

Security & Sanctification, p.2

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: 1 John 2:1-6

Preached on: Sunday, April 5, 2020

Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Alright, grab your Bibles wherever you are out there as the scattered church, and let's look at 1 John again tonight. We're looking at 1 John on Sunday nights and we're in chapter 2. We actually got started on this last time and we're gonna finish it up tonight. We're talking about "Security & Sanctification," that in Christ we have wondrous security, and through that security, we walk out sanctification.

Let's look at it together. 1 John 2, beginning as 1, verse 1 rather, and going down through verse 6.

1 My little children [John writes], I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate 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, "Well, 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 this is the Apostle John who's writing this. He's an aged man. There's a lot of tenderness and, ah, grandfatherly compassion in his writing. He's writing to the church and the church is facing, as always, heretical and false teaching. Ah, ah, ah, a type of teaching, false teaching that is, called Gnosticism has come into the church and it's, it's a group that, um, puffs themselves up as elitists and they have the key insights on what it really means to know God and you have to go through them to find out "the truth." And one of the things the Gnostics became known for was immoral living, just violating the clear teachings and commandments of the Scripture yet they would say they knew the Lord. So I think that context, I don't think, I know that context is essential to understanding these verses.

Now we've already talked about, I., our security in verses 1 and 2, and there's two figures I want to pull out that speak of our security in Jesus Christ. We talked about, first of all, Jesus is our lawyer. He says here in verse 1, "My little children, I am writing these things

to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins," I think that's all of us, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The point being as a child of God you've had a heart change. Your new heart, the new you desires to honor the Lord, desires to please the Lord, desires to keep his commandments, but we're still packed or packaged rather, in this unredeemed humanity. We're not glorified yet and the old desires of the old me are still there. And so sometimes we do sin, but he says if you do, if you're a child of God, if you believed on Christ, then you have an advocate, a lawyer, with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We talked about this a lot but just suffice it to say we talked about what a lawyer he is. He is what I've sometimes called our adequate advocate. He's adequate to take care of our standing before the Father. Jesus knows the law, he wrote the law. He knows the case, he became one of us, he was tempted like us, he understands our weakness, our difficulties, but he never sinned, and then he went to the cross and died for our sin and the Bible says he became sin. The Father looked upon Jesus on the cross as if he had committed all of our sins. My point is he knows the case. He knows our situation. He knows the law, he wrote it, he knows the case, and thirdly, I said last time, he knows the Judge. He knows him quite well. Now you could say, in one sense, the Judge is his heavenly Father but the Bible also says all judgments been given over to the Son. So in one sense Jesus stands as our advocate and our lawyer for us, before the Judge, then he turns right around and he sits in the judge's chair to judge the case. Here's my point: security. We stand secure in Jesus Christ. He is our lawyer.

Now there's a second part, we're getting to that now, and that's Christ is our liberator. Now he's our lawyer to represent us before the condemnation of the law, he's our liberator from the condemnation of the law. Let's look at that in verse 2, if you would. The Bible says, "and He Himself," the emphatic emphasis is, it's all wrapped up in Jesus. "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; not only ours, but also for those of the whole world." Now scholars have debated for ages what that means, he's the propitiation for our sins and those of the whole world. Well, no one knows absolutely for sure. I think it means that there is a sufficiency of Christ's atonement for all who will come to him anywhere, anytime. But listen, folks, no one is more Reformed in their theology, well, some could be, I guess, but I'm very Reformed in my theology, ah, because I believe Jesus is a Calvinist, if you know what I mean. That's just a figure of speech, but my point is there is a sufficiency in the atonement for all who will repent and believe, and listen to me, anyone, anywhere, at any time who will confess they're a sinner and call on Christ, they will be saved. Sufficient for all, but it's only efficient for the elect. It's only going to savingly change those who are the elect of God, that is, those who do repent and believe on Jesus Christ.

Now let's set that aside because I don't think that's the main thrust of where John's going with this. He wants us to talk about Jesus, "He Himself," the first line there of verse 2, "being the propitiation for our sins." The word "propitiation" literally means "the satisfaction." I've preached this so many times to you. He has satisfied the demand of holy law that was against us as lawbreakers. He satisfied it. He went in our place. He himself, he himself, he's both priest. Listen, and sacrifice. Jesus is not a priest like the Old Testament priests that brought a third party sacrifice. Jesus is the priest who himself became our sacrifice. How securing is that? He's all of that.

So he liberates us from being in a standing of guilty before God's holy law. Matter of fact, just to give you the weight of the law that was over us before Christ liberated for us from this, look at Romans 7, would you do that? Romans 7 and we don't have time just to unpack all of this but just running through it, we'll pull out some things. Romans 7, beginning in verse 7. Paul is writing about our experience and he talks about how we naturally face sin and deal with sin. He says, "What shall we say then?" This is Romans 7:7, "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" He said there's something about the law stating it and pointing it out that makes me vividly aware I'm accountable, and from that point on, I am fully condemned because I know the truth about myself and about my lawlessness.

Verse 8, "But sin," he's talking about this sin principle that's in the old unredeemed humanity I'm packaged in, "the sin taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead." Now he's not just talking about coveting, he's using coveting just as an example. He said it's funny, when the law says something's a sin, there's something about my old fallen nature that rises up, it kinda stirs it up to sin more. That's how fallen we are. That's how guilty we are. That's how accountable to God's law we are.

Verse 9, "I was once alive apart from the Law," figure of speech, "but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died." I recognized and understood my standing as a condemned, lawless, law-breaking transgressor before this Triune holy God. So I'm dead, the Bible speaks of, dead in transgressions and sins. The law just condemns me in every way.

Verse 10, "and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me." Now if you're writing from the perspective or if you're understanding this for the perspective of being one of God's elect, here God, you're one of God's elect and God has chosen you to be with him from the foundation of the world, yet you look at God's perfect and holy law, nothing wrong with the law, by the way, we're the problem, you look at God's perfect and holy law and it's actually the law that condemns me and the law that keeps me from being one of God's. It should have been life to me. Nothing wrong with the law of God, matter of fact, talking about our country and what we're going through with this coronavirus, I think among other things it's a, it's a shot across the bow. It's God saying, "You better wake up. You better realize you're not in charge. You better realize you're weak. You better realize there's One you ought to kneel before." And the moral absolutes of this holy God that he's given us in his word are good for any people, any land, and any nation, and we ought to repent as a people and return to the word of God and the moral absolutes God's given us in his holy word. There's nothing wrong with the law, but in our condition God's holy law condemns us. We die in our standing before God and we, therefore, are in a status of condemnation under the law.

Verse 12, "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." We talked about that.

Verse 13, "Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be!" It wasn't the law's fault. "Rather it was sin," the middle part of verse 13, "in order that it might be shown to be sin by the effecting my death through that which is good," the law was good but through my sin caused the law to be my problem, "so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful." So Paul says we're just a bunch of wretches. I mean, we just stand in a pitiful condition, completely and righteously condemned by this law. But Jesus, Jesus becomes our priest and our sacrifice and liberates us from that status of being condemned by God's holy law.

Now Hebrews 9:12 tells us that it was "not through the blood of goats and calves," that's what under the Old Testament economy, that's the kind of sacrifice a priest would bring. Continuing, "but through His own blood, He entered the holy place," that's the holy place in heaven, "once for all, having obtained," past tense aorist, finished in past time with continual results, having contained for us "eternal redemption." What a security. Christ was our lawyer, now we're talking about Christ is our liberator.

Now let's remind ourselves that God cannot just forget our sin. God cannot just forgive it, "Okay, I'm just gonna forgive it." No. People have used, ah, liberals sometimes use the argument, "Well, if a loving parent can forgive a child, surely a loving God will forgive us." Here's what you don't understand: there's no parent that's holy like God's holy. There's no parent who is just in holiness like God is just in holiness. Therefore God can't just forget it. God cannot just forgive it. There's some things God can do because he is so holy and he can't just forget or forgive sin. But Jesus, Jesus accomplishing our propitiation, that is, Jesus in himself giving himself for us on the cross, accomplishes what we could never accomplish. He accomplishes it for us, therefore causes us now to stand before God with the law's demands, the law's condemnation against us having been satisfied.

I like to picture a, a roaring voracious lion and he's very very hungry. Um, I, I sometimes like to watch these, ah, wildlife shows and they'll show those lions in Africa chasing down, I mean, they are absolutely every fiber of their being is driving them to conquer and kill that antelope or whatever it is, and then they'll devour it. Well, that's where God's law was before us. God's law was after us and have every just reason to be after us, to devour us in condemnation, but instead God put Jesus before that roaring lion and that lion devoured him on the cross in our place, and yet he took it all and lived again. And now you picture that lion as being wholly stuffed with everything he can possibly eat, totally satisfied and he's sound asleep and purring like a kitten, no longer after us with a vengeance.

He himself is our propitiation. Now Jesus did that and when Jesus dies on the cross for us and becomes our priest and sacrifice, he does not ask God to forget our sin. God hasn't forgotten your sin. Now there's a figure of speech but if he's truly omniscient, he's never forgotten anything. Matter of fact, he never didn't know anything. He's already, always,

always, he has always known it and he's never forgotten anything. Jesus is not in effect asking God to, ah, forget anything, he's just now asking God to look upon us in a new way. He's saying, "God the Father, based on My propitiation for the children, based on Me being their priest and their sacrifice on the cross, now it is right, it is in fitting with Your holy standard of righteousness to look on the children now as righteous." That's just good news right there.

Now look, we don't stand before him in our righteousness. Some of you have gotta get off of that. That's why some of you struggle with the security of your salvation is you keep thinking you're standing before God in your righteousness, something you can perform, something you can merit, something you can achieve. You don't stand before God in your righteousness, you stand before God in Christ's righteousness. That is security. That's where John's going.

Security because he's our lawyer, security because he is our liberator. He liberates us from having that standing of condemnation before his holy law. Now let's go to the practical side of this and, again, I think this is the backdrop of the Gnostic heresy that teaches you can be a Christian and live sinfully, you be a Christian and not keep the commandments, and this was an, an accepted philosophy of life. It wasn't like they were trying to honor the commandments and failed some, no, the Gnostics would say just give in to your lust. They would say the material body is hopelessly evil, can't do anything with it, just give in to it, and John is saying here when you see that teaching, when you see that concept, that's not Christianity. When you see that, that's someone who does not know God. That's someone who has not been forgiven by Jesus Christ.

So let's talk about our sanctification. We've talked about security, verses 1 and 2, back to our text in 1 John 2, now let's talk about our sanctification and quickly let's talk about, first, the inner motive for sanctification which is the love we have now for God. Let me say that again: our motive for sanctification is not to gain heaven, that's been gained. Now again, sanctification means set apart to honor and serve God with your life. My life is now set apart for Christ's service, not set apart for sinful indulgence but set apart for Christ. What motivates me to want to live this way? It's the love for God that now lives in my heart as his child.

Look at verse 5, "whoever keeps His word," I think you could amplify that out to say whoever has the new heart that desires to keep his word and has the purpose and pattern of his life to keep his word, "in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." Now perfected here means matured. I think the idea here is our love for God has come to that completed spot, not perfected spot but mature spot, mature place. When it is the predeterminate purpose of our lives to keep God's word and obey his commandments, then the love of God is having its way in us like it ought to.

Um, for example, if, if you had a, a very wealthy uncle and he had no, no relatives at all but you, and you were fairly young and he said, "A, if you'll come live with me and care for me, I, I know I'm old or I don't have that long, if you'll come live with me and you'll care for me, when I pass on you'll get all of my wealth as your inheritance." Well, let me

ask you a question: what do you think would encourage that uncle's heart? That you're gonna come live with him just so you can begrudgingly get through taking care of him, then have, have all of his wealth when he dies? Or are you gonna come live with him and you're gonna love him and out of a love for him, you want to please him and take care of him? That's where John is getting. Loves mature when from our hearts we're grasping we love our God, we want to please him and we want to keep his commandments not to gain something, it's all been gained through Christ, but because we love him. That's the motivation for living in sanctification, that is living for God, keeping his commandments. The true Christian is known by this pattern of continuously keeping Christ's commandments and not like the Gnostics and the false teachers of this day who had a lot of loud talk but a lot of loose living in their lives. But remember, notice, remember the context, while we're striving to keep his commandments, when we fail we have an advocate and we have a liberator, Jesus Christ.

Now let's talk of something about the perpetual practice of sanctification. The inner motive is the love of God, now how, how is the practice? Look at verse 3, he says, "and by this we know that we've come to know Him if we keep His commandments." Literally it's, it's present tense. It means if we keep on keeping his commandments. In other words, we didn't take a shot at it and then throw in the towel and now we're living like we love the world, the flesh and the devil. It's a, a new pattern of life for us. I don't know how long a child of God can go that way but he can't go long. He just can't go long and God will not allow that of a child of his. He'll apprehend him and bring him back.

But he says here a child of God, his perpetual practice is that he keeps on keeping. Your practice vindicates your profession. Again, the contrast is the Gnostic teaching of the day that came into the church where they would say you don't even have to try to keep the commandments of God, you don't even have to honor the law of God, you just give in to your fleshly desires. No, he says, the true child of God may stumble and fail but his heart is, "No, I want to keep on keeping the commandments of God. If I fail, I'm gonna get up and keep on keeping the commandments of God. If I blow it, I'll get up and keep on keeping the commandments of God. I'll get back on track." That's my new heart. That's the perpetual practice of my life.

Look at verse 4. He says something real strong here and, again, I'm totally convinced the emphasis here is not on the true Christians who are reading this and who are striving to live this way, the emphasis here is against the false teacher who indulges in wickedness yet calls himself an elite Christian mind. Verse 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." Amplify that out to where I think John's going, the one who say, "I'm a Christian. I know God. I'm a follower of Jesus Christ. But as a, ah, a, a, an intentional philosophy of my life and pattern of my life, I indulge in sin." He says, "You're a liar. You're a liar. You go around promoting..." Look, in our land today, we have people who, who, who celebrate in the streets promoting wickedness, things that God says are absolutely wrong, against his commandments. You can't live that life and embrace that philosophy and say, "I am a Christian." John says, "No, you're a liar."

Now, now you, reminds me of our President I saw on tv. Doesn't he just make you want to scratch your head sometimes, the things he says? He's pretty tough and I wish he'd act, I wish he'd handle himself different at times but I can tell you one thing, he's kinda like John sometimes. "Well, that's just a lie. That's just a lie." And I don't know whether he's right every time, I don't know, I'm just making a point, sometimes even God's godliest men get real brash, get real firm, and, and get pretty tough. John says, "If you've embraced indulging in wickedness and violating God's commandment and claim to be a child of God, you are a liar." That's tough stuff, straightforward. Thank you, Grandpa John. We need some of this straight talk sometimes in the kingdom of God.

Well, ah, we've talked about our inner motive for sanctification is a new love for God that's in our hearts, the perpetual practice is we want to keep on keeping his commandments, we don't want to just go at it and throw in the towel somewhere along the way, and now the perfect pattern of sanctification. There, there is, by the way, you will never be the perfect pattern of sanctification. I will never be a perfect pattern of sanctification. But there is one who was. I guess you could say still is the perfect pattern of setting his heart and life apart to honor God and keep his commandments.

Verse 6, "the one who says he abides in Him ought he himself to walk in the same manner as He," Jesus, "walked." Again, the Gnostic heresies and heretics would say, "We know the truth about Jesus. We know the real wisdom of Jesus. We're the real followers of Jesus." But they had a predetermined purpose and lifestyle that violated the commands of God. They said, by the way, these guys want to say they follow Jesus? These guys want to say they're the true teachers of Christianity? These guys want to say, "We have elite knowledge"? That's what the Gnostics would say of this day, "So follow us," and yet they by predetermined purpose and lifestyle practice dishonor the commandments of God, how can that be a follower of Jesus when Jesus' whole life, his whole purpose, every molecule of his being when he was in a physical form was to obey the Father's will? So what he's saying is, "That's what you ought to be like, like Jesus." And again, go into John's earlier strong rebuke, they're lying when they say they're followers of Jesus because Jesus wanted to follow the Father's will. Jesus wanted to keep the commandments of God.

How did Jesus walk? I've written down four things here and just, just four thoughts just to get in our minds if you think about what, what captured Jesus' heart and mind, or where, where was the passion of Jesus' heart and mind.

1. He loved his Father. Look what he said, "You know the, that I love the Father because I keep His commandments." Again, John would say to us, "Now contrast that to what these false teachers are telling you. Contrast that to the concept that Christianity means once saved, always saved, and after that you can just indulge in the world, you're okay." Jesus didn't do that. Why? He started with a love for his Father.

Secondly, how did Jesus live? He loved the Father's law and he loved the Father's will. He loved it. So again, anybody that would teach different than that is contrary to following Jesus. They're not acting, acting like a Christian at all.

Not only did he love his Father wholly from his heart, heart, mind, soul, everything, he loved the Father's law and he loved the Father's will, and thirdly, he lived the Father's will. He kept the commandments. Jesus said every prophecy, every word of God's law, he fulfilled every jot and every tittle of it. Every tiny piece of God's commandments he perfectly fulfilled.

And fourthly, he did it to his death. He set his face like flint and walked into Jerusalem and gave himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the children on the cross because he was that wholly committed to the Father's will.

Again, think of the glaringly obvious contrast between that devotion to God's will and commandments and the Gnostic heretics who were saying, "Oh, just indulge in sin. That's the way to live Christianity." So radical.

Now folks, there may not be any pure Gnosticism in the world today but there are there not hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of confessing or professing Evangelical or Ecumenical striped Christians who live this very philosophy? They indulge. They, ah, ah, explain away. They excuse and they all think that either Mary or the priest or the sacrament or because they prayed a prayer and walked down an aisle in some Evangelical church, that they've sort of stamped their ticket and they're free. I'm gonna tell you what John says to you, if you're living in the world and you're loving the world, you don't even honor God's church 5, 6, 8 times a year perhaps and you're just indulging in the things you enjoy in this world, you're not striving to keep God's commandments, something is not right in you. John would say, "If you think you're a Christian, you're a liar. You're a liar." That's not what a Christian is and just look at Jesus and notice how he was devoted to please the Father and walk in the Father's will. We are to imitate him.

Now we're not to imitate him like I pointed out some time ago when I, I saw a fella going down the road and had about a 12 or 15 foot cross on his shoulder and had a wheel on the back of the cross and he was marching that cross, ah, across our country to try to get people to look to Jesus, and I'm not saying the dear man's motives were impure or wrong but his approach is wrong. The cross has done been carried, the sacrifice has already been made. Our, our approach now is to preach the Gospel.

So we're not to imitate Jesus by going to a cross or suffering in some way like that. That's been done. We're to imitate Jesus like a little boy imitates his daddy. A little boy imitates his daddy, imitates her momma. She says, "I, I want to be like her. I want to be like him. I..." And they begin to learn what does he love, what does he joy in, what does she love, what does she joy in, and then how does she do that? That's the way we want to be imitating Jesus. 1 Peter 2:21, "For even, even here unto we were called because Christ also suffered for us, an example that we should follow in His steps."

A true child of God, John says, has a new heart. It's a heart that loves God and out of that heart that loves God, he wants the perpetual pattern of his life to be one of keeping God's will and honoring God's commandments. He may fail and he may blunder but he repents

and gets back up and he keeps on keeping on wanting to honor God's will and honor God's commandments, and he remembers that he looks to Jesus and he realizes, "I'll never be perfect like Him but I still want to be like Him. I want to love what He loved. I want to have heart motives that He had. I want to embrace God's law like He did and live it out." The old songwriter said, "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way. While we do His good will, 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. If these folks here drifted into embracing some of these "elitist Gnostic teachers," they're not gonna be happy in Jesus, they're gonna be heartbroken and frustrated. The only way to be happy in Jesus is to trust and obey. Why? Because we're under some woeful, begrudgingly, ah, ah, force and burden, "Oh, I gotta do it because I'm a..." No, no, no, the heart's been changed. I'm learning to want to honor him. I want to be pleasing to him. I want to do his commandments.

Security and that leads to walking in sanctification.