

Ongoing Influence of the Cross

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Preacher: Rev. Malcolm Macleod

[0 : 0 0] chapter 4 where we read that God is love and love is from God and John goes on there to describe to us the way in which Jesus is at the centre of the life of the people of God and at the centre of the Father's own relationship with them. The other thing that we can see about this letter is that John is facing something that perhaps the church is facing in every generation in the world and that is how to identify the true church of Christ and how to know genuine Christianity when we find it and in the scope of the letter he draws our attention to three things that will show us where we find genuine Christianity and the first of these is that our theology is such that we understand and know the preciousness of Jesus Christ. That has to be the very first thing that's going to set apart the people of God. The second thing is that the people of God are going to be known by their love for each other and John makes that clear if we love God we love the people of God and the third thing that we're going to find is that those who love God and to love the people of God that their lives correspond to what God requires in his word and here says John is where we find how we identify the genuine church of Christ in the world. Right theology, love for one another and a right kind of godly living and he is highlighting that because things have gone wrong and the community to which he is writing they are gone wrong in their understanding of sin, they have gone wrong in their understanding of who Jesus is and they have gone wrong in their understanding of their relationships with each other and with the world around them. And here in these verses we want to see the way in which

John focuses in on what has gone wrong and how the wrong can be put right and how the cross of Jesus Christ is at the centre of everything that God is doing. Well I notice first of all that there is a problem in the passage and the problem is one that John wants his readers to avoid and he comes to his readers and we can sense the warmth of his heart of his love for them as he addresses them at the beginning of the chapter, my little children. It gives to you that sense of the heartfelt love of God coming through John to speak to these people so the first thing they're going to think of when he does address them is the fatherly love of God touched by the fact that they are John's children but especially the fact that they are the children of God. Behold he says in chapter 3 what kind of out of the world love is this that we are called the children of God and today God is coming to us and he wants us to sense his love for us. He wants us to feel that his heart is reaching out to us and he wants us to know that the love that he has in his heart is for us together here today as we consider the gospel of

Jesus. And as he reaches out to them he is putting them on their guard and he wants them to avoid the very thing that's going to cause problems in their lives and that has done so in the past. I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin and that's a great healthy desire on the part of anyone who cares for anyone else that their ultimate desire is that they will not sin and we understand what the consequence of sin is. It is of course as John says in chapter 3 it is lawlessness. It comes because we stop believing and as soon as it comes it interrupts our fellowship our relationship with God and that's what we have in chapter 1. If I sin if I'm walking with darkness I've lost my fellowship with God. It interrupts that communion where I enjoy the love and the beauty of Christ fully my life.

I sin and immediately there is a gap I've lost that fellowship and it flows out into my life then with a demonstration perhaps of the fact that my love has become cold. My love for God has become cold and I've lost sight of the beauty of what God has done for me in Christ.

And it leads me down a path of not only having a cold heart and having no fellowship with God but in the direction of a life that's lived in rebellion against God because of sin is lawlessness.

[5 : 2 1] I have left God's law behind and I've entered on a journey once I sin. And John really doesn't want them to sin at all.

And of course the the ultimate consequence of our sinning is that we are guilty before God and that the wrath of God is hanging over us as Paul says.

The wrath of God is is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. I sense guilt in my conscience. I sense my heart is cold and I sense that God is is angry with me and he wants them to avoid that.

And isn't that marvelous today that that's how God's love reaches out to us. He wants us to avoid sin. He wants us to avoid feeling the guilt that comes with sin.

And he wants us to avoid losing the most precious thing of all. Our fellowship, our communion, our walking with God in the light.

[6 : 27] What great love. The love that that we see John having for his people and the love that flows from our own hearts to the lives of others.

My little children. I say this so that you will not sin. But John is a realist.

He doesn't live in a fantasy world where he thinks that people are going to live and they're not going to sin. In actual fact he knows that life is very different. And so he goes on.

But if anyone does sin we have an advocate. If as if there was some doubt or some condition with regard to people sinning.

And can we not as we can in other parts of the New Testament can we not translate this word if in order to bring us to face to face with the reality of our sin can we not translate it and say but since anyone or everyone does sin.

[7 : 35] And that's that's the reality that John is facing. He is speaking to people who are going to sin. And in the earlier part of the letter in chapter 1 he's he's referring to people who think they're no sin at all.

And he's also referring to people at the end of the chapter to people who have stopped sinning. Since they were converted they're so they're so holy and so good that they've stopped sinning now. And in verse 8 there are those who are so good that they don't sin anyway. And there's that double level of of being deceived in our hearts. And perhaps without realising it sometimes we ourselves fall into that trap of thinking that we're good.

And perhaps today that you sense that that you're so good yourself that that Jesus isn't important.

And you're not concerned with your sin because you're doing well. And you're you're coming to church and and you're you're reading your Bible and you're you're doing your prayers.

But all of that can take place and at the same time we don't stop being sinners. And we we can't allow the things that we do to mask the fact that in our hearts whoever we are we are sinners before God.

[8 : 56] The reality that John wants to draw attention to. And by doing that he wants us to take ownership of the fact that we're sinners.

Because until we do that the gospel is going to be meaningless. And God wants us today to hear what John is saying. Well they've decided they wouldn't sin.

And he wants them also wants you also to hear that because sin is a fact that you have to embrace the truth of that as you come to hear the gospel.

Taking ownership for sin. And we know at the very beginning of of sin entering into the world that's the thing that didn't happen. And the moment Adam was challenged with the sin that you had committed it was the wife that you gave me that that committed the sin.

Taking ownership of my personal sin is the first necessary step to recovery from my sin. And the gospel as I said today it's not going to be meaningful to you.

[10 : 07] It's not going to be precious to you. And Jesus will be someone else who lived a good life. You won't need them unless you take ownership of the fact that you're a sinner.

And of the fact that you sin every day in thought, in word and in deed. Taking ownership of the problem.

No resolution without that. No way forward until we embrace the truth and the fact of our sin against us.

God. And that leads me secondly to the very thing that becomes precious. That when I recognize my sin.

That God makes a provision for my problem. And the provision is exactly what I need. If anyone does sin.

[11:03] We have an advocate with the father. We have somebody who comes alongside to help. That's so precious and so special.

But when something goes wrong and I'm on my own. The spirit of God is the comforter who comes alongside for my help. And whatever my crisis is.

There is nothing quite as precious as someone special coming along side me. In order to help me through my crisis. Help me through my grief. Help me through my sorrow.

And here John is saying with regard to those who do sin. That we have an advocate. He is not simply someone who comes alongside to help.

But he is a legal advisor. He is somebody who is going to take my case. And plead for me in God's own court of law. He is the advocate.

[12:04] And he is going to go into God's presence for me. As someone who is there to deliver. To rescue.

To argue the case. So that the problem that has led to my condemnation. So that problem is removed. He is the legal person.

Who is ready to address my guilt. And that is good news for me today. If my conscience is heavy with the guilt of the sin. Concerning which I have taken ownership.

That here God is telling me. That he has provided somebody. Who will take away my guilt. And he has done that. In a particular location.

It is an advocate. With the father. Yes it is wonderful. To have somebody. Coming alongside me.

[13:07] In my own world. And strengthening me. And supporting me. In my own world. And sometimes I need that. But there is another. Kind of help that I need.

Which takes place outside of my world. And that is. Where my first help must. Take place. And where it comes from. Something that happens outside of my world.

That will change my world. And the location that we find this advocate in. Is in that very place. Where the change must take place.

He is an advocate with the father. And here is the father. With whom we can have fellowship. Here is the father. Against whom we have sinned. Here is the father.

Who dwells in light. And this advocate. Is with him. Here is the father. Who loves us. What manner of love is this.

[14:04] That we are called the children of God. The advocate. Is in the place. Where God dwells. Where my father is. In that heavenly home.

And also. Where my judge is. He is advocating. At the place. Where the universe is governed.

And he is advocating. At the place. Where decisions are made. With regard to every individual. That has ever travelled through this world. What. A provision.

That he is in. Before God. And as we. As we read. In the letter to the Hebrews. And in other parts of the Bible. He is there.

To make intercession for us. He is there. To ask things. At God's right hand. In Psalm 2. We read. Ask of me.

[14:59] And I will give you. The heathen for your heritage. And the uttermost parts of the earth. For your possession. Ask of me. But this asking. It is not about.

The kingdoms of the world. It is about you. And to me. As we take ownership. Of our sin. That he is there. Talking with God.

Speaking to God. And he is there. On my. Behalf. What a provision today. That in. The sin seek world.

In which we live. Lives affected. By our own personal sin. And everything that happens. Around us. That the God. Against whom we have sinned. Is himself. Receiving.

An advocate. On our. Behalf. And when he is doing that. You and I.

[15:58] We want the best. Qualified advocate. We can find. The case is serious. It is. Sin against a holy God. Which deserves the eternal wrath of God.

For all eternity. The problem is big. The guilt is huge. The wrath of God. Is immeasurable. I need somebody. Who has a great reputation.

And somebody who has. A great reputation. In his life. And in his advocacy. And in everything that he does. And that is exactly. What God provides. It is not anybody.

And in many situations. Others can help me. It is. Jesus. Christ. The righteous. Jesus. Here is my advocate.

The one who. Who was born. In Bethlehem's manger. The babe. On the breast of his mother. He is my advocate. Jesus. Who lived his life.

[16:58] In this world. Who journeyed on through. This world. As the sinless one. Who journeyed on. And he grew up. And he came to. To begin his ministry. At 30 years of age. Jesus.

The Christ. He is not only. The Jesus of the manger. He is the Jesus of the cross. Who was raised up into glory. Because of the work.

That he had finished. Which was pleasing to the father. He is the anointed. King. Of God's kingdom. And that is a great privilege. That my advocate today.

Is not any other person. Or any other important person. Nothing less. Than the son of God. Who came into the world. Who died on the cross. And who was anointed.

As God's king. And who now. Has all authority. In heaven and in earth. He is supremely qualified. He has authority. To go in there for me.

[17:55] Because he has been appointed. To that task. And. His reputation. Is matched with his.

Work and his life. He is Jesus Christ. The righteous. In other words. He is the godly one. He is the one who lived his life. Completely in the service of God.

And honoring God. And his whole life was lived. He was without sin. There was no guile found in his mouth. He was the holy. Harmless. Son of God.

He is righteous in his life. And he is also righteous in his death. He was obedient. Even to death. Death on a cross. The whole of his life was obedience.

Righteous. And. The supreme display. Of his reputation. As a righteous one. We have in the cross.

[18:56] The cup that the father. Has given to me. Will I not drink it? As he. Goes from the garden. And as he. Takes ownership. Of your sin. And my sin.

And goes to the cross. The lamb of God. Taking away the sin of the world. Isn't he a marvelous advocate. Is he not one worthy to consider today.

As we think of. Of you taking ownership. Of your sin. And God's provision is such that. Jesus takes ownership. Of your sin. And he. Goes and he takes it away.

And he dies. For the sins of the world. And the wrath of God. Is poured out upon him. As the righteous one. I have an advocate. With the father. Jesus Christ.

The righteous. Here is. An advocate. That's got God's ear. Because of the work. That he's done. Here is an advocate.

[19:50] Who understands. Every detail. Of the law. Of God's kingdom. And of his government. Here is an advocate. Who. Has a personal relationship. With a father.

Who is the judge. On the throne. He is supremely qualified. His reputation. Is. Wonderfully. Amazing. That we. Cannot. But. Be caught up.

With the beauty of him. And he's there. On our. Behalf. Today friends. Let's.

Not hesitate. With regard to our sin. It's there. And God tells us. It's there. Let's embrace that. And as soon as we do that. The gospel opens up.

And. In the marvel. Of the beauty. Of the Lord Jesus. That here. He is in heaven. Today. On my behalf. And no matter. How great. The weight. Of my guilt is. There is somebody.

[20:46] Greater. More influential. More powerful. Than any of my sin. And he's there. At God's right hand. Having conquered sin. Having triumphed over death.

And gone. With all of the authority. And with all of the claims. That he needs. As my. Advocate. God's.

Provision. We give thanks. Today. That. That. The work of Jesus. Didn't finish on the cross. That he's. Doing another work.

Today. That's equally as important. And equally as crucial. To. To. The. Freedom from sin. And to us being.

The children. Of God. There's a problem. There is a provision. And it's great. And finally. There is.

[21:44] A prayer. What's Jesus saying today? What am I going to think. About Jesus today. As. As he's at God's right hand. On my behalf. What's the center.

Of the conversation. What's the topic. And John tells me here. That. He is the propitiation. For our sins. And not for ours only. But also for the sins.

Of the whole world. He is the propitiation. For our sins. The very problem. That you and I have. He is. The propitiation.

For that. And I. I go down the street. In my imagination. Where. Where. John's readers. Were to be found. And I'm.

And I'm. I'm asking myself. When we ask somebody. What do you think. This word means. What do you understand. When. When this man. John's on about. Propitiation. And they're immediately. Going to respond. And they're going to say.

[22 : 39] Well. Our understanding. Of that word. In our culture. Is. That when we sin. Against the gods. That's at the pagan temple. When we sin. Against the gods. The gods. Are angry with us.

And the only way. To turn away. That anger. Is for me. To come with a gift. And a sacrifice. And. In that way. Try and appease God. So that his anger.

Is turned away. So that's how the man on the street. Will understand. Propitiation. I've done something wrong. Against the gods. I need to come. And bring a gift.

A sacrifice. And hope. And pray that. That the sacrifice. Is good enough. So that the gods. Will turn away. Their anger. And I will know. Peace. And so.

I ask now today. What is the pressure. In the street. Today. Understand. From the word.

Propitiation. As we have it. In the gospel. It is. Exactly the same thing. With one key difference.

[23 : 35] It is exactly the same thing. In the first place. Because I've sinned. Against God. And God is angry. With me. And. The third place. I need something.

So that God's anger. Is turned away from me. But the marvel of the gospel. And the great difference. Between. The person. Who is. Gospel wise.

On the street today. From the person. Who was pagan wise. In the days of John. The great difference. Today is. That you. You don't bring the gift. At all. You don't have to pay the price.

You don't have to give the sacrifice. The beauty. Of propitiation. In the gospel. Is. That the person. Who requires. The gift. Is the person. Who provides. The gift.

And this God. Against whom. I have sinned. And whom. I have offended. The glory. Of his gospel. Today is. That. Here is.

[24 : 32] The lamb of God. Here is. The unspeakable. Gift. That we. Purchased. With the blood. Of Jesus. And nothing. Less than that. And it is.

That blood. Of Jesus Christ. That is. Our propitiation. That when that's presented. Alongside of my sin.

In God's. Court of law. Then my sin is covered. And God is. At peace with me. Propitiation. What. What has that to do with prayer? What has that to do? What has the cross to do with. The cross.

Where Jesus was forsaken. As the son of God. As he bore our sins. When he cried out.

It is finished. What has that got to do with. Prayer. And with. The conversation in heaven. It has.

[25 : 32] Absolutely. Everything. To do it. To do with it. What is. The claim of my advocate. What is Jesus saying today. At God's right hand. With regard to my sin.

What is he lay before. God's throne. As his. Argument. As his case. For me. It is. Not how good you are.

Praise the Lord for that. But it is. How good he was. And it is. How good. His sacrifice was. And it is the fact. That the father.

Said from before the world was. If you go. And if you do this work. And if you. Bear the sins of the world. And if you die for their sins. Then.

I will give you. These people. They were yours. Says Jesus. And you. Says Jesus to the father. And you gave them to me. And so he goes to the cross. To die for them.

[26 : 30] And now. At God's right hand. In Jesus' own words. In John 17. I pray for them.

I pray not for the world. I pray for them. And so. In heaven today. As I come with. The great problem of my sin.

That can. That can. Seems. Sometimes. So heavy. As it was. In. In Pouligam's progress. That burden. Which I cannot bear. As I come with that problem.

I come. To see. The great answer. To my problem. And not only. In the provision. But. In this prayer. Of Jesus. At God's right hand.

That is. Sacrifice. Is. Enough. That what he suffered. Is. Enough. And.

[27 : 29] Because he is praying for. You and I. Personally. Individually. It draws. It. Draws. Attention. To the fact. That.

In. The prayer. There are. Two topics. Of conversation. And. One of them. Is. The cross. Of Jesus. And.

The other one. Is. The sinner. Who is lost. You. And me. What a great. Honor. Today. That. When I face. The problem. Of my sin. And as I.

Seek to deal with that. That. At God's. Right hand. There is that process. Going on. Where I'm involved. And where.

I'm involved. Because my father in heaven. Loves me. And where I'm involved. Because. The love of which. My father in heaven. Has loved me. Is a love that will never. Come to an end.

[28 : 23] And he wants my recovery. And so he has. Put in place. This process. The preciousness. Of the cross of Jesus. In my life. And in my experience. And. As we sang in Psalm 21. God never withheld.

From him. Anything. That he ever asked. Do you think maybe. He won't. Achieve forgiveness. For you. Do you think.

Maybe your sin. Is beyond. The scope. Or do you think. That. That his concern. For you. May not. Be as great. As his concern. For someone else. The gospel.

Is much bigger. Than that. The love of God. Is much greater. Than that. And the heart of God. Is more embracing. Than that. That all. Of your sin.

[29 : 20] And all. That you are. That it is covered. By all. That Jesus. Has done. And.

In that prayer. In conclusion. There is. One more. Key factor. Connected to it. And that is. That something happens. In here. There is. That live. Connection. Between. What. Jesus is doing. At God's right hand. And what's happening.

In my heart. And while Jesus. Is. Is praying. To the father. For me. Seeking my forgiveness. I'm saying. Sorry for my sin. In my own heart. And that process.

Of confessing. My sin. And of turning away. From it. Has begun. In my heart. In connection. With what. Jesus is doing. At God's right hand. And so that. As he's praying.

[30 : 16] All of these emotions. Of mine. And all of my affections. Are moving. In the direction. Of turning away. From my sin. Saying sorry. To God.

And discovering. At a moment. Of forgiveness. Blessed. Is the man. Whose sins. Are forgiven. To be envied. With desire.

Is the person. Whose sins. Are forgiven. And so the help. That I need today. It begins. Certainly. At God's right hand. But ultimately.

It arrives. Beside me. And it's. It's the ministry. Of the other comforter. The Holy Spirit. That God sends. To dwell in my heart. And he.

Begins to prompt me. And to direct me. In the direction. Of Christ. And to hear. This interaction. That's taking place. In heaven. That the Jesus.

[31 : 14] Who died. On the cross. For my sin. The Jesus. Who is praying. At God's right hand. For me now. And that based. On the merits. Of what he has suffered.

That forgiveness. Is freely. Available. To me. And if he is. The advocate. Who is Jesus Christ. The righteous. John makes it.

Quite clear. In verse 9. If we confess. Our sins. In this interaction. That's. That's between our hearts. And. And heaven's throne. If we confess. Our sins. He is faithful.

And just. To forgive us. Our sins. And cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. And. Suddenly. The. Ruins. Of. Of.

Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Sin. That was. Standing between me. And my God. Suddenly. It's gone. And the moment. Of my confession. He is. Faithful. He's not. Going to let me down.

[32 : 11] He's not. Going to stop short. If we confess. Our sins. He is faithful. And. Just. Because. He was just. In. The cross. Of Jesus.

He can. Forgive. My sin. Without. Anyone. Pointing the finger. And saying to God. You cannot do that. Because. The answer.

To. To that kind of accusation. Is. This is what I've done. I can do this thing. Because of what I did. In the cross of Jesus. And therefore. The sinner. Who embraces.

His sinnership. Takes ownership of it. Will find. Joy today. That. In the gospel. There is. A fully qualified.

Advocate. To represent me. And. The outcome. Of that. Representation. Is. That the love. Of God.

[33 : 09] Because of which. He gave his son. Will once more. Flow into my heart. Cleansing from all sin. It's a picture of. At last. Seeing God.

In communion. And in fellowship. And in closeness. What I've lost. Because of my sin. It comes back. In this marvelous. Process. Of intercession.

Of confession. Of repentance. And of. Forgiveness. Hallelujah. The joy of our salvation. That our sins are forgiven.

And all because. Of what Jesus has done. So let's go today. And let's. Let's embrace. Our sin. We need to do that. However big they are. Let's.

Let's. Let's. Let's. Let's have wide open arms. And. And say to God. They're mine. I've committed them all. And from there. Your journey. Will be one of. Tears.

[34 : 06] Of brokenness. Of. Joy. Of gladness. And. Of complete freedom. And. Like John. We wouldn't want you.

To miss out on that kind of freedom. Because there is nothing in this world. That can compare. With knowing that my sins are forgiven. And I've peace with God. And knowing.

That I'm on my journey. To be with God. And to be with Jesus. In that. Heavenly home. Amen. May God bless his word to us. Let us pray.