

The Righteous Advocate

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- [0 : 0 0] Let's continue our public worship of God by singing to his praise, first of all from the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 100. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 100, that's on page 362 of the Blue Psalm book.
- Psalm 100 on page 362, that well-known Psalm of praise. O people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and serve with mirth, as praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.
- Psalm 100, to God's praise. O people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, His servant works, His praise for tell, come ye before him and rejoice.
- Sure that the Lord is all in you, will have the need of him.
- We are his glory, God shall see.
- [1 : 4 7] Our glory is here with us, O dear. O enter in his grace with you, I'll push you to his voice, I'll come to you.
- Father, I'll come to you. Paul, I'll you there with me.
- O cry the Lord and all His will His mercy is forever true If we have all my service to And shall come is truly in truth Let's join our hearts together in a word of prayer.
- Let's pray. Lord our God we come before you once more this evening And we ask once more you would humble our hearts before you We again come to this place perhaps with so many things Assailing our minds and assailing our hearts So many things seeking to distract us Perhaps even this evening to distress us So many things seeking for our attention We ask for a short time even this time together around your word We would have truly our minds and our hearts focused on you Come to this place this evening Lord And we come and we bring with us the many burdens of this past week The many anxieties and many stresses and strains Which we have perhaps had to go through or experience We bring also to this place our almighty God The reality that will lies before perhaps some of us this week Might be a painful week With burdens and pressures
- Lord perhaps no one else knows about but ourselves and you We take all these things Things spoken and unspoken Things physical and things mental Things spiritual, things good and things pressurised and things dark Bring all these things at this moment To the throne of grace Help us to understand the reality and the joy that we should have That we have a God who hears the prayers of his people As we pray to you right now We pray to a God who you reassure us and you assure us That you hear us You're a God who is attentive to the prayers and cries of your people We come this evening hanging on to that promise Laying hold on that good promise That when we pray to you As your dear children That you listen to us as a loving father You're the one who is close to all who cry out to you You're the one who has created and placed the stars of the sky

[5 : 27] The stars of heaven Every one of them made by you Every one of them named by you You're also the God as your word tells us Who knows every single one of your precious people Not one of us is too far away from you Not one of us is as it were too far gone For you to know us To keep a hold on us To keep calling us your own With that knowledge of your perfect understanding of who and what we are We come and we understand that all that we are is laid bare before you just now We confess once more that we are an unclean people with unclean lips That before you this day and this week and this month This very hour We have sinned We have done that which is not right As we come and as we confess that sin we remember the glorious truth that in our saviour we have the reality that he is our advocate

That he stands beside us in that dock and he declares us innocent He declares us innocent because he is the one who has taken away the sin off from his people Because he now stands beside us and before us He now reigns and rules on your right hand As that eternal ever living presence In his full body With the marks of his pain The marks of his love The marks of his Graciousness towards his people Still evident in his body As he declares that we are his Again and again As he brings these prayers before you again and again As he remembers and keeps his people Before you again and again The image we have of our great and glorious Exalted Lord and saviour The king of all kings

To all things made through him and for him And yet we have him interceding for us And his love interceding for us And his joy of having a people for his own possession Interceding for us Lord we look forward to that day That day when we will see the reality of what it is to see him face to face And to know him as he truly is When the veil of his life is removed When we no longer will see as it were through a glass darkly But we will see him truly We will see him with eyes sanctified by the new flesh We remember just now with thankfulness Those who have gone before us Those who even as we said in the morning Who have prayed many years for this place The saints of old who lived and who died In this community Seeking to serve you in this place Who have poured out many years of prayer Before the throne of grace For us and for this place

And for your gospel cause in this place Lord we ask that these prayers would not be lost But indeed we would see a fulfilment At least of some of these prayers In our day and in our time As we remember those who have gone We are mindful once more As to the tragedies suffered By our dear brothers and sisters And our next door denomination Lord we pray Lord for the wider Campbell family At this moment And for those who are suffering And those who are grieving Pray for a young family Who have lost a husband and a father We pray Lord for a community And a congregation Who have lost their pastor Their minister and their friend We pray for the denomination Who has lost a young minister We pray Lord for all close And extended family and friends Who are mourning this very day Mourning the loss of one they knew and loved And one who sought to do a good work For the sake of the gospel kingdom Lord we ask once more

That in the few short years of ministry You gave him You would use the preaching of your word To bring glory to your name Lord in that place We know and we understand Lord that's a place of our nation That's an area of our nation Where there's so much gospel need We pray Lord for all the gospel work That goes on Lord in the whole west coast of Scotland In Skye But also in the rest of the west coast We see such gospel ignorance We see such a lacking Of true evangelical faith Across the denominations Lord we ask for days of refreshing And renewal for them We also pray for our own Presbytery in Skye We pray Lord for our own Presbytery in northern Presbytery As they look to have some And any to go and serve In a mission field Where the fields are white for harvest Where the workers are so few We pray for ourselves Lord we thank you for the privilege We have of having Indeed many workers Many workers

[10 : 31] But Lord forgive us We ask for our at times Slowness to serve We pray for ourselves As a congregation here As we seek to serve you in this place We ask for days Lord Of heavy and hard labour Days of heavy and hard labour In the white fields around us We know as we ask for your blessing As we ask for many to come to know you And to love you In this community That requires for us To go into the highways And the byways To go into all the homes Those who are family members And our friends To interact with them To show them in our words And our actions What it is to know And be known by To love and to be loved by And to be kept by And to be held by And to worship And to praise The risen Lord Jesus We confess that we find ourselves Often worrying of the state

Of the gospel cause We give you praise That the gospel causes your cause And you will prosper it Where you see fit We pray Lord And we give you thanks For good news Good news even in our own nation As we have heard even in recent weeks That you are raising up Many new men Many young men And some older men To find that call That inescapable call To come and be pastoral workers To come and work the fields To come and be pastors And to be ministers To expound your word To spend time studying it To lead your people To minister To serve to your people To care for your people We pray Lord For many more young men Many more young men Would hear that call And would themselves Respond to it Respond to that life of service We pray Lord And we give you thanks That you use all your people Those with titles And those without titles

We pray Lord For all your people here Those of us here Who are working As it were Day to day jobs Those working in offices And around our island Those working Lord With people day by day Those who interact With people That the rest of us We never get a chance To interact with We ask you bless them In their workplaces Bless them Lord As I seek to be witnesses To you And witnesses for you In their places of work Pray Lord They be bright And shining examples Even in the face of At times opposition From colleagues Perhaps even scorn And disgust from colleagues Lord you give them wisdom And give them peace I pray Lord For those who are Tired here amongst us Who have time Perhaps Lord To spend Working and existing And ministering To their families Existing and Spending time In this village Lord give them We ask gospel opportunities Lord we give you praise That you can use

The old and the young The working and the retired All for your gospel cause In this place We ask we would see This place full See our congregation Next door full also See our buildings Filling up week after week For your name's sake And for your glory We would know of days Of refreshing And renewal Until these days come Help us to serve you well In this day of small things Help us to be faithful servants With the small talents You have given us With the small amount You have given us To work with Help us to use that faithfully To make the most of the time And opportunity we have Help us to be willing To reach our community In perhaps new ways And fresh ways With the never changing Never altering reality Of the truth of the gospel That gospel which has saved us And which we know Has the power to save Any and all Who will listen to it Help us This evening we ask To have our hearts And our minds Focused firmly On you

Not being swayed By As aware of it The doctrines of this world We ask you We ask you to keep us strong We confess that we are Weak people at times And even as your people Here this evening We are not immune To being swayed And confused By the doctrines Of this world By the theology Of this world For we ask We would find ourselves Rooted firmly And deeply In your living word Help us in our own Private devotions We ask Spend time with you In reading And in prayer Spend time with you In meditation On that word Spend time in silent thought As we listen to your word As we read your word As we perhaps sing Your word privately But each one of us Individually We grow more and more And in doing so We grow together As a family of brothers And sisters In this place Lord keep us We ask Forgive us our sins Once more Lord we beg By asking all these things In the name And for the sake

[15 : 36] Of the risen Lord Jesus Amen Well let's Turn to read In God's word Carrying on of course Our short series In 1st John 1st John chapter 2 This evening 1st John chapter 2 That's on page 959 Page 959 1st John Chapter 2 1st John 2 Page 959 Let's hear again The word of God 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 He is The propitiation For our sins And not for ours only

But also for the sins Of the whole world And by this We know That we have come To know him If we keep His commandments Whoever says I know him But does not Keep his commandments As a liar And the truth Is not in him But whoever Keeps his word In him Truly The love of God Is perfected By this we may know That we are in him Whoever says He abides in him Ought to walk In the same way In which he walked Beloved I am writing you No new commandment But an old commandment That you had From the beginning The old commandment Is the word That you have heard At the same time It is A new commandment That I am writing to you Which is true In him And in you Because the darkness Is passing away And the true light Is already shining Whoever says He is in the light And hates his brother Is still in darkness

Whoever loves his brother Abides in the light And in him There is no cause For stumbling But whoever hates His brother Is in the darkness And walks in the darkness And does not know Where he is going Because the darkness Has blinded his eyes I am writing to you Little children Because your sins Are forgiven For his name's sake I am writing to you Fathers Because you know him Who is from the beginning I am writing to you Young men Because you have overcome The evil one I am writing to you Children Because you know the father I write to you Fathers Because you know him Who is from the beginning I write to you Young men Because you are strong And the word of God Abides in you And you have overcome The evil one Do not love the world Or the things in the world If anyone loves the world The love of the father

Is not in him For all that is in the world The desires of the flesh And the desires of the eyes And the pride of life Is not from the father But is from the world And the world Is passing away Along with its desires But whoever does The will of God Abides forever Children It is the last hour And as you have heard That Antichrist is coming So now we have Many Antichrists have come Therefore we know That it is the last hour They went out from us But they were not of us For if they had been of us But have continued with us But they went out That it might become plain That all are not of us But you have been anointed By the Holy One And you all have knowledge I write to you Not because you do not know the truth But because you know it And because no lie is of the truth

Who is the liar But he who denies That Jesus is the Christ This is the Antichrist He who denies the father And the son No one who denies the son Has the father Whoever confesses the son Has the father also Let what you heard From the beginning Abide in you If what you have heard From the beginning Abides in you Then you too will abide In the son And in the father And this is the promise That he made to us Eternal life I write these things to you About those Who are trying to deceive you But the anointing That you receive from him Abides in you And you have no need That anyone should teach you But as his anointing Teaches you about everything And is true And is no lie Just as it has taught you Abide in him Amen Praise to God For his holy

[20 : 42] And his perfect word Let's once more Sing to God's praise From the sing psalms As we sing That well known psalm But a psalm That is no less true Sing psalms And psalm 23 Sing psalms Psalm 23 It's on page 28 Of course the psalm It reminds us Of the keeping And the love Of Jesus As our good shepherd Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd No want shall I know He makes me lie down Where the green pastures grow He leads me to rest Where the calm waters flow Psalm 23 To God's praise The Lord is my shepherd The shepherd No want shall I know He makes me lie down Where the green pastures grow

He leads me to rest Where the calm waters flow Where the calm waters flow My holy steps He leads back to His way This day of all righteousness He leads me to rest And the Board of Shalom.

me comfort and cheer. In the sight of my enemies, I did a new strength.

We are all good, God to you pour on my hand. My God for her close and her gracious defense.

So truly dear covenant mercy and grace will follow me close to the end of my grace.

[23 : 41] I would dwell in the house of the Lord Almighty is.

Let's turn back to the reading we had. 1 John chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2. As we said, we're carrying on our short series in this letter of 1 John.

We have a section this evening from verses 1 down to verse 6 of chapter 2. For the sake of a text, we can take the incredible and glorious words of our first verse.

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.

as we said, we can summarize John's writings, at least in his first letter, by two overarching themes, that of guidance and that of assurance.

[24 : 48] He's writing to our young church, again, who are being buffeted on all sides. Externally, persecution. Internally, heresy is arising.

And they're really fighting off in all corners. And one thing we see, not just here, but especially in our verses this evening, and we know it off by heart, we see it so many times, but Scripture is honest.

When God speaks to his people, he speaks to us honestly. We often, myself included, perhaps when we speak to others, we'll often try and be as pleasant as possible.

Imagine there's something you want to address, someone you love, someone you care for, but there's something with them you want to address. Perhaps they're doing something you know is wrong and they should know is wrong.

We would try and word it carefully and gently and perhaps not deal with it at all. Well, God loves his people too much. He cares for his people far too much.

[25 : 56] Just to word things carefully and let us get on with our misery. No, when there's a problem, when there's sin, we know that God is a good God and he intervenes and he leads us and he guides us and at times he disciplines us.

We see that taking place here in our few verses, verses 1 down to verse 6 this evening. We see the reality, we also see of course the honesty.

But with that reality and honesty, we also see that our condition is sinful at times. Yes, we know that. But God never just stops with the condition.

Yes, at times as Christians we have to be reminded that we are still sinners, we still sin, we still fall away, we still make a mess of things, to put it lightly. But also God never stops there.

When he reminds us of our sin, he also reminds us as to the Saviour, the one who we go to again and again, who has paid of course the price for our sin.

[27 : 01] We'll see that in these verses. Just three very broad headings for these verses, verses 1 to 6. First of all, seeing the audience, the audience that John is writing to.

Then seeing the advocate and then finally authenticity. So the audience, the advocate, and finally and briefly authenticity. First of all, the audience.

who is John writing these words to? My little children. Just two perhaps broad points to make of the audience.

My little children, they are both special, but of course also sinful. Special, but also sinful. First of all special.

My little children. That's nice enough in the English, and it's beautiful in the English, but even just to give a bit more of a taste, it's also, of course, in the original language we have the same wording, of course, but there's a sense to it that English captures well, but it goes deeper.

[28 : 15] It's just two words in Greek, and the words used are simple, but they convey so much. The Gaelic also, you could really say it's closer.

It's not just my little children, they're mine. John is writing in love here. In Greek, it's the children of me, the children of me, you children, you young church, you believers, you Christians, I was involved from your early days till now.

I've seen you grow up in the faith, my little children. It's so clear. It's so personal.

This is a loved, filled address. John often calls them his children. We see that perhaps next week, week after, verse 18, children.

We see again, then, again, again, again, children, my children, but here and here alone, he calls them my little children. He adds that extra layer of comfort. My little children.

[29 : 30] An extra layer of peace and assurance and reassurance. Because what he's about to say to them isn't easy. It might hurt them, but he's reminding them, but he speaks to them as a father in the faith, to children in the faith.

But more than that, he speaks to them on behalf of the heavenly father who loves them more than even John himself will ever love them. My little children, my.

children. John writes to a people he knows. John writes to a people that he knows. He knows this young church. He knows them well.

We see that in his letters. He cares for them individually. My little children. Brothers and sisters, when we try and lead and encourage and guide brothers and sisters in the faith, if we see a brother or sister who we think is going wrong and perhaps they are going wrong, perhaps we see them in sin and we see them drifting and we worry about them, how do we approach them?

How do we encourage them to turn themselves back to Jesus? Guidance always has to be personal. My little children.

[30 : 51] There's nothing cold here. There's nothing distant here. John writes lovingly and personally to this gathering of Christians. As we perhaps see our failing or faltering, our slowly distancing themselves from God and his ways, brother or sister, we have to be personable.

Guidance has to be given personally. Also, guidance has to be close and careful and caring.

Close and careful and caring. My little children. The reminder that they are his. And because they are his, because he has such care for them, and because the father through him, through John, is trying to assure them and remind them of who they are.

what's about to be said, although painful, is said in kindness, is said in care, is said with compassion.

Anytime church discipline is done, anytime a Christian is reminded, either officially, we could say, formally or informally, every time we are rebuked as Christians by our fellow brothers and sisters, if it's done in love, if it's done carefully, the result should always be restoration.

[32 : 27] Dear brothers, dear sisters, there is no church discipline that doesn't have at its final aim restoration. We long to see those who are faltering and failing, we long to see them restored and growing and going from strength to strength in their faith once more.

little children. Little children. Again, this paternal sense. He's writing as if he is their father and he is their father in faith, my little children.

And like any good father, what is he wanting these little children of his to do? He wants them to grow. He's seeing that they're being tempted towards these mistakes, these heresies, and he's saying, stop that.

Get away from that. He wants to see his children in the faith grow up well. Grow up knowing the true father, of course.

We have to be careful here. John isn't placing himself in a place of ultimate authority. He's just writing as a father in the faith, as perhaps some here would do, as some certainly did in my lifetime, the older men in Grava and other places.

[33 : 43] They spoke to me in love as fathers in the faith, not exercising some kind of control or some kind of praise from me.

No, because they love. They love little children. There's fathers in the faith here too, and I know you love, as it were, the little children in the faith.

My little children. But then we see why he begins so carefully, because this is a hard message he has to share to these beloved little children of his.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. They are special, but also they are, of course, sinful, so that you may not sin.

Now we'll say this here, and I'm sorry if it sounds repetitive, but we'll say this perhaps every sermon we look at in 1 John, just briefly. John is not expecting sinless perfection from these Christians.

[34 : 54] Christians. We perhaps read, but you may not sin, and we think, John is demanding something impossible, or the Lord, through John, is demanding something impossible from these poor Christians.

But if they're hard enough time as it is with heresy and persecution, and they're being told they shouldn't sin, they can't sin, that's not fair, makes no sense.

John, and the Lord, through John, is not demanding some sinless perfection. He's not expecting it, as you say. Scripture interprets Scripture, and we see the Gospel of John, that's found nowhere.

And the rest of his letter, that's found nowhere. As we said last week, well, last time we were together, what is John talking about here? He says we should not sin. We should walk in the light, not in darkness.

The problem, we'll see this in a second, the problem is habitual sinning. Ongoing, unrepentant, full-on, rebellious, habitual, happy sinning.

[36 : 02] You may not sin. It's an active sense of the wording there. But you may not be in sin. Again, John is writing to men and women, teenagers, teenagers, perhaps.

Writing to people who, like himself, he knows, are sinners. When John seeks to encourage his little children of this small church, he has one sinner writing to other sinners, encouraging them not to sin.

Again, John's a sinner, and he's engaging with other saved sinners like himself. God's love. We can't go one way. Now, Bob Ackroyd often uses and often reminds us, professor, moderator, professor, doctor, Bob Ackroyd, always in class, he always reminds us that as Christians, because we're human, we often go one way or the other.

It's like riding a horse. We always fall off one side of a horse or the other side of a horse. We ever say that this is saying to be sinless in all our ways and that we are expected to have no sin.

Or this is saying perhaps the other way that we can do whatever we want. Well, we know both things aren't true. Our Father in heaven, he knows us.

[37 : 32] He knows our limitations. He knows our sin nature. And as saved sinners, we will sin. We know that, we feel that. But John is saying here as saved sinners, we should be striving.

What for? Well, striving that we do not sin. We will sin. I will sin, I will fail. You will sin, you will fail. But we strive, don't we?

And that's not a bad thing. We strive to be like our Savior and more and more like him. And whilst we do that, of course, the Spirit works in us. not relying on our works, not needing our works, regardless, the Spirit works in us, that slow work of sanctification as we are made more and more like our Savior.

But as that internal work goes on, almost removed from us, we still are called in our own lives, in our service, in our actions, to strive not to sin.

to strive not to sin. We are to pursue, of course, godliness. We are to pursue holiness. There's no new teaching there.

[38 : 47] God has said that, of course, throughout the Old Testament. Be holy as I am holy. Dear friends, as John told us last time we looked at it, if you find a Christian who says they have no sin, they deceive themselves.

John is not contradicting himself. We saw that, didn't we, last time? If we say we have no sin, in verse 8 of chapter 1, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

John knows he's a sinner writing to save sinners, but he's reminding them, in the face of growing sin, in the face of growing heresy, brothers and sisters, strive, strive, and strive to keep yourselves away from sin.

Perhaps I'm speaking out of turn, perhaps I am wrong, but I think often we might think that the heresies that affected these Christians in these days won't touch us, but we in Tolstah are somehow immune from these heresies.

We're not. Brothers and sisters, we are not. And the call that John gives to these Christians to strive to shun the heresies and shun, as it were, of the world, and by the world he means the evil side of things, the sin of the world, the heresies, the dangers of the world, we are not immune to these things, not in the slightest.

[40 : 22] Strive. We are special, and they are special because we are the Lord's children, those he has called his own and those he keeps as his own.

But also we are those like our friends, like our brothers and sisters who received this letter from John. We also are liable of falling, of sinning, of failing.

But if anyone does sin, again John is back to being very realistic.

And perhaps we read it, we perhaps read the biblical writers so coldly. This is a letter he wrote to people who knew him. They knew the tone of John.

John is so poetic in his Gospels, he's so beautiful in his writing, he's so intricate. He writes like a real wordsmith, and God uses the writer's natural skills. We saw that.

[41 : 27] The book of Mark is written immediately. The book of Luke, Luke being a doctor, his Gospels written quite intricately with details that a doctor would observe and add. God uses his people as he works through them, and the Spirit uses the natural eloquence and skill and poetic nature of John as he writes these letters.

This is a letter, a normal letter the church received as it were in the post. If you do sin, if you do sin, and really when you do sin, we have, and note there, the we have.

John now includes himself very much with the recipients of this letter. Brothers and sisters, we all have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ the righteous, he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We have an advocate with the Father. This advocate is for the sinners amongst us. Christian, you think you've perhaps gone too far, you've fallen too far away.

[42 : 48] Perhaps you are listening to this message just now, and perhaps you have not been out to this building for many years. Perhaps, dear brothers and sisters, there's someone in your mind just now who you know loves the Lord, but perhaps has fallen away.

Take them to this and remind them that who is Jesus the advocate for? For all who are sinners. Those who have fallen away for months, for years, for many years.

Those who haven't known him yet, who come to know him fresh this evening. Who is Jesus' advocate for? He is an advocate for the sinners. He is the advocate with who? He is the advocate to the Father, advocate with the Father.

Of course, this is a legal term that John is using. He is painting as a courtroom scene for them here. And the image is clear. We stand very much in the dock.

And we are accused of all the sins we are accused of. And beside us is the advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, who as we try and mutter and ramble our ways out of our sin.

[44 : 02] He speaks clearly and eternally for us. He is the advocate for us who puts forward, as it were, the case for us. And the case for us is seen in the marks on his hands and his side that he by his very existence for us, he by his very person, his very nature, he by his finished works.

He is our advocate who says, for all we have done, all the sin and all the misery that Donald has done, I declared on the cross, it is finished.

By my blood, by my eternal life, by the finished work of all that I am and have done, it is finished.

They are mine. I will keep them. I will save them. I will never let them go. He is our way.

He represents us. He speaks and he acts on our behalf. And he places himself, which no advocate on earth would do, he places himself as it were in the prison cell meant for us, taking on the full punishment.

[45 : 30] And we see that, don't we? We see that in how else he's described here. He's not just the advocate, but also he is the advocate who is also, as you see halfway before I start of verse 2, he is the advocate who is also the propitiation for our sins.

He is both the advocate, but also he is the sacrifice. Literally, propitiation, he is literally the atoning sacrifice.

This is, of course, the temple language coming back here. But the reminder that he is the spotless, blameless lamb who declares us righteous.

And when asked for the evidence of why or how we are righteous, he shows himself as the evidence. His very life, his very service, his very person, his very blood, it proves, it shows that we are righteous through him.

My little children, yes, you will sin. Yes, you will backslide at times. Yes, you will make a mess of things. But my little children, we have an advocate for the Father.

[47 : 08] The advocate who is also the payment for your unrighteousness, for your sin, for my righteousness, for my sin. He is both our lawyer, our advocate, our brother in the stand before us, but he is also the lamb, spotless, blameless, slain lamb, whose blood covers the sins of his people.

There's a study we can be done one day for us, but not today. But just to briefly mention what John says here. Not just our sins, but also the sins of the whole world.

The use of John uses the word world, changes different contexts, but here we can understand this well. John doesn't believe that.

John doesn't teach that anywhere else. This is simply John using the word world to broaden out, it's not just to one specific group, but to all.

To all the groups. All layers of society. All peoples. Basically, to summarise, and we'll deal with this more one day in the future, because the features again, we'll deal with it in detail, because it deserves a good detailed view.

[48 : 34] This was said on Thursday night. The gospel offer is free, isn't it? It's a free offer. An open offer. To all shapes and sizes of people.

All ranks of society. All cultures. To all in the world. He's not saying that Christ's death and his propitiation, it covers everyone indiscriminately.

That's not what John teaches. It's not what Christ teaches. It's not the biblical truth. But John's simply saying here, it's not just for you, it's for all the world.

All the ranks and files of society. All the shapes and sizes. All the different tribes and nations and tongues. His work. His finished work.

It's for us. For them. And that is important for us, because of all we read this just now, we have to remember this whole world.

[49 : 34] That's us. When John wrote that, he was writing this to a small church somewhere. Somewhere in the Middle East. At that point, there is no gospel here.

At this point, we are pagans. Doing who knows what. This is good news for us. And we are here of living evidence that this is true.

We have an advocate for the Father. One who stands before us and says and declares that we are forgiven. Why? Because he is the living sacrifice who in his body bears and shows the marks of his love for his people.

Very briefly, we see, finally, authenticity. Authenticity. By this, he is only the perfection of our sins, only for ours, only but also the sins of the whole world.

And by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments. Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar.

[50 : 48] And the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him truly, the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Again, this is not sinless perfectionism. This is a saved sinner writing to saved sinners. As we said at the start, John must speak plainly.

Again, he is speaking and writing against the Gnostic heresy. And part of the Gnostic heresy, because it declared that Jesus wasn't truly there in the flesh, because they believed, of course, that flesh is bad and the flesh is sinful.

Essentially, without going too deep into it, one of the resulting factors of Gnostic belief was basically, eat, drink, and be merry. You're saved anyway.

Crack on and do what you want. Crack on and do what you want. You're saved anyway. That sounds flippant, but it's not flippant. When you read some of the Gnostic writing, it's almost as blunt as that.

[51 : 59] If you're saved, you're saved. Jesus died for you. Then go and live a free life. An easy life. This whole world is evil anyway.

All created matter is evil, so go and be evil. It makes no difference. You're saved. It's okay. Now when you see that is the world, that is the culture, that is the tone that John is writing against, you see why he is so harsh, why he has to be so definitive talking to these poor Christians.

There's no space for them to begin to relax and to think that everything is open for them. The world around them is telling them, sin freely and no worries.

Do whatever you want and have no concern for your soul. John is saying no. No. He's speaking in very strong terms. But they are in danger of being swayed by the world, aren't they?

Being swayed by believing that habitual sin, habitual actions are okay. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth as we read last week.

[53 : 18] The same message is here before us. If we say that we follow him, if we say we love him, but again and again and again we fail to even try and keep his commandments, if all our lives, every section, every part of our lives looks like nothing but sin and rebellion, then we should not be comfortable.

we should not be comfortable. And the problem is when we say this, it is those of us with a weak faith and perhaps a tender faith who hear this and worry.

Speaking plainly, brothers and sisters, those of us perhaps who lack assurance, and we're speaking about this at lunchtime today, those of us who lack assurance, and your minister is alongside you in this, those of us who often lack assurance, the worry about losing your faith, the worry about not being saved, that itself is an assurance for you.

Only Christians worry are they truly, truly saved, and we've covered this before, and that's not for today's discussion, but I'm saying that to caveat because the heartbreaking truth, and one of the reasons why John is so clear here, it is those who should be worried, it is those who live a life of hidden sin, of unrepentant sin, who will often not question themselves.

Those who are weak in faith and small in faith and who perhaps are very true Christians, it's often they who question and who worry and who suffer much worry, but John is writing plainly and loudly from the page here because we need to understand it's those of us who will not question ourselves, who think we're doing alright, who think we're doing well as Christians, but in reality our heart has grown so cold and so far away from our Saviour, it's almost as if we don't know Him at all.

[55 : 22] It's those of us in that place who should be worried when we read these verses, this reminder from John. Whoever says I know Him but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in Him.

Dear Christian, again, this is not to the weak of faith, this is not to those of us who suffer for lack of assurance, this is to the Christians here and those of us here who would call themselves Christians, but your life is nothing but constant rebellion.

And the word habitual is important, habitual rebellion. Not saying those who fall into sin, we all fall into sin unfortunately. Not saying those who have backslidden, there's many Christians who have backslidden and some backslidden for years.

This is to the Christians and you know yourself, this is you're not. And you're living a double life. You're living a double life like John says, you're pretending to walk in the light, but in reality your heart and your soul is in darkness.

You pretend and you're outwardly looking like you're following the commandments, but internally you have no real care, no real concern for the Lord.

[56 : 49] It's to you, John says, to watch where you're walking. But also it's to you, dear Christian, both to those of us who struggle with assurance and to those of us who are worrying and wondering are we too dark, are we too far gone.

It's to both of us and all of us alike and to those here who as of yet don't know Jesus. What is the answer to those with small faith? What's the answer to those with a struggling faith?

What's the answer to those of us perhaps who John is cobbling out here who have as of were a double-faced kind of faith? If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

He is propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also the sins of the whole world. dear brothers and sisters, John is not writing to be cruel, he is writing to be kind.

My little children, in your sin, in your backsliding, in your worries, in your bathering from heresy, in your bathering from persecution, in your bathering from the world, we, you, I, have an advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[58 : 19] How do you, struggling Christian, regain your faith? How do you, far away, rebellious Christian, come back to him? How do you, Christian, who is so worried as to the validity of your faith, how do you test that?

How do you fix that? How do you solve that? We have an advocate. We come back to Jesus. Come back to Jesus this evening. The beauty of the gospel is that applies to all of us.

We come back to him and strengthen and come back to him and ask forgiveness. We come back to him and we know that with him we have, because of his finished work, because he never fails, lets us go, lets us down, because he has completed in his body, because he has suffered in his body the full wrath of all the sins of all his people.

When we come to him for the first time or come back to him for the tenth, the hundredth time, he is merciful to the end, kind and loving to the end, because he is our eternal propitiation, eternally has paid the sins of his people.

That's our encouragement this evening. Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, as we leave this portion of your word, we confess that much like perhaps these first readers and first hearers, we are challenged this evening.

[59 : 44] We are challenged that we are told to examine our own lives and see perhaps areas of darkness in our own hearts and darkness in our own souls. But we give you praise that again like the first hearers, as we are challenged, we also leave this place this evening not having no answer.

We leave this place having the only answer for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is able and he is willing and he is eternally capable of bringing back to himself all who wonder, of restoring to himself all who are far away, of encouraging all who need that eternal gospel encouragement.

Lord, keep us, we ask. Forgive us for our sins. Lord, we do pray for any who have that private life of sin just now. Lord, we do not know but you know. You and they know.

Those who live a life that is in rebellion to you. Lord, we ask you bring them back to yourself and any here who as if you don't know, you bring them to yourself the first time, even this evening.

We ask all these things, clinging on to our advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Let's bring our time of worship to an end this evening.

[60 : 57] Again, from Sing Psalms, Sing Psalms and Psalm 18. Sing Psalms and Psalm 18.

Sing verses 1 down to verse 10 of the Psalm. It's of course a psalm that sings and tells us just a reminder to find our hope and our strength and God who never changes, who never fails.

Psalm 18. I love you, Lord, you are my strength, a fortress is the Lord to me, my rock and my deliverer, for refuge to my God I flee. Psalm 18, Sing Psalms, verses 1 to 10.

God's praise. I love you, Lord, you are my strength, a hope that is the Lord to hear, my hope worth warm Wa tak■e.

It is my strong, oh, love, my shield, The Lord who saved me, I am mine I'll call on Him, I'll
give Him this I'm seeking my hope to die The cause of death and hunger peace
Distraction will be light of Him Excerpt the highest years of death

[63 : 27] My fears that ever saw the year In my distress I fall on God I've guided to the Lord for Him
If all will stand up there, my voice Be listening to the prayer I did The earth before God's
hand We're quick The mountains deep, the nations should

Consuming by His promised land And promise the apostles gave for so Let heaven's party
kingdom Beneath the sea The mountains deep, the mountains And heaven He flew on
wings And heaven He flew on wings And heaven He flew on wings With the grace of the
Lord Jesus Christ

The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Both for now and
forevermore Amen