

## 1 John 2:1-6

On your way to 1<sup>st</sup> John put your finger in Romans Ch 5  
 “How Do I Know That I Know”

Does my sin magnify God’s grace? Oh that’s not really the logic we’re left thinking through as Ch 1 comes to a close, but it’s not far from it. The subject at hand, the context being considered is the ready forgiveness of confessed sin.

John has been quite candid and very clear concerning *fellowship* with God, what it means to be in a place *of* fellowship and how to be restored *into* fellowship when through sin that fellowship is severed. Now again it’s not that you’ve been severed from the *family*, even though you will sin as a child of God, you’re still a child of God, but through sin we forfeit *fellowship* with God. How so? Because God is *light* and in Him is *no darkness at all*, therefore when we walk in (or lead a life that accords with) the unfruitful works of darkness (that is, we sin in defiant disobedience) we at that point choose to forfeit our fellowship with God. Because *God* is light, so if *we* walk in darkness it’s only obvious, light and darkness cannot co-exist. What then are we to do? How is that fellowship restored? Because whether we like it or not sin will be a part of our lives until the day that we see Him; it’s then that we’ll be like Him, but until then the fact of the matter is that we won’t be like Him. We have a sin nature (look at Vs 8 of Ch 1 [read]).

We have a problem then don’t we? Because if my sin is darkness, yet God is light, and I’m going to sin and my sin will separate me from the light how can I then be restored *to* God, that is come back into fellowship *with God*? That brings us to that powerful and popular promise that’s found in Vs 9 doesn’t it? Check it out (read).

Now if you weren’t here last week I’d encourage you to pick up a copy of that study, we spoke about what it means to truly *confess* our sin. To look at our sin through the same lens that God views it, to agree with Him *about it* and truly turn *from it*. Now here’s the point: sin-confession-forgiveness; but here’s the problem: sin-confession-forgiveness. You see in the wicked rationale of man he finds a loophole (or so he thinks), “If I can sin, confess my sin and God will *forgive* my sin then why not do what I want under the banner of this insurance policy? After all John has said that if I say I don’t sin I only deceive myself, if I say I haven’t sinned I make God a liar, but if I’ll confess my sin God will forgive me.” And what is meant to be motivation and inspiration to aid you in maintaining a relationship of intimacy with God suddenly becomes a license to sin.

Paul confronted this same faulty logic in the book of Romans (you've got your finger in Ch 5 let's look together beginning in Vs 20 [through Ch 6 Vs 2]). Look at Vs 6-7, look at Vs 12-23...Paul putting forth in spectacular fashion the proper perspective regarding the Christians relationship to sin. It's what Peter summarized when he spoke of the work of Christ in us saying, "*as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.*" 1 Peter 2:16

It's that same "freedom *to* sin" as opposed to "freedom *from* sin" mentality that John is looking to crush from the very get go of Ch 2, it's an unfortunate Ch break and it probably would've broken better at the end of Vs 2 of Ch 2 because fellowship, sin, forgiveness and the means through which we receive that forgiveness, is all in view up until that point.

The heart of God toward you and me is not to provide a means to give the release to our flesh that we may be craving, He isn't looking to make a loophole so that you and I can feel justified in our sin, it was sin that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross, do you think then that He's going to allow a means for you and me to continue in sin in blatant disobedience and somehow wink at that or be ok with that? It's not God's heart to give us an "out" for sin, but rather to provide us a platform for fellowship with Him and victory *over* sin.

Vs1-2

You see, follow the flow, keep to the context, the connection between these 2 Ch's is John saying, "Listen, sin is a universal problem whether you are a believer or not because sin is somehow woven into the fabric of our being, we have a sin nature. But don't (because of that) understand me as saying that sin is simply something that we should default to in a fatalistic fashion, 'oh well it's going to happen, why resist it, simply confess it' but rather one of the primary reasons I'm writing to you is that you not yield *to* sin, but that you would walk in victory *over* sin through the means that God has provided us via His grace."

He employs this term of endearment and will continue to throughout the letter, "My little children" of course the reference is to their spiritual state, not necessarily that they're new believers (though they may be) but the point is that they're comparatively quite younger than John in Christ, "My little born ones," or "born again" ones.

"These things I write to you, so that you may not sin." You see, there it is, "I don't want you to interpret what I've just said as a license *to* sin, but rather as a means to have victory *over* sin." A proper understanding of God's grace will never lead one *into* sin, but rather will enable him to have freedom *from* sin. Remember these Vs? Titus 2:11-12, "*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*"

Here's the point, grace that saves your soul will change your life, grace doesn't lead me to sin more, but to love God more, God's grace and mercy should translate into my life in holiness, not sinfulness...Because I'm sober to the cost of my forgiveness... (More on that in a minute)

So John is encouraging us not to lay down in the face of sin and simply give in, but rather walk in victory. However he's a man of balance, he knows that there will be failure, there are times when we *will sin*, it's tragic but true. Be encouraged, we have an "Advocate" with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

What does that mean, "we have an *Advocate* with the Father"? What is an *Advocate*??? The word is "parakletos" it's the same word that Jesus used when He referred to the "Comforter." the Holy Spirit who would be sent to us after He ascended. The word speaks of one who "comes alongside to aid or to help" it speaks of a *legal assistant*, a *pleader*, one who *pleads another's cause before a judge*. In short, a defense attorney; so as to where the Holy Spirit is your Advocate on earth, Jesus Christ stands to be your defense in heaven. Romans 8:34, "*Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*"

However you should also recognize the fact that there is a fundamental difference between the defense attorneys of this world Vs who we have in Christ.

A defense attorney in this world will seek to argue for your innocence. Christ will readily recognize your guilt; however He also demonstrates to the Judge that the penalty for your crime, your sin against Him has already been satisfied therefore the gavel falls in your favor and you're found justified before the Father.

Notice that the credentials of our Advocate are readily on display, He's Jesus Christ "the righteous." Those last 2 words there completely qualify Him to represent you in heaven. You can't just practice law because you feel the need. You can't begin a legal practice with out being qualified, there's a bar exam you need to pass. Even so you can't just step into heaven's court of law and begin to defend yourself, you'll be thrown out, you're not qualified, you haven't passed the exam. What's the exam? Sinless perfection, you get that right and you'll qualify, unfortunately you've already failed therefore you're *unqualified*. Jesus is completely qualified to represent His "clients" before heaven's court of law because He passed the exam being in all ways tempted as we are tempted yet with out sin, completely perfect and righteous.

We *need* Jesus there to represent us not only because we do just fine at messing things up on our own and need someone there to stand in the gap for us and be a defense for us but because Satan (the bible says) stands to accuse us before God day and night (Rev 12:10). As if you don't feel guilty enough for your sin, Satan is there to really drive it in, add insult to injury. He hurls condemnation at you; understand that there is a vast difference between condemnation and conviction. I point that out because they can feel similar but they have vastly different results and come from polar opposite positions. Condemnation is from the pit of hell, it's that voice that implores you to give up, calls you a hypocrite, says, "Who do you think you are trying to be all 'godly' anyway, why don't you just toss in the towel and quit playing these games?" Conviction however is from the Spirit. Conviction is that voice that says, "Hey, why did you do that and what were you hoping to accomplish? You don't want to grieve the Spirit like that, breach your relationship with God that way, it's not worth it." Conviction pulls you in toward God as to where condemnation drives you away from God. We need the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, but we reject the condemnation of the enemy.

But again let me point out that sin isn't limited to what you may do wrong. It also includes what you and I don't do right. Perhaps you're of the opinion, "I haven't done anything too bad." But what about doing good? James said, "...to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." James 4:17 Remember it's not all about sins of *commission* (things I do that I shouldn't) it's also about sins of *omission* (things I don't do that I should); and when we walk in the light as He is in the light we begin to see just how short we've fallen of His desire and His design. Isaiah was already a believer when God called him, but when his eyes were opened to the glory of the Lord he said, "*Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.*" Isa 6:5 Sin is the great separator, it separates us from one another (both in life and when we part from this life), and it separates us from God. But as believers we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Vs2

The words "He Himself" are obviously emphatic, "Christ and Christ *alone* is the propitiation for our sins." What does *that* mean? "Propitiation"?

It's one of those big theological words, it points to the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf; it means that Christ is the means through which the holy wrath of God was satisfied. Jesus is humanity's offering for sin and it's through the sacrifice of Christ that we're reconciled to God. Jesus has satisfied the sin debt of man before God. To the Colossians Paul said it like this, "*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—*" Col 1:21-22

Jesus has by Himself become the means through which man can be reconciled to God. He is the *propitiation* for our sins. Again Peter said it like this, “*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*” 1 Peter 3:18 Jesus brings us to God, sin is no longer a barrier between God and man *in Christ*. Or to understand that another way, “He is the *propitiation* for our sins.”

But check it out, not for our sins only but also for the whole world! Do you understand what that means? It means that all the sin, of all the world, throughout all of history was wrapped *up*, placed *on* and atoned *for* in Christ on that day when they took Him, bloodied and beat Him and nailed Him to a cross. (We spoke a moment ago of not taking advantage of the grace of God understand the cost involved with our atonement, what it meant for Jesus to be our propitiation, this is what we were talking about). Why then do men perish in their sin? Because the sin of all mankind being atoned for does not equal all of mankind being saved. Why not? Because even though atonement has been made (forgiveness has become available) it’s only accredited to man *in Christ*. All of mankind *could be* saved, but those who reject Christ *can’t be* saved because it’s in Christ and Christ alone that we find forgiveness, that is, a satisfactory payment for our sin.

Vs3

Again John just makes it so simple for us, how can you bring assurance to your heart? How can you know that you know Him? The word for “know” here in Vs 4 speaks of knowing on an intimate, personal, by experience level. It’s not talking about knowing *about* Him, but knowing *Him*. You may know several things about me, but if you don’t know me you don’t really have a relationship with me. This word speaks of a relationship, how can we know that we have a real relationship with Jesus; not theoretically, but experientially? John is seeking to free us from doubts and fears...Here’s how; you will respond affirmatively to His word, that is, you will keep His commands. Jesus said it like this, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*” John 14:15 and Again, “*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*” John 14:23-24 You might understand it like this, to *know* the Lord is to *love* the Lord and to *love* the Lord is to *obey* the Lord.

You see the knowledge of God isn’t some mystical kind of vision, or incredibly deep insight, it’s manifested through simple obedience to His word. Now I need to point out that John *is not* saying that a relationship with God is *established* by obedience, that’s called religion, and/or self righteousness, legalism. Rather, that a relationship with God is *demonstrated* by obedience, its faith that surfaces through works in my life, works don’t save me, but they can serve as evidence that I’m saved. If I *know* God I’m going to obedient *to* God.

Vs 4

You see John is saying that the truth of this is so matter of fact that if someone says that they're a believer, if they say that they're a Christian and don't obey God's word, they're liars. Oh it may be their dog tag religion, they filled out a paper somewhere that told them to check the box that applies to them, "Hmmm I'm not a Muslim, not Jewish, not Buddhist or Hindu, not a Mormon or Jehovah's Witness, I must be a Christian." Listen, it doesn't work that way.

I'm not trying to be rude or insensitive, it's simply what the word of God declares. Last week while I was sharing (2<sup>nd</sup> service I believe) from Vs 6 of Ch 1 which basically says that if we lead lives that are indistinguishable from the world (unbelievers) and say that we know God and have fellowship *with* God we're liars and don't practice the truth and some gentlemen got up out of his seat, bible under his arm and stormed out mad. I'm not throwing stones at anyone, I'm just telling what God's word says, I'm just the messenger, it's God's message.

But wouldn't you rather have someone tell you straight and maybe rattle your cage, cause you to give yourself a heart check now and then and see you in heaven rather than have someone say, "I'm ok you're ok, God understands" and give you a false sense of security all the way to hell?

People who say they know the Lord and yet don't honor His word, don't spend time *in* the word (because how can you obey it if you don't ever read it or seek to know it) simply aren't telling the truth, they're either seeking to deceive you, or they may be deceived themselves, but don't be deceived the truth is not in them. They are those of whom Paul would say, "*They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*" Titus 1:16

Vs5

Note the link between obedience *to* God and the love *of* God in your life. As the love of God matures in your life it will show itself through obedience; and your love *for* God, your obedience *to* God will serve to assure your heart, that you're in Christ.

You're different than you used to be, your drives, your desires aren't the same. Listen, if you think you've come to *know* Christ but there's been no marked and evident *change* in your life then I would urge you to reconsider your position. Don't rest on a false sense of security; I'm not saying that sin is eliminated in your life as a believer, it won't be until we're in His tangible presence in glory.

Certainly a person's attitude *toward* sin and relationship *to* sin will change when they truly belong to Christ. You won't love sin like you once did, you certainly won't brag on your sin as you once did, you won't make plans to sin like you used to. A Christian won't look back in fondness over his sin like he once did, remember the passage we read earlier? Rom 6:2, "*What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*" Far from being fond of your sin, now you're ashamed of your sin. If you're truly a Christian you certainly won't be able to enjoy your sin like you once did. There's no one more miserable on the planet who comes to Christ, then through various and sundry circumstances decides to throw in the towel, tries to walk away and just re-immense himself into his old ways of living. Because you know too much, you've tasted God's goodness, you've experienced His love, you know your sin grieves His heart.

So you're trying to sin, but you're miserable in it, you've got too much of the world in you to be content in Christ, and too much of the Lord in you to have any real fun in the world. You're not comfortable in habitual sin like you used to be. Because God has changed your heart, and it's hard for you to kick against the goads; your relationship to sin has changed, your life is to be different now, notice.

Vs6

Now don't misunderstand this, John isn't seeking to say that you should be doing miracles, walking on water and leading a life of sinless perfection. The point here is that a life that's abiding in Christ and has Christ abiding in it, will have Christ shining through it. Your life will take on the flavor, the characteristics of Christ.

How did Jesus lead His life? In loving obedience to the Father, He led a disciplined life of fellowship *with* the Father and obedience *to* the Father. He moved in the pathway of righteousness. He said, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" John 6:38 and On that last night, having shared that last supper Jesus looked *at* them and said *to* them, "*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*" John 13:15 What's that, wash feet? I suggest to you that that statement goes way beyond the boundaries of what they saw that night; it extends to what they saw in Christ throughout His entire ministry. "I've given you an example, an example of obedience to the Father, of fellowship *with* the Father, of service and sacrifice *for* others, meeting the needs *of* others, of serving rather than being served and laying down your life, setting your wants aside, that others might be saved."

How do you know that you know? You're in love *with* God, and you walk in obedience *to* God...

Prayer Points:

God once again we thank You for the simplicity with which You've communicated to us. You don't want there to be any confusion when it comes to where we're at with You. Help us to consider that soberly as we reflect on Your word today. May Your grace abound in us that we walk in victory over sin and lead lives empowered by Your Spirit. May our lives reflect our relationship *with* You through our obedience *to* You.

If while we've been considering God's word a light has come on for you, you're realizing that perhaps you're not where you thought you were, or you knew you weren't there but today you sense the urgency to be there. You want to repent of your sin, to turn from your sin and give your life to Christ, to walk in obedience to the word of God, than you can receive Christ right here and right now and your life can be changed in Jesus name.