

If any man sin !!!

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Date: 01 May 2022

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- [0 : 00] So much power, thy word I in my heart of it, that I open not thee.
O Lord, the ever-blessed heart, thy status is of me.
The judgment's all thy mouth is won, my lips declare it now.
For joy I test them on each way, the riches of me give.
I will thy holy preaching, my meditation.
- [1 : 21] Uncarefully I will respect unto thy wishes, which one upon thy status, my dear light, shall constantly be shed.
And by thy grace I never will thy holy word forget.
Amen. I'm going to turn for us all to this passage that we read together from the first epistle general of John.
And we'll read it to chapter 2 at the beginning. Chapter 2, verse 1. And so on.
Many believe that the words of the apostle at this point are the words of somebody who is of mature ear.
- [3 : 12] He's an old man. When he says, my little children, he's saying that not because he is addressing Sunday school or addressing boys and girls of immature years, he's saying it as an old man speaking to men and women, not necessarily as old as himself, but certainly considerably younger.
And looking at his epistle, what you find permeating, what he has to say, is clearly evidence of somebody who has experienced much in his lifetime.
And his experiences are not necessarily all good experiences, but he has no regrets about the things that he has had to go through in his lifetime.
And I think many believe that what you would probably discern most of all in what he has to say is the compassion that he has for those who are recipients of his word.
He has longings for them, desires for them. He wants them to have the best of all things.
- [4 : 48] And by that, he understands that the best can only come through the Lord Jesus Christ. The first chapter ends with certain truths that he wants us to understand.
He needs us to understand. If we say, he says, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.
And when he says that, he is dealing with a topic that is all important to every one of us.
The reality of sin in the world and in the lives of all who are in the world. not necessarily of the world, but in the world.

[6 : 05] In other words, when he is teaching what he has to teach, when he is talking about what he has to talk about, he is not addressing people who are unconverted about the reality of their sinfulness.

but he is also speaking to those who are who are Christian believers as well as those who are unbelievers about something that is very painful to all of us.

And that is the fact of sin in our lives. And one truth that he needs to address, which I suppose arises out of teaching that contradicts the word of God, and that is that there was a belief amongst some anyway, that once you became a Christian, the reality of sin, the fact of sin, was something that was behind you.

It is no longer a problem. The doctrine, I suppose, has always been in the church, or influencing the church in some way, the doctrine of sinless perfection.

The doctrine where it is believed that once a sinner becomes a Christian, sin is something that is in the past. It is no longer a problem to be addressed in the presence.

[7 : 46] And in the words that he closes the chapter with clearly, he asserts that is not the truth. All have sinned and continue to sin.

And there is no person who is not under that cloud, as it were. But for the comfort and consolation of his people, there is the truth that Jesus Christ is greater than our sin.

If we go to him with our sin, we go to the only person who can deal with our sin. The only place where our sin can be handled finally.

And all the Christians should understand that. But he says if you go to him, you confess your sin. That's why you need to go to him with a confession of your sin.

So that the sin that is confessed is dealt with by him. And that's the only way that sin can be dealt with. Whoever owns that sin, whoever sin it is, only by bringing it to Christ and confessing it honestly, earnestly, and without excuse.

[9 : 13] And that's the hardest part. You know the expression yes, but, but, it's all encompassing.

It's as if you come to Christ and you come even when you're dealing with people, when you're dealing with the likes of yourself and myself and you said well, yes, I did something wrong and I apologize for it and I'm sorry for it, but, and when you say that, but, you're instantly trying to suggest that there are mitigating circumstances, there are reasons behind what led to the reason for the confession or the reason that led to the apology or the need for it.

God, no, we cannot, whoever we are, come to God with such an approach and that's not what John is encouraging. He wants the person who comes to Christ to come to them for the right reasons and with a perfect understanding, as perfect as it ever can be, of what Christ is able to do and that confession means confession, the whole truth, nothing but the truth, is brought before Christ and that Christ is able to deal with it in that way.

now, that thought immediately, I hope, suggests to us that when we don't do that, if we don't do that, that what is not confessed remains undealt with, remains as something that is held on file, as it were, something that will remain because we haven't dealt with it and we haven't brought it to Christ to deal with it and if we haven't then it will remain where it can be raised again as a matter to condemn us.

Now, that's the background, I suppose, to the words that we have here in this chapter and he continues along the same vein into the second chapter and I think if we want to sum up what we have to say today is this, that what we want to understand and every one of us needs to understand is this, that sin is a serious matter and the seriousness of sin is something that John wants, not just the stranger to God but the person who knows God that they will in no wise continue with the attitude that because of what Christ is able to do, that sin is no longer a serious matter for them because obviously if you're a Christian you're aware of the teaching that Jesus

[12 : 43] Christ is the means by which sin is dealt with. You know the doctrines of repentance, you know the doctrines of reconciliation, you know the doctrines of salvation inside out, you know that Christ who went to the cross, went to the cross to deal with sin, you know all that and because you know all that it may be that your attitude to sin is an attitude where sin is not really as insidious or a damaging part to our life that it should be and if anything I want us all to understand that this is what John means us to take on board that sin is a serious martyr and that despite the fact that

Jesus deals with confessed sin that despite the fact that the guilt of sin is dealt with on the cross that despite the fact that there is atonement available and that there is mercy freely given to the sinner who goes to Christ sin is still in the world sin is in the heart of the person who lives in the world and we live in a world that belittles sin we live in a world that makes sin something that we want not to talk about at all if at all possible if somebody had the opportunity to rewrite the Oxford dictionary one word that would be removed instantly is this word sin because it's so offensive to the human mind to the modern mind it is a it's a word that we don't want to countenance because of what it suggests because sin is a word that at its heart has within it accountability to

God it has a word that is small and seemingly insignificant at one level it has the idea within it that what we do that is wrong is a wrong that is against God not something that affects me preeminently but affects my relationship to God above all else and as such it needs to be recognized that this is a matter that is of the most serious import to every one of us so just looking at that remembering that and considering it just for a while today I want us to think of what the apostle is saying to his little children you can imagine him if you're going to visit

John you'll find a botox sitting beside the fire with his pipe and slippers coming to the end of his days and he's seen it all he's done it all he's able to speak out of the vast amount of experience that he's had of this world and what this world is capable of and he's saying as a benign loving father grandfather figure my little children these things I write up to you that you sin not that's what I want you to understand I don't want you to sin I don't want you to sin because I know what sin does and I suppose such a huge area but I'm going to highlight a couple of things just for our thinking for our thoughts if you remember what John has been saying he's begun this chapter or the previous chapter and continued throughout the chapter emphasising the wonderful privilege of enjoying fellowship with God enjoying fellowship with God enjoying access to

God enjoying fellowship with those who know God and who love God in the same way that you love God love so there's a huge emphasis placed by him on that wonderful privilege of sharing intimate moments with God who is in heaven while you're here on earth and yet he gives you access into his company and he speaks to you as a heavenly father speaks into your life into your situation into your everyday activity in the world it's a wonderful thing the Christian enjoys but he says although that is so there is always a threat to that fellowship being disturbed in verse 3 of chapter 1 it says that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the father and with the son

[18 : 50] Jesus Christ if we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth if we walk in the light and he is in the light we have fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin you see where the emphasis is falling there but one thing that is bound to impact upon this most wonderful privilege is sin itself it disturbs our peace it affects our fellowship it interrupts the transaction or the communion that there exists between God and his people the believer we are told in various places by the apostles Peter John James Paul very often he reminds us of the fact that through

Christ we have peace with God we have peace with God and our conscience is undisturbed because of what Christ has done for his people but one thing that disturbs the conscience is sin that impacts upon that peace it disturbs the peace it creates an uncertainty dear well maybe if you think of it like this what John is doing he's thinking of a child he's thinking of children he's thinking of the relationship that he has with the Lord's people and he's able to speak as somebody who has the knowledge of that but if you ever had to discipline a child discipline

I'm not talking about a belt and slippers but simply to speak harshly to a child who's doing wrong and you say that is bad that is wrong just a word is enough and when they understand that they are doing wrong they lose their boredom for a brief moment they'll check you out they'll look in your face and say well is he still angry is he still annoyed is that am I allowed to come back into this warm embrace that I'm more familiar with because their awareness of being wrong has been stimulated in some way now the Christian is in that position with God when they do something that God tells us is wrong and until we resume our proper relationship with him that uncertainty will disturb our peace and that's what John is wanting us to understand the peace cannot exist if there is sin in our heart

I'm going to go on to explore this a wee bit with you because I'm not really very sure about it and maybe you can work it out for yourself but Dr.

Martin Lloyd Jones has suggested four things in his comments on this book that are powerful reasons why a person could suffer because of sin in their experience sees it as something that is repulsive that is ugly and the way I was thinking of it when you see the way sin comes into our experience those of you who are fishermen those who use hooks with bait what you do is you cover your hook with the bait so that hides the barb that is on the hook the fish isn't meant to see the barb but once the bait is swallowed so is the hook and once the hook is swallowed the barb it takes a hold and sin is like that the actual badness of it the evil of it is hidden from sight it seems attractive many sins are attractive to us they're beguiling they're they're they're they're things that we we think well there's no harm in this and the world will tell us that there are many things which God considers to be sinful that the world does not and the world says why do you listen to that nonsense that the church propagates because really what you're talking about is human nature and human nature is something that must be allowed to live out to its full extent so why are you going to protect you with a name whether it's

[24 : 57] God's name for it or not it's just what we are what we do the way we live but you see God has a way of speaking about it and that way is to condemn it because it is ugly it is something that is damaging to the person who is responsible for it another thing that Martin Lloyd Jones said if you want to think about what sin is like go to the cross because sin is the very thing that is at the heart of Christ's humiliation and Christ's death on the cross nothing less than that and if you want to understand how evil it is how awful it is how ugly it is go to the cross look at Christ and see the sufferings there and finally it is something that is dishonouring to the gospel and the power that the gospel exerts on the life of a believer for their good if we sin we make out that that is not really of significance so I was thinking let me give you two examples when we look at the life of David and this is where

I wanted you to think for yourself we know the history of David we know the gross sin that he was guilty of when he committed adultery with Bathsheba but it's not one sin but many and you can the ones I think when you begin to unravel the whole episode you'll find well David was guilty of neglect of duty he was guilty of envy he was guilty of lust he was guilty of eventually murder and the whole package is there and it's awful but it's easily just said David sinned but then you ask the question at what point was David aware of his sin and the obvious answer

I suppose is he was aware of sin when God revealed it to him and is that really the answer to the question was David only aware of his sin when God through the prophet said to David you are the man this is your sin was David oblivious to sin before then I don't think he could have been because we know David was a man after God's own heart that's the word of God on the life of David and if he was a man after God's own heart he knew what sin was and he knew how sin worked and he knew the damage that sin did but I believe that well I suggest to you that it's quite possible that

David was able to live with his sin and excuse the sin and make all kinds of rational excuses for what he was doing was he not king was he not sovereign did he not have the right to everything that was in his kingdom all the possessions that were others they were his because he was king you know he could work out his mind going along these lines this was another man's wife well this matter the man was his just as his wife was his property belonged to him and he could rationalize his sinfulness like that until the point that God said to him through the prophet you got it all wrong he revealed to him the real nature of sin he needed to have that experience so there are many ways in which

David knew about sin and understood to a degree what sin was but God needed to bring it home to us and you know in a sense this is what John is dealing with here I write unto you that you sin not because you need to understand that by sinning what you are doing is wrong and you need to understand and experience the extent of your sin the true nature of your sin the awfulness of your sin and if we have a view of it that trivializes it or belittles it then we do ourselves a disservice and we we injure the name of

[31 : 19] God especially if we are believing people it's amazing how God works I was reading recently about it's a book it's full of little anecdotes about the men of sky and the story told about a man and he feared no man and he feared no God and he lived because he wanted to live his life the way he chose to live it without giving answer to anybody or accountable to anybody and the story has it that his home was a home that people frequented day or night it was a kelly house and seven days a week people could go there and have a good time his home was open to anybody and one

Sunday it was an open house as usual and the house was full and he himself in those old houses there was a sort of pull down bed which you had in the house somewhere for emergencies and there was one in the kitchen and he pulled it down and he was lying on his bed there with the rest of the house full of his friends and a knock came to the door and a tinker was standing on the door now a tinker was somebody who went around the houses selling tinned goods that was their profession they were quite well known in their own islands they made pots and pans and sold them on the doorstep and this was this tinker and he asked if he could come in and they invited him in and they were only too happy to have somebody join their festivities and anyway after a wee while the man asked if he could sing a song for them and the host said by all means and they were only too happy to be entertained and according to the story the tinker began to sing a hymn written by

Dougald Pachanan and the hymn was a hymn on the judgment day and as he sang he sang the man was a believer himself or he sang it with gusto and it spoke about the judgment day and as he sang the song his host was pricked in his conscience he was devastated and God revealed to him his heart he didn't move from where he was and in an instant God made him a sinner and you know sometimes that is how God works in the lives of people who are unbelievers he brings home our sin to us we've lived in our sin we've dwelt in our sin we've added to our sin and we've done with full energy and activity and without a thought but all of a sudden what we've done becomes something we understand we shouldn't be doing the same can be true about our

Christianity at times because we can be tolerant of our own sin we can accommodate our sinfulness because not to do so is inconvenient and sometimes God in his mercy will bring home to us our sin you know the story of Michael Kate is another instance where God brings home to us but there's no suggestion I don't think anywhere in the Bible of any of the saints of God being without sin no suggestion whoever it is that would say to you other than that they're not telling you the truth nor is there any suggestion in the Bible that the person whoever that person is will not be answerable to God for their sin whether you're a

David a Solomon or any other saint who succumb to sinful inclinations that will affect their life it will affect their relationship to God to others and to their spiritual well-being it is something that is an inevitable consequence because of the very nature of what sin is now it would be most miserable if John didn't go on to say I don't want you to sin he says but he says if any man sin we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous he is not making an open door for you to go through so that you can sin at will that's not his reasoning John is a wise man

[37 : 08] John is a father who has seen it all and done it all and been in places perhaps at times that had mostly his own doing he knows Peter he's a buddy he's a friend of his own and he's seen the tears of Peter and he knows the grief that was in his heart because he sinned and he doesn't want anyone else to have that grief but he wants us to understand that there is an answer to our sin that there is a place where we can take our sin and he says if any man sin we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous I dealt with this word recently this advocate with the father this picture you can have in your mind of a courtroom a courtroom and in that courtroom there is somebody there to represent you and that representative is none other than

Jesus Christ he is the advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous and that's the passion you go to with your sin and you think to yourself what an advocate somebody who has no sin of his own to answer for somebody who is able to plead your cause in the presence of his heavenly father somebody who has the imprints of the nails in his hands maybe that's a theological point that you want to discuss amongst friends does Jesus really have the imprints of his nails in the palms of his hands or in his feet in his glorified body in heaven surely he's experienced in glorification healing well maybe maybe not my own thinking is that he's still in his body whatever that spiritual body is made up there are evidences of his being in the world and what he encountered in the world and as he stands in the presence of his father his father knows exactly this is my son this is the one of whom

I said I am well pleased this is the one who went to the cross not for his own sins but for the sins of his people and when he is pleading he's not pleading for himself he's pleading for them not only that he said he is the propitiation for our sins another big word another theological word a word that allows theologians to spend a lot of time debating what lies at the heart of this world but essentially my understanding of it is this Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins God is angry with our sins God is a God of wrath as far as our sins is concerned but Jesus Christ our propitiation turns away the wrath of God so that that wrath no longer applies to the sinner who is in

Christ who is trusting in Christ for whom Christ died for whom Christ bore the sins that were ours in his body to the tree do you remember the story in the Old Testament of the burning bush the bush is burning the fire of God has come down and yet it is not consumed there are many stories I suppose many truths contained in that but when Christ took the sins of his people the whole of God's wrath came down upon the sin bearer he drew the wrath of God upon himself so that his people would not have to have the wrath of God come down upon them that wrath which I deserve which you deserve if you're a sinner but if you're a sinner saved by grace if you're a sinner who has trusted in

Christ that wrath of God will not touch you so you go to that Christ that's what John is saying he is the propitiation for our sins but you're sitting here today maybe and you're a sinner and you're not in Christ and God's wrath is waiting for you God's wrath is going to come down upon you God's wrath is going to be poured out in full measure upon you as a sinner who has not gone to Christ but John has put before you this opportunity he says the Christ who died on the cross died a death that ensures that any and all whoever they are whenever they come that there is sufficient provision in him for you not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world not the marvel of it all you know if

[42 : 48] God in his wisdom saw fit to take Callum McDonald and put him where Christ was and say well Christ doesn't need to die we'll take this guy here and we'll put him where Christ was and his death will be sufficient and well I'm afraid that's not right however holy however perfect you might see him you cannot find the like of Christ anywhere else but where God has put him and that is on the cross because he is God and he is man and holy God can bear the wrath of a holy God upon a sinner that's the gospel that's what John wants us to believe oh my little children he says these things I write unto you that you sin not that you sin not and there's one sin that he would have in mind more than any other that most vexatious of sins that gross sin of of ignoring

Christ of denying Christ of not believing Christ not believing the gospel going on as if you have no need of that Christ or don't sin that sin you have enough to be going on with without having to answer for that one but that will be the sin that will await every sinner who has not closed in with Christ that will be the preeminence and that will be the sin that God will deal with first and foremost the sin of rejecting his own son his own mediator his own advocate his own redeemer the one that he gave in order that sin be dealt with God may God give you that wisdom to make sure that oh I'm sure you're thinking I don't have many sins to answer you go on with that belief but may

God teach you otherwise may God teach you that you have a need of a saviour and that no saviour but Christ is there for any sinner let us pray Lord help us to believe that you are God and that you have made provision for us in your son Jesus Christ you have given us your word and through your servant you have encouraged us to put our trust in that Christ who bears your name forgive us our many sins cleanse us through the blood of the everlasting sacrifice all we ask we ask in him Amen our closing psalm is psalm 85 psalm 85 and we're singing from verse 8 to the end of the psalm I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to whose folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness to them that fear him surely near his salvation that glory in her land may have her habitation truth met with mercy righteousness and peace kissed mutually truth springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven high give what is good the

Lord shall give our land shall yield increase justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face he switches I'll hear what God the Lord will speak I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his whole dear speak peace Leno to But let them not return to foolishness.

To them that fear them truly nearth is its salvation.

[47 : 35] That glory in the love may have a reputation.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness.

And peace is mutually. Truth springs from earth and righteousness.

Looked down from heaven high. Yea, what is good the Lord shall give.

Our realm shall give him peace. Justice to set us in this death.

[48 : 54] Come, Lord, before the death. Amen. Now may grace, mercy, and peace be called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all my mind always.

Amen. Without a sin. Thank you, Father. Get a gate of sin for us.

That's all right. Thank you.