

Security & Sanctification, p.1

By Jeff Noblit

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Bible Text: 1 John 2:1-6
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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Let's grab our Bibles and let's go to 1 John. If you're not a member of Grace Life Church and maybe just listening in, first of all, we're glad that you've decided to do that tonight and, ah, we plan on being in 1 John until we get through, so you might want to study along with us. 1 John was written by the aged Apostle John. He's writing in the context of, um, should I say every epistle we study, the context of false teaching. Ah, there was just an unrelenting effort of folks to come into the church and veer them off of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and, ah, in particular this was the early days of what we call the Gnostic heresy. Now Gnosticism was like an octopus with a lot of tentacles but, um, generally Gnosticism was a teaching that there was an elect group of leaders who had, um, a superior knowledge and if you really wanted to know how to know God and what Christianity was really about, then you had to submit to and learn from these Gnostics, their superior knowledge, and, ah, which is really contrary to Christianity because Jesus preached the Gospel to the poor. Christianity isn't about necessarily having, ah, the intellect, being so enlightened that you know all the facts of the world, so that's good to fill your mind with facts if you have wisdom to use the facts, but nevertheless they esteemed themselves and their great great deep knowledge and you had to follow them, and one of the things that they came up with was that Jesus was not, ah, physical, he had no physical body. The real Jesus was a spirit and this spirit came upon Jesus in his early life or early ministry, and then it departed Jesus, ah, like when he went to the cross or something. It's a, a mystical kind of a notion and so, um, they would teach in addition to that that the body is fallen and corrupted in sin and all material things are inherently sinful which is a lie. They are not. Now sin has entered the material world but it's also entered the spiritual world, by the way. There are demons and they are not spiritual or good, they're fallen, but nevertheless material is good and of God and it's gonna last for eternity, by the way. He's gonna clean up all the material universe when he returns and restore it and it's going to be glorious. But the Gnostics would say, "No, if it's physical, it's, it's, it's inherently corrupted. It's irredeemable. You just can't fix it so you might as well just give over, ah, to the lust of the flesh and just indulge in it because it's just, you can't fix it anyway."

And so now this was coming into the church. Now you can imagine in this day when, ah, in the Gentile regions of the world promiscuity and fornication was actually a lifestyle. It was just a common embraced lifestyle and so it was very easy for some of this ungodliness, the dishonoring of God's commandments primarily in the area of our sexual

expression and orientation, ah, was just a common part of false teaching. So get that backdrop in your mind and that's mainly what he's addressing here. So he's going to tell Christians, "You ought to have a love for one another and a love for God's commandments that is different from those kind of folks. There ought to be a glaring contrast."

Let's read the text together. 1 John 2, beginning in verse 1.

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [or a lawyer] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Now looking at this, I want to talk about two basic things: security and sanctification, and one builds on the other. Ah, our sanctification, that is living our life set apart from God, living our lives under the rule of Christ, not under the reign of Satan and the values and precepts of this fallen world, but we're set apart to live under the rule of Christ and under the truth of the word of God. That's sanctification, set apart for God. But sanctification doesn't flow out of a teeth-gritting determination to get our, get our flesh in line. It grows primarily out of the glorious joyous security we have because what Christ has accomplished for us. Matter of fact, if your sanctification, your service for God does not grow out of a deep love for Christ, then it has a, a faulty foundation. Everything else is going to fail you but if the love for Christ is there and that motivates you to want to honor him, that's what pleases God.

So let's talk about, I., our security in verses 1 and 2, and first under our security we want to talk about our lawyer, or I might just say Christ our lawyer. He's called an advocate and it's the same word for lawyer here. Look at it again, "My little children," just stop there for a moment. This is characteristic of John, again, he's older and there's a tenderness and a sweetness to his tone. He has the tender affection of an aged pastor or a spiritual, you might even say a spiritual grandfather. So he's very sweet in his demeanor toward them. He does the same thing, um, what down in verse 12 when he says, "I am writing to you, little children." Ah, you can just sense it in his spirit as he writes, the tenderness.

Then he says, "I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin." Interesting just statement right there. It's an aorist tense and it has the idea of be finished with it, no longer is it who are to embrace and enjoy sin, both the habit of sin or an occasional falling into a single act of sin. In other words, don't be like the Gnostics who can, who actually have the audacity to teach that Christian grace means we can be lascivious, we

can just give in to the lust and desires of our fallen flesh. Paul says, "Don't go there. That's not who we are. We ought to be those who said once and for all that's not who I am anymore."

Then he goes on to say in verse 1, "but if anyone sins." Now he's not saying if anyone embraces and treasures sinning, a true child of God can't do that. You may enjoy a sin as a child of God but you can't joy in the sin. I, you say, "That's just turning words." No, it's not. There's, it's what the Puritan author one time said, "What my flesh loves, I hate." It's a new disposition. So when he says "if anyone sins," he's not talking about a lifestyle of embracing and joying in sin but a believer's occasional sin, even the godliest do sin. And, ah, some of you who think, "Well, I've got a pretty doggone good track record." Well, you have the sin of pride. You just, it gets, one way or another we're humbled by the fact that we're still housed in this unredeemed package of humanity and we all do at least occasionally fail our Lord. We do because we're naturally weak because we're housed in this unredeemed humanity and because of Satan's deceptions.

Then notice the security we have, though. I mean, or do we lose Christ, do we lose heaven, do we lose our home, do we lose our fellowship, are we abandoned because we're always going to find ourselves falling short from time to time? No, "I'm writing to you that you would be the kind of people who said once and for all that's not who I am, I don't want this in my life. I don't want to embrace and treasure this." But, middle part of verse 1, "if anyone sins, we have an Advocate," parakletos, "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Now here's, here's what John is saying. He's, he's saying, "Unlike the false teachers who profess to be Christians and are teaching false doctrine, particularly that salvation is Jesus plus their elite learning, or Jesus plus indulging in these desires of the flesh, unlike them, those of us who are truly God's children, who walk in the spirit of saying we want to be done with sin, we don't want to embrace it and treasure it in our lives, we have a unique, exclusive, family blessing." And what is that? That our elder brother Jesus is our personal lawyer. He is our advocate. He is our personal go-between lawyer between us and the Father.

I want to tell you something, folks, that is security. You can't be more secure before God than have the Son of God advocating for you before God the Father. What a glorious position we're in. It's an exclusive family blessing. It's like regeneration, nobody but those in the family get regeneration. Matter of fact, they don't even, they don't get it if you tell them about it. You, you, ah, I remember, I'll never forget in one of the presidential debates years ago, ah, George Bush II was being asked about was he born again, was he, what did he believe about spiritual things, and on the topic of being born again he said, "Well, honestly I can't explain it because if you haven't experienced it, you won't understand it." And I don't know the man's heart. I liked a lot of things about George Bush II, but that's a pretty good answer. It, these are exclusive family blessings and if you don't have it, if you haven't experienced it, you're not gonna get it no matter how much somebody explains it to you. Regeneration, we can go through to justification, and then what we're talking about here, sanctification, then the certainty promise of glorification, and then on top of that we have an advocate who intercedes for us, Jesus Christ the righteous. What security. Folks, listen, this is the basis for us wanting to keep his

commandments. This is the basis for us wanting to please God and not our flesh and not the world because we are grateful, we are humbled with joy that we have such an adequate advocate.

The word "advocate" again is the Greek word "parakletos." It literally means "to come alongside to help." He's our, he comes alongside. It's almost, ah, in my simple mind, I'm, I'm struggling and I'm weak and Jesus says, "Son, you need, I'm gonna come alongside and hold you up and help you because you, you gonna face My Father one day and you're not gonna make it, but if I'm with you, it's gonna be all right." You know, you've see that in movies and stuff where somebody's going into a bad place and maybe some gang guy runs that part of town, whatever it is, and all of a sudden another tough guy comes up and says, "I'm, I'm in with him. If you're with me, you're okay" that's literally what this means, "I'll come alongside you and you're gonna be with Me and you're gonna have security before the Father." Matter of fact, this word "parakletos" is used again in John 16:7 where it's translated comforter or helper. I joy in the glorious security that Jesus Christ is my helper and my comforter, and by the way, the Holy Spirit is the same thing, the Bible says. He's one that comes alongside us to be our comfort and our blesser. Jesus was that to the disciples while he was walking the earth and he says, "And after I leave, I've got another One that's gonna come and he's just like Me, and He'll be your comforter and He'll be your helper." Folks, listen to me tonight, as we face these, ah, difficult days, and by the way, these, these aren't very difficult compared to what our forefathers went through for Christ, but it is hard and I know people are hurting and people are anxious and people are worried. Here's what I challenge you to do: open your Bible, read of Jesus and cry out to him and say, "Christ, be my helper. Be my comfort." And you see if he won't show up and give you the help and the comfort that you need. He will. He'll be faithful.

One man wrote that the Spirit intercedes to man for God and the Son intercedes to God for man. So as Christians, we get this double blessing that, again, is an exclusive family blessing. We have the Spirit interceding to us, revealing God to us, and we have the Son representing us to God the Father.

Well, verse 1 says, he's Jesus, he's our advocate and then he adds this qualifier, he's "Jesus Christ the righteous." Wow, what a statement. In other words, he's not just a great guy with great intentions and he'll give you all he's got. He's more than that. He is the one and only human who is fully righteous. He's the human who is fully righteous because not only is he fully righteous, he's fully God and he's fully man. He's the God-man. He's the only righteous one.

I found this definition in a, a lexicon, a great lexicon. I thought it was real good. When you're thinking of righteous or righteousness, it means that his thinking, his feelings and his actions is wholly conformed to the will of the Father. Now think about that, in every way his thinking, in every way his emotions or his feelings, and in every way his behavior or his actions are wholly conformed to the will of the heavenly Father. There's only one like that and it's Jesus Christ. He's the righteous one, therefore he is our adequate advocate. He's fully innocent of any and all charges of transgressing or violating

God's law, and he had a lot of those in his earthly ministry, but not one of them would stick because he's righteous. And he fully and perfectly kept God's law. Christ is righteous in character, who he is, and in conduct, what he does and has done. And by the way, he's specifically righteous in fulfilling the assigned duties of the office of Christ or Savior. God the Father gave God the Son Jesus Christ the commission to fulfill the office of Savior. God the Son Jesus Christ said, "Yes, Father, I joyously accept the duties of the office of Savior that is saving Our church." And I'm telling you, he is faithful to get it done.

Now here's an exhortation for you and I. We're talking about security here. We're talking about this Jesus Christ is our lawyer, our advocate who keeps us settled in our standing and our relationship with God the Father. He ever lives, the Bible says, to make intercession for us. Jesus is not through with his ministry, he's working his ministry right now of faithfully interceding. Did you know that? He's still saving us, not justification but he is saving us so that we get all the way through to glorification right now and he can't fail. So we need to be exhorted tonight that we must not get the view in our minds that God is a God who wants his pound of flesh. Now you think God's like that because you're like that. "Okay, I'll forgive them. Okay, I'm gonna, I'm gonna pass over there since but I'll tell you what, I'm gonna da, da, da, da, da. And I'll tell you what, I'll remember that. I tell you what, I'm gonna get them back about that and that." That's not the way God is, that's the way you are. You see, you're ungodly naturally speaking. You're the opposite of him.

I don't know why, it's a trite example, but I also always think of 7-Up, the soft drink. Today, do they still say it's the un-cola? Is that, I don't know if they do that anymore because you have the cola and then you have, and it's always brown, and it's got a sweet caramelly taste kind of, and then you'd have 7-Up, it's the un-cola and it's clear and it's got a citrusy taste. So it's the opposite. Well, that's the way we are. There's God and then the ungodly. God's not like us. He, he wouldn't forgive and say, "But I tell you what, I'm going to watch you. Tell you what, I'm keeping score here. Tell you what, you, you know how you've blasphemed My name, know how you forsook My church, you know how you dishonored My truths and My laws, you know how you lived in vile, vulgar rebellion and sin and disobedience to your parents, dishonoring God ordained authority. I'm, I'm gonna get you back for it. I'll forgive you but I'm gonna get you." No, no, no. Do not put that on God. That's who you talk to when you look in the mirror, that's not the way God is. He's not out for his pound of flesh with somehow Jesus over there tugging on his robe saying, "O God, please forgive them." That's not what this is. The Father wants to forgive you. The Father wants to save you. The Father wants you to enjoy your absolute, unthwartable, unchangeable standing of security before him. "For God so loved the world," now think about it, "that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." God wanted to do that. It cost him greatly but he's not out for a pound of flesh and he wants you to joy in the security that his Son gives you. That's who he is. 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, "namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

So you understand something, God the Son isn't the only one that's saving you, God the Father is saving you through God the Son. God the Father wants you to be reconciled. It's not like Jesus is for you but the Father is trying to figure out if he wants you to come in or not. It's not like Jesus is for you but God the Father said, "I don't know if I can trust them yet." No, no, no, no. God the Father thought this thing up from the beginning and placed his heart and his eyes of unmerited favor on you before the foundation of the earth and then his Son Jesus Christ, now they are coequal God but he is the Son of God, his Son Jesus Christ then took on the role, the duty of being for Christ, the Savior, who would righteously achieve the vision of making us right in his eyes and secure in his presence.

Well, the Bible tells us that we are the unrighteous. We've talked about that, Romans 3:10 through 12, "as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one.' Not even one. 'There is none who understands.' On your own you would have never understood who God is or how to find him or how to get there. You would have never understood how to appreciate him or treasure him. 'None who understands, there is none who seeks for God.' You would have sought for religion, you would have sought for, 'Let's make a deal, God. I'll walk down the aisle. I'll pray a prayer. I'll start giving my tithes. I, I, I, I'll clean up my life a little bit. I'll do the ordinance of baptism. I'll, I'll start coming to church with my husband or my family or whatever it may be.'" No, that's the let's make a deal, God. No, you would have never sought God, actually all you're doing in that is seeking your own well-being, not seeking the glory of God. You never would seek God to honor him and love him and serve him on your own. Verse 12, "all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Romans 3:10 through 12.

That's us. We're the unrighteous ones, but think about it, that's where we are and yet he's this Triune holy God – now listen – that mandates all his creatures be righteous. Did you hear that? He mandates it. If he does not mandate it, then he himself fails the bar of justice which comes out of himself. He would contradict who he is if he did not mandate all of his creatures to be righteous. But as a substitute in our place, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is our advocate, all words out of our verse here, he fulfills the mandate. He fulfills it so the Father can say, "Not one tiny jot or tittle of My law or My holiness has been offended by allowing these into My family and the security of being Mine and being with Me forever."

Romans 5:18 and 19, "For then as through one transgression," that was father Adam in the garden of Eden, "through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness," that's Jesus, "there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many are made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One of the many will be made," here it is, "righteous." He fulfills the Father's mandate on our behalf and all this is based on his righteous character and his righteous conduct, rather on our behalf and he therefore can declare us just. And look, the Father doesn't cross his eyes and say, "Okay," cross his arms, "Okay, all right, You died for them, they're just." No, the Father has got his hands raised up and he's excited and joyous and greatly happy. The Bible says there is joy in the presence of the Lord when a sinner repents. There's, there's a joy in heaven and it begins with God the

Father so don't you make God the Father into this austere, distant, hardened, ah, ah, calloused judgmental being. He wants you saved. He's the God of all grace and if you know Christ as Lord and Savior, he wants you to joy that you're secure through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ.

Thinking about Jesus being our lawyer, I thought what a lawyer he is. Think about it, what a lawyer he is. I mean, I, I, I think I told you this years and years ago. When I was a little boy growing up in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, it's a big metropolis about 40 miles north of here, and, um, I, I, one day I was driving through and I know why, was it, I know was this a big deal in all the small towns around? It was a big deal in my town, that was if there's a fire, you can't follow the fire truck. I mean, it's just a big deal, I don't know why but all my life as a child "Oh, you don't ever follow a fire truck. Well, it's against the law. You don't follow a fire truck." I mean, it's like one of the seven deadly sins, don't follow the fire truck.

Well, I was courting a girl and she lived at the bottom of the hill down on a creek, a little subdivision down there, and I was not going to her house but I was close and the fire truck went over the hill down toward her house and I saw smoke and I thought, "My goodness, what's going on?" And immediately I remembered you don't follow a fire truck. I mean, they'll put you in the state penitentiary. You, you'll never get out again. And I mean it really, it was kind of a frightening thing. It was just kind of like Barney Fife, it was just drilled into me and, ah, so I followed the fire truck not real far and I parked a good bit away and I started walking and a police officer was down there and he saw me, saw where I parked, he came up and he gave me a ticket and, um, I had to go to court. I don't know, I don't remember, I, I'm not good at going to court, praise the Lord by God's grace, but nevertheless I went to court, I mean, I'm a high school student and, um, I didn't have a lawyer but my mom knew the judge and he was actually a family friend, and he just kind of poked at me and teased with me, to be honest, and then he just dismissed it and I left the place and I thought, "Boy, you know it's good to know the judge." But you know the good thing with Jesus is, think about it, Jesus is the best lawyer because he knows the law, he wrote it. He knows the case, he's one of us, he became one of us, he was tempted like we are except without sin, he, he knows the case, he went to the cross and became our sin on the cross. He knows the case and guess what else? He knows the Judge. He's tight with the Judge. He's tight. Matter of fact, in one, I can just picture me standing before, um, the judge or the bench where the judge was supposed to be and Jesus is standing with me as my advocate and my lawyer, and then after Jesus represents me, he goes over there and he sits down in the judge's chair because the Bible says all judgment has been given over to the Son.

Now think about it, what, now you can't have a better lawyer than that. What's God trying to tell us? What's John trying to tell us here? He said think about the security you have in Jesus Christ. Joy in it. Rest in it. Glory in it. Treasure it. Let it give you hope even in these uncertain times. He is your adequate advocate who secures you in the infinite, ever-present, unquenchable, undeniable love and care of the heavenly Father, and the Father doesn't do this begrudgingly, the Father joys in welcoming you into the family as his child.

When Satan accuses us, the Bible says Satan is the accuser of the brethren, when Satan accuses us, you remember he, in Job, Satan was allowed into the presence of God, he made accusations against Job and God gave him some respect. Satan comes before God and accuses us in the court of divine justice. Jesus our righteous lawyer intercedes for us and based on his own merits, the mighty gavel of divine authority comes down on the bar of justice and God declares us not guilty every single time. Every single time. You see, now, now you and I might argue that, um, man, I'm weak and, man, I struggle, and, man, I blew it again but you understand, God is not looking at you, he's looking at the righteousness of his Son so in the merits of his Son he declares you not guilty. I hold nothing against you.

Well, I'm struggling. How long have I been preaching, my august body of congregation? About 30 minutes. Well, you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna end here because I don't want to rush through the rest of this but we're talk about sanctification when we come back together and how our walk of sanctification – now listen to this and, and, and I don't know how I missed this, well, I do know how I missed this in my earlier years, I missed it because I had not experienced it because as you experience faithful local church life, the Bible comes alive to you in new ways because God's all about the church. This book was written to a group of believers in a church. Matter of fact, the entire New Testament is centered in local church life. Now, it's gonna be universal church one day, we're all gonna be one mighty church glorified but it don't work that way yet. We're restricted by time and space and we, we, we're not, ah, in that realm of the eternal glorified state so we have to function as local churches, but here's what you're gonna find, your sanctification and the fact that you, let me put it this way, the way you walk in sanctification proves that you're truly God's and you're truly secure. Now sanctification centers in your love for the brethren and we'll talk about that more next week.