

# 1 John 2:1-6

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[ 0 : 00 ] This one's supposed to record this. So I want to open up with a passage that's actually not relevant to our sermon topic today.! For thousands of years, the people of God all over the world engaged in corporate gatherings where they hear the word of the Lord and they respond.

One way that people respond is by using the word Amen. The word Amen is a word used in almost every language of the world, and that's because actually the Greek New Testament took the word straight from the Hebrew Old Testament, untranslated.

So you can go to countries everywhere, and you might hear a slight distinction, but it's the same word, Amen. And when God's people say Amen, they are saying, Yes, we agree. Yes, we join in with what was just said.

Yes, we affirm what is being spoken. And so you see that God has prepared this word Amen to make both preaching and praying a corporate exaltation in God's supremacy.

So I guess what I'm saying is I'm not going to let you get away with just sitting there and not responding. I want to hear the response of God's people. If something that's said today resonates with you, if you feel it in your heart, say Amen.

[ 1 : 43 ] Let it be known. There's a psalm that says, Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. It doesn't have to be loud. It's not going to be distracting. And I think you'll see that the people of God are edified by the response vocally, verbally, when we join in with what's being spoken and we agree with it.

You guys trying to act with me? Are you good with that? Yes, alright. Alright, so this portion of 1 John that we're into today, you can turn to 1 John. We're going to be in chapter 2, verses 1 through 6.

And you'll see today that it's both deeply theological, but also deeply practical at the same time. And so what that means for us is that there are some foundational things to the Christian life that we're going to work through in the beginning.

And so what I'm asking you is to press in with me here. Let's engage our minds. Let's pay close attention to what is being said. I don't actually have something to say this morning.

God has something to say from His Word. And so that's why we engage our minds. And then we allow God to take the truth and to penetrate our heart. Hebrews 4.12 says, For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

[ 2 : 59 ] So join with me. 1 John chapter 2, verses 1 through 6. 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 sin. 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, is 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. This is the Word of the Lord. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we come before you as a people who are redeemed.

We come before you today only because of your Son. And God, we want to hear from you. We want to feel your presence. We want to draw nearer to you as you draw near to us.

[ 4 : 02 ] Lord, that's a promise you give to us. God, we trust you. We trust your Word, and so we rest in that promise that you will draw near to us. God, you will transform our hearts and our minds. This is what you want, God.

You want us to become more like you. And we pray that that would happen today by your Word and by your Spirit. Pray this in your name. Amen. So we're going to start today in the second half of verse 1, actually.

And the first point is, there is hope for sinners. Jesus Christ. So, Rob, if you could go to the first slide there. First half of verse 1.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And I think sometimes we forget why.

Why we actually need an advocate. So the first sub-point is, Christ our advocate. So I think the only place to start is starting with God's holiness.

[ 5 : 01 ] Because if we don't understand God's holiness, we don't understand our sin. And if we don't understand our sin, and how bad it is, we're never going to understand why we actually need an advocate before the Father. So God is holy.

Got a lot of points. I'll just keep giving you a nod. Rob's doing double duty here. Last week, Jordan referenced 1 John 1.5. It says that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

And Jordan talked about how light is used to represent both truth and righteousness, or holiness.

And it's so important that we understand God's holiness, just like what I said, or else we never get why our sin is such a big deal, and then why we need an advocate in light of that.

And all throughout Scripture, we see reference to the holiness of God. God, in other words, his otherness, his set-apartness, if you will. It's because of his purity and his perfection.

God is holy. I have a few passages here. They don't at all do justice to everything we can talk about in terms of God's holiness. That's like a whole year of studying, probably. But Deuteronomy 32.4.

[ 6 : 06 ] The rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity. Just and upright is he. Psalm 96.9.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Tremble before him all the earth. And Isaiah 5.16. But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.

And then one more. Revelation 4. The picture of the elders before the throne. And day and night they say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.

So God is holy. Yes, amen. Two other themes that quickly emerge as you read through scripture is not only is God holy, but because of his holiness and because of his righteousness, God hates sin with a passion.

And sin must be paid for. Right? One scripture on God's hatred for sin. Proverbs 6.16-19. There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him.

[ 7 : 09 ] Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brother.

God hates sin. God hates those things. And then we jump to Romans 1.18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth and unrighteousness.

We see there God punishes for sin. So God is holy. And the next point here is that we are all sinners. Psalm 14.3, other passages could be given, but Psalm 14.3, They have all turned aside.

Together they have become corrupt. There is none who does good, not even one. And also John starts chapter 2, verse 2, saying, But if anyone does sin.

And really, he's already made it clear that everyone does in fact sin. If you were here last week in chapter 1, verse 8, John says, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

[ 8 : 10 ] And down in verse 10, If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. So in our humanity, I think we want to have it both ways with God.

And what I mean by that is this. We actually want God to be the just and holy and loving king that he is. We desire a ruler like that. So we're going to kind of touch on that last week.

But at the same time, we grimaced and discussed at the thought of a God who punishes sin. Right? So we kind of want it both ways. But let's think for a minute about what sin actually is.

Sin is missing the mark. Right? Sin is not attaining to God's standards of holiness and perfection.

And really, I think, sin is pride and it's unbelief when it comes down to it.

It's thinking, on the one hand, we can usurp God's authority. We can make decisions for ourselves about what is right and wrong. That's pride. And then it's not taking God at his word.

[9:07] It's not believing in what he says. And that's unbelief. So, and even more, I think when it comes down to it at another level, when we sin, we're taking the good things that God has made.

God made a good world. Right? Genesis 1 and 2. God made the world perfect. We take those things and we twist them and we distort them for our own selfish desires.

And I think a few examples might help us out here. Work. Work is actually something, believe it or not, that was around before the fall. We can read about this in the beginning. God gave Adam work to do, but the result of his work was supposed to be the spreading of life and the spreading of joy and love.

So work is good. Right? But how often do you see others or even yourselves working in a way that exploits or demeans other people for your own personal advancement or your own career advancement, just kind of stepping on people?

Or sometimes more subtly think we desire to succeed at work. We desire to provide for our families. And this is good. But sometimes we become so obsessed with either pleasing our bosses or we become obsessed with making money that really it consumes us.

[10:17] Right? To the point that we neglect our families. We neglect the people around us. We neglect other things that are important. So that's one example. Two, family. God gave us family. Family is a way to enjoy relationships.

To enjoy intimacy with people that know us. Right? To experience friendship and love in a deep way. Family is good. Yet, how often are our angriest moments, our worst outbursts, our most sarcastic comments directed at our family members?

Right? This doesn't really make sense. But family is good. But we twist it and we use it for our own good. Right? And third, church community. I think you'll agree with that. We are so blessed in having this loving, godly community.

Yet, how often are church communities turn into a big comparison game where we judge each other and we judge each other's motives, talk about how we would do this or that better. So we've turned something good and right into something sinful and wicked.

And we allow this bitterness to fester and cause division and disunity. So we see that work is good, that family is good, that community is good. And yet, we take these good things from God.

[11:27] Right? They're from God. And we twist them and we distort them in the pursuit of our own selfish gain. I could probably go on and on with endless examples. Make you feel really bad.

But we see that the result of this sin is bad. All around us we see this. We see mistrust. We see abuse. We see exploitation. Pain. Brokenness. Heartache. Murder.

And on and on and on. Right? So, no wonder God hates sin so much. Right? It's taking what he made good and it's twisting it. It's ruining what God made to be good.

So, he is just to punish us for our sin. So, to recap so far. God is holy and righteous. We are sinners. God hates our sin because it destroys his good creation.

And he is just to punish men for it. So, we deserve God's punishment. So, now we come to Christ. The third little sub-point here.

[12:25] Jesus Christ is the righteous advocate for sinners. So, John says here in verse 1, We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Now, this here is courtroom language. John says that Jesus is our advocate before the Father. So, Jesus is our defense attorney before God the Father, the judge of the universe.

He's our advocate. So, that begs the question. What does an advocate actually do? An advocate represents the interests of another. An advocate speaks and acts on behalf of and in favor of another.

An advocate takes up the cause of another. So, John is telling us here that Christ actually takes up our case and our cause before the Father, who would be just to sentence us to eternal punishment for our sin.

And John describes Jesus as the righteous. And this is huge. This is absolutely necessary. For if Jesus were anything but righteous, he would have no standing of his own before the Father.

[13:24] Right? If Jesus were not righteous, he would be equally guilty of sin, of breaking God's law, of missing the mark. And he too would be sentenced to eternal punishment. But that's not the case.

Jesus is righteous. Jesus has kept all of God's law. Matthew 5, 17 is a good verse to reference for that. But let me ask you this. And as I was thinking about this, I thought, what...

So, if Jesus is just our advocate, and that's it. He's before the Father. He's advocating for us. He's only an advocate. What case could he possibly bring before the Father on our behalf? Right? We're condemned to sin, and Jesus is going to speak on our behalf.

What's he going to say to the Father? The Father knows we're guilty. Jesus knows we're guilty. He has nothing to say. If all he is, is an advocate. So, we come to the next point.

And this is, I think, maybe a climax here, is that verse 2, he is the propitiation for our sins. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

[14:26] So, the second point here, Christ, our propitiation. That's a big word. Propitiation. I don't think we hear it very, very often. Actually, I don't think I ever hear it outside of church.

That's because it's really, it's a theological term. And we're going to kind of break down here what it means. So, the Greek word that's used here, in the pagan sense, it meant to appease or to satisfy, and as in turning away wrath or anger.

And it was really used in a very emotional type of sense. The gods are angry, we do something, and it turns their wrath away from us. It's emotional. The New Testament usage of the word here, though, is quite different.

You might also sometimes hear, or maybe not, the word expiation. And I think it's worth mentioning because these two words kind of go hand in hand. Whereas, expiation, so that X is out of or from, expiation has to do with the removal of sin, the removal or taking away of something.

And propitiation has to do with the object of that expiation. Check with me here. It's bringing about a change in character in something. So, Jesus' death on the cross was the expiation, expiation, the removal of our sins.

[15:41] 2 Corinthians 5.21, He made him to be sin, who knew no sin. Christ took our sin upon himself. He expiated our sin from us. And so, by removing and taking that sin upon himself, Jesus became the propitiation, or the satisfaction for our sins.

So, he assumed our guilt. He paid the penalty that was demanded of us by the holy and just judge, God the Father. So, what's the change that occurred? The change that occurred was that now the Father could look on us and bestow love and mercy on the basis of what?

On the basis of justice satisfied. Right? The obstacle to our fellowship with God was removed in Christ on the cross. So, that's divine satisfaction.

Hit the slide there. So, I want us to go back into the courtroom. Okay? So, you and I, we stand accused before the Father. Our sin is before Him. Right?

We don't meet His standards of perfection. We don't meet His standards of holiness. And our advocate, He hears the case that's brought against us. Right? He arises from His chair. This advocate is none other than the judge's son himself.

[16:48] That's pretty good, right? He declares before God, this child today is in fact guilty. But, I have already paid the penalty for His sin.

I took His sin upon myself on the cross. I buried her sin with me in the grave. I have satisfied your demand for justice. Therefore, this child before you today is declared righteous.

And so, what was assumed impossible actually happens. We see that both justice and mercy collide together on the cross. So, we see the wrath of God and the love of God are both on display. We see that sins are paid and sins are forgiven. Jesus' blood is spilled out and we go free. Christ is crucified and it's our redemption. Hebrews 7.25 says, Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them.

So, Jesus' righteousness and His propitiation for our sins those things make His advocacy effective for our salvation. So, this is divine satisfaction.

[18:00] Now, we look back at verse 2. Look with me there. John says, And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. That's the next point there.

For the whole world. Martin Luther said this in his Old English. It is a patent fact that thou art a part of the whole world so that thine heart cannot deceive itself and think, The Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me.

So, I want to see. Show of hands if you're part of the whole world. Show of hands. Everybody?

Yeah. That's what I thought. Jesus died for you. Right? He died for all of us.

And how about your noisy neighbor? How about those kids? This is really applicable to those that live across from New London High School. How about those kids that ride their obnoxiously loud

mopeds down the street day or night?

I would, I set up a table next to my window. We actually face one of the main roads right by the high school. And so, we hear this noise all the time. And actually, as I was preparing in the middle of the day, they're going back and like, back and forth.

[ 19 : 02 ] Almost like God is testing. Back and forth. Just revving their engines. So, that was poignant for me there. How about, how about our unbelieving family members or co-workers? Right?

Who we've grown, we grow so accustomed to being around them that we lose any sense of urgency in regard to their eternal state. How about them? Are these people not ones for whom Christ has died? It's important to realize, though, this verse is not saying that everyone will be saved.

It means that forgiveness is offered. It's offered to all. But it only comes through faith and repentance. We see this all throughout the New Testament, especially. Faith and repentance. And God calls us, his saints, to carry this message to the world.

Right? Jesus has the last words in Matthew 28. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

So, there is hope for sinners. His name is Jesus Christ. But one of the main themes of the book of 1 John is that we can have assurance of salvation.

[ 20 : 11 ] And that's really what these next four verses are out. Not that Jesus is our advocate, but that we can know that Jesus is our advocate. So let's keep reading here. Verses 3 through 6.

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, 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. Second point, there is proof for believers. Obedience. And what we see in these verses is there is a connection between knowing Jesus and obeying Jesus.

And then, since knowing Jesus and obeying Jesus are connected, through obedience, we can be assured of our salvation. And there's an obvious implication in this passage that Jesus only advocates for those that truly know him.

[ 21 : 14 ] So Christ advocates for those that know him. But the question is raised, what does John mean exactly by knowing Jesus? Now John likes to write in a way, in the book of John, in 1 John, in 2 and 3 John, where he restates similar ideas in different ways, slightly different ways, and so what happens is you get to know what he's trying to say a little bit better each time he restates that idea.

So I'm going to reread verses 3 through 6, and I'm going to emphasize certain parts here. 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, 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. So John could have just said, know him each time, but instead he doesn't. He's trying to help us understand what he's doing. He means by know him. So the word know, here in the Greek, it's not the know in the sense of absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact.

So I know the Chicago Bulls of the 90s are the best basketball dynasty of all time. I learned it when I was young. I learned it immediately. At the moment I learned it, and it's absolute. It's not that kind of know.

[ 22 : 34 ] That's not what John's talking about. Maybe a slightly better example is meeting someone for the first time. You know their name. It's an immediate thing that you know. It's a fact. That person's name is this.

The term know here is really talking about experiential knowledge, something gained day after day. So it's like if someone asked you, do you know New London? You might say, no, sorry, I'm just visiting.

I don't know New London. Or you might say, well, I kind of know New London. I just moved here not that long ago. Or you might say, yeah, I know New London. I was born and raised here. Back in my hand. And so that's the type of know John's talking about.

It's relationship. It's fellowship. So knowing means relationship. Oh, we already got it. Nice. And John also connects, he connects knowing Jesus with God's love being perfected in us. So let's look at verses four and five for a second. John says, 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.

[ 23 : 41 ] Now this is kind of unexpected, the language that he uses here. We would expect John to say in verse five the opposite of what he just said in verse four. I think we'd expect, but whoever keeps his word truly knows him, and the truth is in him.

But that's not actually what John says, right? See, he's shedding light on the term know him, and he's saying that know him means that we are a work of God's divine love. It means that God's love is produced in us and even perfected in us.

In first John four, he talks about how God first loved us, and when we experience this love for ourselves, our love then springs out of that, right? So we both experience and then we embody God's love.

We are the objects of God's love and then the vehicles for his love. And one other way to say it is we receive God's love and then we reflect that same love. And that's part of knowing Jesus, right? So the second thing is knowing means receiving and reflecting his love. John also connects knowing him with being in him. All right, this in him or this in Christ language is very prevalent throughout the New Testament and particularly in Ephesians 1.

[ 24 : 53 ] And we studied this as a church about a year ago now. Without reading Ephesians 1, I just want to mention all the things that Paul says are ours in Christ. Every spiritual blessing, adoption as God's children, redemption through Jesus' blood, the forgiveness of our sins, union with him, an eternal guaranteed inheritance, the indwelling of the Spirit.

That's what it means to be in Christ. And John says what he means by knowing Christ is being in Christ. So knowing means union with him.

And finally, knowing means abiding in him. So John connects knowing Christ with abiding in Christ. So really, John is stealing the language of Jesus from John 15 where Jesus uses the analogy of the vine and the branches.

To abide in Christ is to dwell in him, to continue in him, to fellowship with him. And John speaks of this throughout 1 John as well. In Jesus' vine-branch analogy in John 15, it reveals that abiding in him means being utterly dependent on Christ for nutrients, for life and for love and for joy and for power.

So that's what knowing Jesus means. It also means abiding in him. It means continual fellowship with him. So knowing means abiding. So I guess to summarize that portion, knowing Christ means experience him in relationship.

[ 26 : 18 ] It means receiving and reflecting God's love. It means being in union with him. And it means abiding in him. So now that we've defined and developed what it means to know Jesus, we can move on to the next part.

And that is, if we know Jesus, then he's our advocate before the Father. But the question remains, how do we know that we know Jesus?

And the answer that John gives us is obedience. So I want to reread verses 3 through 6, maybe emphasize different parts of the verses. So read with me, verses 3 through 6.

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, 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 we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. So John is saying that we know that we know Jesus by the demonstration of our obedience to him.

[ 27 : 27 ] Now, as I was thinking about this, I was thinking, I don't know that we like to hear that in our evangelical circles. I think we get a little bit nervous. Are you saying that by obeying Jesus, I come to have fellowship with him?

Is that what you're saying, Mike? Or are you saying that my works earn me salvation? Is that what you're saying? And we have to be careful here not to flip the gospel on its head. And I think that a couple of other passages from scripture will help us here.

So if you would, please turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 31. Jeremiah 31. It says this, verse 33 through 34.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they shall be my people.

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother say, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sins no more.

[ 28 : 40 ] 2 Corinthians 5, 17 and 18. Paul says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.

All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself. And I think these passages get at something. So make no mistake, we do not come to know Jesus by any act of our own.

That's not what John is saying. That's not what this passage is talking about. And later in chapter 4 in 1 John, he says, And this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

So we see that God initiated, God reached out, God came down from heaven, God took on our sin, he buried it in the grave, he rose from the dead, conquering sin, and proving that he's God.

Right? And by repenting of our sins, so our part is repenting and faith. That's our part. But God is the one that started everything. Right? By repenting of our sin and trusting in him, we receive salvation.

[ 29 : 41 ] Another thing that we see is our hearts are transformed by his spirit. So he is the one written on our hearts. You see, our obedience is the necessary result of our knowing and believing in God.

When we experience his love, when we realize that he's actually for us, when we come to truly know him, we're forever changed. Right? We, and our desires are forever changed.

So when, when John says if we keep his commandments, and when he says whoever keeps his word, that keep there, it carries this idea of attending to carefully, of observing, of guarding.

And I think he's saying that when we know God, we have an eager desire to carry out his will, to live out his commandments. So he's saying that what's produced in us through knowing God is a zealous and a passionate determination to follow God, not out of obligation.

It's because we know God. We know in our heads, we experience in our hearts that true joy, that true happiness is found in obedience to God. God tells us throughout scripture, he's about our joy.

[ 30 : 48 ] Right? He's not here to rob us of our joy. He wants our joy. That's what Jesus told his disciples in John 15. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.

And this is why John can say in 1 John 5 that his commandments are not burdensome. They're not burdensome. So do you see now, do you see the connection between knowing Jesus and obeying him?

I hope we do. Quick example. I think a parent-child example really helps out here. So, a lot of you have babies right now and I think, you know, when I was a baby, I didn't really obey my parents like at all.

You know, when you're first born, you don't obey them at all. You can't even understand what they're saying. You kind of just do what you want. You cry when you want something. Right? And when you get a little older, you might obey your parents but only because you know there's a punishment coming if you don't.

Right? So now there's a little, there was a little bit of ice cream left in the house and it was mint chocolate chip which is delicious. I know there's some mint chocolate chip haters out there. So good.

[ 31 : 49 ] And, I think it was also my sister Kim's favorite ice cream and my parents said, make sure you share with your sisters. And I was like, yeah, sure. They go to watch a movie and so I take all the ice cream and I'm like eating it in my bedroom by myself.

Ate all of it. Come back out. Parents, they knew what happened. I mean, come on. I was probably like four or five and they're like, where's the ice cream? So I got a spanking for that one. I only obeyed them at that time in my life because I knew there was a punishment.

Right? Now when we mature a little bit, we get a little bit older, I think we come to obey our parents because we need to. And I think an example is my parents said, you need to do your homework when you get home from school before you can go outside and play.

That's back when people actually went outside and played. Or before you play Nintendo. And I only had 30 minutes of Nintendo I could play. So I obeyed them. I did my chores. I did my homework because I knew that something else was next.

Right? So that's like the next stage of obedience. But I think we see as we get older, when I got into college, especially as an adult, I actually desire their advice.

[ 32 : 57 ] Right? I call them up and I say, I'm going through this. Like, what do you think? And I've come to recognize my parents actually want what's best for me. My parents actually love me and they care about me. And so they don't, they don't give me commandments to ruin my life.

They give me commandments, not now. They don't command me still. But because they love and care for me. And I think this is kind of what John's getting at is that the Christian type of obedience, it's that last one.

It's the one that we know that God loves us. We know that he cares for us. And so we actually want to do what he says. So the next, the next point here is that this brings us assurance of salvation.

And that's the next step in the passage. Is that we can be confident in our standing before God because of our obedience to him. Now we know John isn't talking about sinless perfection.

He's not talking about perfect obedience. I mean, he already told us that if we sin, we're liars. Or if we say we have no sin, that we're liars, right?

[ 33 : 57 ] And we see in verse 1 of this passage that the goal is actually that you may not sin, but we know we're going to continue to sin, right?

This language that John uses of if anyone does sin, he's actually talking about one-time acts of sin, not habitual sin. So John's assuming that that sin is infrequent in the life of the believer.

He's talking about the pattern of our lives. So I think it's helpful to think about the stock market. If you look at one day of activity or even maybe a month, a few months, or a year for General Dynamics or for the NASDAQ or whatever, what you'll see is valleys and peaks all over the place, right?

And it's really hard to determine where it came from and where it's going. But when you zoom out over the course of a few years or a decade, you'll find that there's an obvious upward trend.

Even if it was going up and down, up and down, up and down, there's an obvious upward trend.

And I think this is what the Christian life is like. So when we come to Christ, our hearts are radically transformed.

[ 34 : 58 ] There's a massive shift in the way we think and what we do and our desires. There's a massive shift when we come to Christ. But as we continue to walk with Jesus, we continue to abide in Him, we ought to find that though we might go through seasons of spiritual recession, the obvious trend is an upward one.

And for every downward spike, we have an advocate declaring us righteous before God. So in verse 1, John says, with the Father, that Christ is our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, that with there really means facing.

And so the idea that John's painting here is that every time we commit an act of sin, our Savior who shed His blood for us, He stands before the Father face to face, right?

And He intercedes on our behalf. He tells the Father, look, that sin is covered, it's already paid for. And it's not to comfort us. It's not to comfort us when we sin, on the one hand, knowing that Jesus intercedes for us.

But on the other hand, it ought to deter us from sin, right? Because we know that Christ is wounded by our sin and He has to go before the Father yet again and plead on our behalf. 2 Peter 1, 5-8 says, Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

[ 36 : 25 ] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So how are you doing in your obedience to the Lord?

I don't mean today. I don't mean this month. I mean if you plot out your whole life or you look at the last few years, do you find an increasing desire for the Lord, to follow the Lord?

Do you find an increasing presence of the fruits of the Spirit? Can you point to the transformation that took place when you came to Christ and that's continuing to take place? If these things are true, be assured, Jesus is your advocate before the Father forever, right?

He eternally stands before the Father, interceding on our behalf, declaring us righteous even when we sin. And I'll say this, if you're going through a period right now, if you're a believer and you're going through a period of spiritual dryness, Jesus wants you back, right?

Jesus is ready, he's ready to stand before the Father and plead your case when you turn back to him. He wants you back. Now, if you answer no to those questions, I beg of you to consider your standing before the Lord.

[ 37 : 39 ] Consider whether or not, as John talks about, you've actually been lying to yourself and to God, thinking that you have fellowship with him when all the while you're still living in sin, you're still separate from him.

Myself, one of the elders, we would love an opportunity to speak with you, to pray with you. Don't leave here today wrestling in doubt. It's not what God wants. Don't leave here today whether in wonder or not Christ is actually your advocate.

He wants to be, though. He died for you. So come talk to one of us, but more importantly, get right with the Lord. Ask him to reveal your sin to you. Ask him that you would receive his forgiveness.

He wants, he's offered it out to you. He's holding it out there for you to take. Surrender your life to him. So finally, I want us to go to the last phrase of this passage.

The point here is to walk as Jesus walked. Verse 6, look with me there. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

[ 38 : 40 ] So we see here that the Christian duty, the Christian imperative, is to walk as Jesus walked, to live like Christ. Christ. So we've already proven, right, we've already proven that the nature of the believer is altered by Godic conversion and this results in obedience.

I think another way to say it is that our godly lifestyle flows out of our new identity in Christ. But this certainly doesn't mean that we don't have to work for it, right? We have to work for it.

Peter just said make every effort, make every effort. And our model for this, our example, is none other than Christ himself, right? So there's another obvious question here.

If John says we ought to walk as Jesus walked, then how did Jesus walk, right? Now I could take us to a bunch of passages in the Gospels and show examples of how Christ lived his life and draw out characteristics, but instead I just want us to turn to Colossians chapter 3.

So turn with me to Colossians 3. And I think what we'll find there is a whole host of characteristics that define who Christ is and then how we ought to live as a result.

[ 39 : 53 ] So I'm going to read 3, 1 through 17. And as I'm reading, what I want you to be thinking is, so Paul talks about things to put off. I want you to be thinking, which of these areas do I need to put off?

What is God pressing on your heart that's an area you're struggling with right now? And when Paul talks about what we need to put on, I want you to be thinking, which of these areas am I really struggling to embody right now?

What is Christ telling me? Look, you've got to work on this. You've got to allow this to take root into your life. So follow along with me. Colossians 3. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

[ 40 : 58 ] And these you too once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. You struggle with any of those? Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave-free, but Christ is all and in all. Put on, then, is God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, anybody got all those checked off?

Yep, got it, got it. I'm humble, I'm kind. Bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[ 42 : 13 ] And whatever you do in a word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. We've covered a lot of ground today.

God hates sin. Sin separates us from him, but we see that he made a way, right? He made a way through his righteous son, our advocate, our substitute.

And the call of God, it's absolutely a call to repentance and turning from our sin, but so much more than that, it's a call to nearness. It's a call to fellowship.

It's a call to joyful relationship. And this motivates us and inspires us to obedience, to following in Christ's footsteps. The last thing that I want to do, there's an old hymn that I thought about as I was going through this.

It's called Trust and Obey. And I want us to sing this hymn together, so I'm going to try to start us off on the right key. But, Rob, if you could get the words on the screen. If you don't know it, just listen.

[ 43 : 14 ] Just sit there and listen to the words. When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way.

While we do his goodwill, he abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship, then in fellowship sweet, we will sit at his feet or we'll walk by his side in the way.

What he says we will do, where he sends we will go. Never fear, only trust and obey.

[ 44 : 42 ] trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

Amen. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we thank you for these truths. God, we pray that they would penetrate our hearts, Lord. God, we pray that this wouldn't be just knowledge as in head knowledge, Lord, but that this would be an experiencing of you.

This would be coming to truly know you, to know who you are, to know your love for us, so that you're for us, God. Our sin is ugly, yes, but Lord, you made a way.

You sent your son. He is our advocate. He is our substitute, our sacrifice, our atonement for sin and we thank you for that, Lord. God, we pray that our desires would change, each and every day would conform to yours.

We pray that our hearts would be transformed, Lord. God, we are living sacrifices for you. We pray that you'd be glorified by our hearts, by our lives, by everything that we say and do.

[ 45 : 54 ] In your name, amen. Amen.