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Our Advocate

1 John 2.1-2

Series: Blessed Assurance (Communion Series)

The Village Church

February 4, 2024

I. Introduction

- A. Paul Liljestrand was a noted musician
 - 1. Prolific composer
 - 2. Organist
 - 3. For 30 years he was the organist and choir director at Calvary Baptist Church in NYC
 - a. A position that Tim Yoder would eventually have
 - b. In fact, Tim Yoder interned with him back in the day
 - c. And Randy Woods studied with him back in his college days
 - 4. He was also the Chair of the Music Department of Nyack College for 10 years
- B. Sometime ago – before I came – Randy had him come here as a featured artist
 - 1. He performed on the organ
 - a. And also worked with the choir
- C. Well, evidently, in addition to being an accomplished musician, he had something of a sarcastic sense of humor
 - 1. For he told Randy that when he looked out on our congregation, it reminded him of a box of Q-Tips!
- D. I want you to know, that when I look out on this congregation, that's not what I see
 - 1. I see something completely different
 - 2. I see a room full of little kids
 - a. That's right – a bunch of rug-rats!
- E. I know that might not be much more complementary than Paul Liljestrand's observation
 - 1. But at least my observation is scriptural
 - 2. Because this is the way our text begins:

II. Text

- A. **1 John 2:1-2** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 My little children,
 - 2. I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
 - 3. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - 4. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins,
 - 5. and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

- B. “My little children”
 - 1. Little children = teknon (Gk)
 - 2. Term used in the Greek to refer to, not just children, but *little* children
 - a. Children appropriate for the nursery
 - b. So, yes – rug-rats!
- C. Of course the NT doesn’t use the term quite that way
 - 1. It doesn’t use it literally
 - 2. Only John uses it
 - a. He uses it metaphorically, as a term of affection
 - b. A loving term of endearment
- D. Whatever John is saying when he uses the term
 - 1. He wants his people to know that his instruction is coming from the tender and compassionate heart of a parent who deeply cares about their well-being
 - a. As from the heart of a daddy to his toddler
- E. And the daddy, as he observes his toddler, knows what life has in store
 - 1. Far better than the toddler, who is oblivious to anything farther in the future than the toy on the other side of the room that he covets
 - a. Or where her next meal is coming from
 - 2. He knows that life will have its challenges
 - a. And he wants these little kids to have the assurance
 - b. That whatever comes their way
 - c. That God has a way that will work all things out for their benefit

III. Assurance and Sin

- A. We’re in a series in communion Sundays on the assurance of salvation
 - 1. Using the book of 1 John
 - 2. We began the series back in the fall with two messages
 - a. And we return to the series this week
- B. It’s certainly appropriate that we approach the Lord’s table with a sense of what God has done for our salvation
 - 1. So that we find, in this table, the pleasure of God in the death of His Son
 - a. Who was given so that we might have life
 - b. And have life in Him abundantly
 - 2. And 1 John does that for us wonderfully
- C. But it’s interesting what it is that John is addressing as he gives us this kind of assurance
 - 1. He’s raising the issue of sin
- D. 1 John 2:1 (ESV) —
 - 1. I My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin...
 - 2. But what are “these things” that John is writing about?
- E. Well, these things concern our awareness of our own sin
 - 1. And God’s remedy for our sin
 - 2. Remember – back in November – what John said

- F. **1 John 1:6–10** (ESV) —
1. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
 - a. In other words, pretending to have fellowship with God while we sin is hypocrisy
 2. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
 - a. So following Christ is the avenue through which the blood of Jesus – which we remember in the Supper – cleanses us from sin
 3. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
 - a. That is, to deny we have sin, we lie to ourselves
 4. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - a. So that, if we acknowledge our sin, and confess it, Jesus forgives us
 5. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
 - a. In other words, if we deny we are sinners, we accuse God of lying
- G. Now these are wonderful words of assurance
1. Assurance for all believers in Jesus who acknowledge our sinfulness, confess our sins
 - a. And experience the forgiveness of God
- H. But, the enemy of our souls wants to use this assurance against us
1. He wants us to think that this sounds all too easy
 - a. That it's like a "Get out of jail free card"
 2. He wants us to think that if we sin – we simply confess our sin, and we are forgiven
 - a. So why not sin even more?
 - b. Why not sin with impunity?
 3. Why not "continue in sin that grace may abound" as John's co-laborer Paul said?
- I. The technical theological term for this is **Antinomianism**
1. Literally, "anti-lawism"
 2. The idea that grace inevitably yields to licentiousness
- J. But John says, "antinomianism" is such a big word
1. But it's all just baby-talk
 2. Only toddlers would be susceptible to such antinomian nonsense!
- K. "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin"
1. Everything John has been saying – every ounce of assurance that he has given
 - a. Far from leading to sin
 - b. Leads us away from sin
 2. And in fact, leads to greater holiness
- L. But how?
1. How does assurance of salvation in Christ lead us away from sin?

- a. And toward holiness?
- 2. The answer has to do, not with us and our impulses and proclivities and dispositions
- 3. But the answer has to do with Jesus Christ
 - a. And who He is
 - b. And what He has done for us
 - c. And what He continues to do for us
- M. Three things are said about Jesus in this text that carry us toward holiness of life

IV. Jesus Christ...

A. ... Our Advocate

- 1. The first is that He is our advocate
- 2. 1 John 2:1 (ESV) —
 - a. I My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
 - b. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ...
- 3. The word “advocate” is a compound Greek word
 - a. Advocate = parakletos (Gk)
- 4. Kletos = to call
 - a. Para = beside
- 5. There’s actually an old English word which is based on this Greek word
 - a. In England, back in the day, the family lawyer was often called a “paraclete”
 - b. Because when a family got into a tough spot – maybe a legal problem, or a death in the family which required navigating through a myriad of complicated issues
 - c. They would call their family lawyer, their paraclete
 - d. They would even call their paraclete before they would call their pastor
- 6. Jesus is our paraclete
 - a. The One who we call along beside us
 - b. To support us
 - c. To advise us
 - d. To strengthen us
 - e. To even stand in our place when trouble comes
- 7. Our advocate – who, at the bar of justice, pleads our case before the judge
 - a. And Jesus is our advocate
- 8. Romans 8:34 (ESV) —
 - a. 34 Who is to condemn?
 - b. Christ Jesus is the one who died—
 - c. more than that, who was raised—
 - d. who is at the right hand of God,
 - e. who indeed is interceding for us.
- 9. That’s our advocate – interceding for us!

10. **Hebrews 7:25** (ESV) —
 - a. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him,
 - b. since he always lives to make intercession for them.
11. So Jesus, having ascended, who sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven
 - a. When the accusations come
 - b. We don't have to plead our own case
 - c. [Remember the old adage: whoever serves as his own attorney has a fool for a client]
 - d. No! We don't have to say a thing before the bar of divine justice
 - e. Jesus is our advocate, our paraclete, our defender
12. But more than that, Jesus comes along beside to give us strength
 - a. To give us the desire to live a life of holiness
 - b. To give us the power to live a life of holiness
 - c. He does it by the Holy Spirit
13. The Holy Spirit is called, for instance, "The Spirit of Christ" in Romans
14. **Romans 8:9–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.
 - b. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
 - c. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
 - d. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
15. The Holy Spirit is the other One who receives the designation of "parakletos" in the NT
16. **John 14:16–17** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you forever,
 - b. 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells **with** you and will be in you.
17. **John 14:26** (ESV) —
 - a. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
18. So, little children, Jesus, our advocate, our paraclete
 - a. Is at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us
 - b. And, by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ
 - c. He is with us
 - d. And He is in us

- e. Giving us the desires, the inclinations, and most importantly, the power to live the life of Christ
 - f. A life of holiness
 - g. So that we may not sin
19. **Philippians 2:12–13** (ESV) —
- a. 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence,
 - b. work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,
 - c. 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
20. God working in you, by the Spirit of Christ
- a. The Holy Spirit
 - b. Paul (Colossians): Christ in you, the hope of glory
21. Our advocate
- B. **... Our Righteous One**
1. **1 John 2:1** (ESV) —
- a. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
 - b. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ **the righteous**.
2. The word “righteous” is one we’ve seen before
3. **1 John 1:9** (ESV) —
- a. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and **just** to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
4. Because of the righteousness of Christ, all who trust in Him alone for salvation have had their sins forgiven
- a. Because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to our account – transferred to our account
 - b. And our sins were imputed, transferred to His account
 - c. Because He paid the penalty for our sins on the cross
5. So that, when we confess our sins, He is just, righteous, to forgive us
- a. Because our sins have been paid for
6. **Righteous = dikaios (Gk)**
7. In this case, it refers to the righteousness by which Jesus acts on our behalf
- a. He pleads our case
 - b. He intervenes on our behalf
 - c. He enables us to grow in holiness
 - d. And as our advocate, He is right and just to do so
8. Not every lawyer is righteous – have you noticed that?
- a. I know many fine lawyers, godly lawyers
 - b. Lawyers that I would trust with my affairs, with my children, my grandchildren
9. But none like Jesus
- a. Because Jesus, our advocate, is “**The Righteous One**”
10. Even good lawyers make mistakes

- a. Good lawyers might be able to get you off on a technicality
 - b. Some lawyers might be able to get you off the hook by misdirection or half-truth or even a lie that the jury buys
11. Not Jesus
- a. His advocacy of you is perfect
 - b. Is just
 - c. Is good
12. Because He always acts in accord with the very nature and character of God
- a. And He always acts for the benefit, the welfare of His clients
 - b. His own people
 - c. All who belong to Him by faith
13. He is our advocate – the righteous advocate
- a. And you never have to worry about being represented by a crooked lawyer
 - b. Or an incompetent lawyer
14. Your advocate is The Righteous One
- C. **... Our Propitiation**
1. **1 John 2:1-2** (ESV) —
- a. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
 - b. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - c. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins...
2. There's that word again!
- a. It keeps showing up!
3. And, as you know, whenever we see it, we call attention to it
- a. And even though it seems like a big theological word, it's an important word
 - b. And you should know it
4. Which is a shame – because not all English translations use the word “propitiation”
- a. Some use the phrase “sacrifice of atonement” or “atoning sacrifice”
5. You might recall the advice of Derek Thomas
- a. Who said that if your translation doesn't use the term “propitiation”
 - b. You should go buy one that does!
6. That's because the word propitiation is a specific word that means “a wrath-removing sacrifice
- a. It reminds us that God is not pleased with our sin
 - b. That He hates our sin
 - c. That He is angry with us because of our sin
 - d. But because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, God is no longer angry with us
7. **Romans 5:9** (ESV) —

- a. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood,
- b. much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
- 8. **Propitiation = hilasmos (Gk)**
 - a. Related word is even more illustrative of its significance for us as we prepare to receive the Lord's Supper
 - b. Greek translation of the OT
 - c. **Hilasterion (Gk) – mercy seat**
- 9. In the OT sacrificial system, the mercy seat is the gold covering of the ark of the covenant
 - a. Inside the ark of the covenant was the Ten Commandments, the Law of God
 - b. By which we are condemned because of our sin
- 10. But in the sacrificial system, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people
 - a. So the mercy of God, through the sacrifice of the lamb, would cover the condemnation of the Law
- 11. All of that, of course, was just the type or shadow of what Christ, as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, did on the cross
 - a. The mercy seat – hilasterion
- 12. Jesus Christ is our mercy seat, our hilasmos
 - a. Our propitiation
- 13. And as strange as that word sounds to our ears
 - a. You don't want to be without our propitiation!

V. **All of Christ for All the World**

- A. **1 John 2:1–2 (ESV) —**
 - 1. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
 - 2. But if anyone does sin,
 - 3. we have an **advocate** with the Father,
 - 4. Jesus Christ the **righteous**.
 - 5. 2 He is the **propitiation** for our sins,
 - 6. and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- B. **“But also for the sins of the whole world”**
 - 1. This phrase presents some problems, as you might imagine
 - 2. Was Jesus Christ the propitiation – the wrath-removing sacrifice – for the whole world in the sense of every human being who ever lived?
 - a. Will every human being really be saved?
 - 3. That's not possible, as the Bible makes perfectly clear
 - a. John himself clearly distinguishes between those who are believers and are saved and the world, as those who reject salvation in Christ
 - b. **John 17:9 (ESV) —** 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

- c. **1 John 3:1** (ESV) — 1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
 - d. **Matthew 25.30** – Jesus Himself teaches that there will be the separation of the sheep and the goats; the goats will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth
 - e. So what are we to make of this text: “... not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world”?
- C. Remember, John is a Jew
- 1. And he is calling on believers to make a connection between the OT sacrifices and the sacrifice of Jesus
 - a. And Jesus is the propitiation, the mercy seat, of the sacrificial system
 - 2. But John is saying, Jesus is not just the sacrifice for all those Jews who understand the significance of the mercy seat, of propitiation
 - a. He’s saying that Christ’s sacrifice is also available for Gentiles
 - b. Gentiles of every stripe; of every ethnicity; of every race
 - 3. So that in the end, Christ was the propitiation of everyone who would ever believe in Him
 - a. And in the end, a multitude from every corner of the globe would be saved!
- D. In Revelation 5, John has the experience of seeing the scroll containing the events leading to the culmination of human history
- 1. And no one is seen to be worthy of breaking the seals and opening the scroll to bring history to its appointed redemption
 - 2. But then one of the Elders tells him to weep no more, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy to open the scroll
 - 3. And John looks, and he sees, not a Lion, but a Lamb standing as though it had been slain
 - a. The Lion – Lamb is in fact Jesus Christ!
 - 4. And so heaven worships!
 - 5. **Revelation 5:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,
 - b. “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,
 - c. for you were slain,
 - d. and by your blood you ransomed people for God
 - e. from every tribe and language and people and nation,
 - f. 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
 - g. and they shall reign on the earth.”
- E. Jesus is our advocate
- 1. He is our righteous one
 - 2. He is our propitiation
 - 3. And not ours only
 - a. But for those from every people, language, tribe and nation
- F. This is all of Jesus for all the world

VI. Conclusion

A. And that's something that even little children can understand!

B. **1 John 2:1-2** (ESV) —

1. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
2. But if anyone does sin,
3. we have an advocate with the Father,
4. Jesus Christ the righteous.
5. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins,
6. and not for ours only
7. but also for the sins of the whole world.