sense of being in all places. The “whole world” is kind of like saying Bruce has been all over the world, but Bruce hasn’t been in every single place in the world. Reasons:

1. One example of this we already brought up The teaching that “the world” will hate us (John 15:18-19 and 1 John 3:13) .
2. One example of many, if you read how this word is used in John 16:20 you can see how it’s meant generically to refer to sinners in general and not every single person ever. “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.” – Jesus here is talking about the upcoming persecution that the apostles were going to face but that is not to be understood as every single person in the world. There was no one who lived in Brasil who was rejoicing at the persecution of the apostles.

- c. Putting all this together we would say: Jesus suffers the wrath of God, forgives, removes sin, and provides atonement for Christians and people from all over the world.

- d. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

John says if you know all of this if you've experienced and understand God's love through his propitiating sacrifice and his advocating work then you will keep his commandments

- e. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

John leaves no room for gray areas in his letter. Either you are in the truth or you are a liar. Either light or darkness. Either God or the devil. John speaks in a way that doesn’t allow for endless nuance. If we have no desire to keep God’s commandments, then saying “I’m a Christian” is a lie.

- f. 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:

Again keeping God’s commands perfects the love, or makes complete the love that we have for God. God has loved us and perfected us, and as we walk in his commandments, we are growing into that perfection. Because of the Spirit we can now follow God’s commands to an ever increasing degree. As that happens, our love for God increases and is made complete in us.

- g. 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

John says that abiding in Jesus brings about a debt to walk in the ways in which Jesus walked. The word translated “ought” has the notion of debt. We owe it to Jesus to walk like Jesus if we call ourselves Christians.

5. HTSWL?

- a. Our first response to this letter is to be open to the fact that God expects all of us to confront sin. Since we all sin, we all need by necessity to open to hearing about sins that we could be committing.

- b. Second, **bringing up sin with someone is only ever meant for Christians**. For people who have been purchased and for people who do profess Jesus as Lord and claim to be Christians. This is not something we do to the world. John is very clear to bring up the distinction between us and the world and for that reason we interact with each other differently.
- c. Third is that if you are a Christian, **you may need to confront sin with people you are in relationship with**. Sometimes we think “save the relationship and don’t bring up the sin”. That’s not quite John is saying here, and he’s saying this in a really intimate scenario where he could lose all relationship. It’s precisely because you have been given this relationship, you can say these things.
- d. Fourth, if you confront sin somewhere, **our posture has to/must be/can only be done in the posture that John writes**. John says “we” have an advocate for “our” sins. Meaning, when you or I confront sin, you ought to bring up how Jesus has done all this propitiating activity for the very sin we are bringing to the attention of our brother or sister. If you bring up a sexual sin, then bring up how God freed you and forgave you for a sexual sin. If you bring up the sin being manipulative, bring up how God restored you to full relationship whenever you committed that sin.
- e. Fifth, let’s not lose the context of this conversation. God never called people to repentance that He did not first have some sort of relationship with. John puts this in an intimate setting because the relationship has grown as such so as to allow the calling out of sin. **Naming sin isn’t meant to be done like dropping bombs everywhere we go**, in this passage it’s done in an intimate setting. Even when Jesus is walking around in public saying “repent” He’s saying it to a people who He had already been revealing Himself to, for 2000+ years.
- f. Sixth, The sin he mentions isn’t even specific. There’s no need to add shame to the sin when we talk to Christians. Listen to **John 5:14 “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”** we don’t even know what sin He’s talking about! It’s just a generic term. The Fear of the Lord is the basis for naming the sin of this new believer. The fear of the wrath of God is what Jesus already suffered which compels true believers to turn from sin.
- g. Seventh, your spiritual leader is absolutely required to call out sin. **Ezekiel 3:16-20 “16 And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: 17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. 20 Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand.”**
- h. Eighth, talking about sin is only ever done because God loved us too much He sent His Son as a propitiating sacrifice. Because of love, not of judgement, we talk about sin.