

Salvation Begins with S-I-N

(1 John 1:5-2:2)

9/28/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

In one of my favorite episodes of Andy Griffith, a preacher from New York comes and preaches in Mayberry.

And his sermon was focused on the need to slow down and stop being in such a rush in life.

Unfortunately, Barney slowed down during the sermon and ended up sleeping through most of it.

On the way out of the church, Barney is walking out with Andy and Aunt Bee, and they both compliment the preacher on his message..

And Barney, wanting to appear that he listened as well chimes in with...

“Yes preacher. That was a might fine sermon. That’s a subject that you can’t talk too much about.”

And then he adds, “Sin,” while nodding his head...

Andy looks at him with disgust before walking away and telling him that the message wasn’t about sin at all...

Now, the scene was meant for a laugh, but it reveals a common view of preaching, being that Barney assuming that preaching should be about sin...

And for years in the modern church, sin was a major portion of nearly every sermon...

One the most well known sermons ever preached in America was by Jonathan Edwards, and it was entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

And the subject of the sermon was the fact that man's sins are so offensive to a holy God that man is held by God's grace over the flames of hell by the strength of a spider web tied to their back...

And if it were not for God's mercy and patience, sin has the power to plunge every man into hell at a moment's notice.

That was common preaching in the 1700s, 1800s, 1900s in America, and it was preaching that was biblical and led many people to seek salvation from their sin in Christ...

However, in the 1940s and 1950s, preaching about sin became less and less fashionable in America and even around the world..

By the time, we reach the 1980s and 1990s, preaching about sin and its dangers was considered old fashioned and out of date...

The common sermon became a self help message designed to make people feel better about themselves...

And the words, hell, sin and judgment fell out of favor with a large number of pastors and eventually disappeared from many churches...

And the result of that in 2016 is that we have an entire of people in our country and around the world who redefine what sin is, or worse yet, fail to call anything sin at all...

Rather, we live in a culture that calls sin by other names....

Like mistakes or errors in judgment...

Because of this failure in churches to address sin, we also live in a culture that even if it admits sin exists, it never lays the blame for sin on themselves...

Instead, it was their upbringing that caused them to sin...

It was their teachers that led them to sin...

Their environment...

Their disadvantages in life...

We now live in a day where sin is also redefined...

The sin of homosexuality is now a lifestyle choice that you can enjoy and according to some still enjoy fellowship with God...

The sins of slander and gossip are now information that you have to tell someone in order to keep them out of harm's way...

The sin of lying is now a necessary in order to protect the feelings of others...

The sin of idolatry is now called a hobby or family time....

In 2016, we live in a culture that is doing all it can to not only redefine what sin is....

Listen to the opinion of this NY Times reporter, Frank Bruni...

“It is past time for church leaders to take homosexuality off the sin list.”

However, in some churches, pastors readily admit that sin, hell, and judgment are no longer part of their sermons...

Here is what Joel Osteen says,....

“You know, (I don’t preach) hellfire and brimstone. Most people are beaten down enough by life. They already feel guilty enough. They're not doing what they should, raising their kids—we can all find reasons. So I want them to come to Lakewood or our meetings and be lifted up, to say, 'You know what? I may not be perfect, but I'm moving forward. I'm doing better.' And I think that motivates you to do better.”

Wow, that is incredible...

In Ostend’s false gospel, your biggest problem is not the guilt of sin before a holy God, but the guilt of failing as a parent..

Or failing at your job.

And his solution to your guilt is not forgiveness in Christ, but teaching to you to raise your head higher and have a better attitude...

And in case you didn't know, that is dangerous and false teaching....

But when you don't have a correct view of sin, judgment and hell, you have to find other reasons of people to listen to you...

And he has found lots of itchy ears who want to hear what's right about them and not what is wrong...

Barney expected preaching about sin, but in 2016, we expect preaching about self improvement...

And millions of people eat it up all the way to the gates of hell...

That's a long introduction to the second section of 1 John but it is an appropriate introduction because a test of true salvation a person's view of sin.

How you view sin reveals how you stand with God...

If you have a wrong view of sin, you are one the wrong side of God...

So, let's look at 1 John 1:5-2:2 to make sure we have a correct view of sin, which is one of John's test to determine true salvation...

Though this will be very straightforward, these are truths about sin that we all must believe and must teach to those who desire to know Christ...

So, let us look at sin's relationship to God, to man, and to salvation...

And in the process, let us affirm our salvation by affirming some important truths about sin...

Let find the first truth about sin in 1 John 1:5 as we learn first of all about...

I. Sin and God (5)

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Last week in 1 John, John gave us the first test about salvation and it was...

People who are truly saved believe in the reality of Jesus Christ, who came to earth, lived perfectly, died for sin, and was resurrected...

John began his letter testifying an eyewitness of Jesus' life and by telling his readers that those who desire fellowship with Christ must believe in Him first of all...

So, the first test of 1 John is your view of who Jesus is...

This second test begins in verse 5 as John turns our attention to sin...

And so John continues his testimony to his readers by telling them what he heard from Christ...

And Jesus' teaching was that He as God was the Light of the world..

Christ was the Light in the sense of an attraction to all men, but also in the sense that there was no darkness in him at all..

In other words, God has no sin in Him at all...

God does not sin.

He is not responsible for sin.

And therefore, he causes no one to sin..

God is perfectly holy and righteous and therefore separate from all men...

And though we all may know that and affirm that, it is an important truth about sin...

Because sin has infected everyone but God....

Now the question always comes....

Well, where did sin originate?

Did God not know that sin would come into the world?

Could God have not prevented sin?

And the answer to all of that is this...

Sin originate in Satan.

God certainly knew that sin would exist, and yes he could have stopped it if He had desired to do so...

Yet, God allowed sin for various reasons, but the most important is that the presence of sin allowed God's attributes to shine all the more brighter...

If there is no sin, then God is not set apart in his glory...

If there is no sin, God's grace and mercy is not as clearly seen...

If there is no sin, we would not see God's justice..

Though God does not sin, God allows sin to exist for a time to highlight his incredible glory, power, and grace..

So, sin truth #1 is this....

Sin is in the world, but sin is not in God...

The second truth relationship that John describes in this passage is the relationship between....

II. Sin and Man (6-10)

Though most people would affirm the relationship between sin and God, there would disagreement over the relationship between sin and man...

Let me read verses 6-10, which describe various views of the relationship between sin and man, and then we will go back and look at each view in more detail....

Verse 6...

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Now, what we get in these verses are incredible truths about sin, but I want to start with the various ways that people view their sin...

The first view of the relationship between people and sin is found in verse 6....

And it is this...

Some people believe that they can claim to be a Christian yet live a life filled with sin...

For them, the relationship between sin and man isn't that important..

We have met these people before, and people with this view are around today....

And John is describing them by describing what they say...

They say that a man can confess to being a Christian and yet live how they please....

Yet that is not a correct view of the relationship between man and sin..

James says, Paul says, John says, and Jesus says that a profession of salvation that is not followed by a decrease in sin is not true salvation...

People who live in darkness after supposedly coming to the Light of Christ are, according to verse 6, not telling the truth...

That is an incorrect view of the relationship between sin and man...

Then in verse 7, we get to a correct view of sin and man...

A correct view of sin and man is that people who say that they have come to the Light of Christ walk in the truth and not in sin...

Clearly, we know that John isn't describing a perfect life after salvation, but he is describing a changed life after salvation.

We follow the light of Christ by obeying the truth of the Bible...

Look, he is a real application...

People who are in Christ don't mind living in the Light...

They don't run to hide in the darkness and cover their sin...

They are fine living lives that are exposed to the world because they no longer have anything to or conceal...

One of the refreshing qualities of a true believer is an honesty about their life...

They aren't perfect and they don't broadcast their sin, but they will tell you the truth and they will be open and straightforward about their lives...

They aren't secretive and sneaky but open and honest because they know that covering their sin is no longer a priority since their sin has been covered by the blood of Christ...

Before Christ, you are concerning about covering sin.

After Christ, you are grateful for the cleansing of sin.

In verse 8, we go back to another incorrect view of the relationship between man and sin...

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Though it seems hard to believe for those of us who have a correct view of sin, there are people who don't see themselves as sinners in the world...

Some people simply see their sin as mistakes and bad judgments but don't see their sin as crimes against a holy God...

In their view of the relationship between man and sin, they see themselves as good people with a few flaws or weaknesses....

But overall, they would never see themselves as criminals in God's court of law...

If you ask them, they would call themselves good people who had made some mistakes in life but had learned from them and were now living right...

Yet, what a tragic mistake that view is...

In that view of man and sin, you aren't in real trouble because you haven't done anything that bad...

Often, in that view, you are fine as long as you are better than the neighbor down the street...

Then John swings back to a correct view of the relationship between man and sin in verse 9....

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

People with a correct view of the relationship between man and sin acknowledge that they have a problem with sin...

They see the need to confess their sin because they feel the weight of their sin...

And they confess their sin to the One that they have most deeply offended, and that is God Himself.

Now, a note needs to be made in relationship to verses 7 and 9 about this correct view of sin....

John is writing to believers in this letter and in verse 7, he is not teaching that we must continue to walk in Light in order to keep enjoying forgiveness..

The forgiveness of salvation is not something that is required over and over...

The justification of the sinner, where God declares a sinner not guilty happens at a point in time, and it is good for eternity...

You don't walk in obedience so that you are forgiven by God today...

True salvation has brought complete forgiveness once and for all...

The true believer has been cleansed from sin once and for all in the death of Jesus Christ when you confess your sin to Him, turn from it and trust in His death to cleanse you from all your sin..

However, believers still sin after salvation, and so there is a need for confession to keep your relationship with the Lord in good working order...

Now understand, daily forgiveness of sin is not necessary for the believer...

His sins, -past, present and future- were forgiven when he was saved, and that forgiveness is once and for all...

So, daily confession is not required to get forgiveness but to maintain freshness...

And the point of what John is writing is that believers with a correct view of sin and man realize that sin separated us from God but it also clogs the lines of blessing even in those who are totally forgiven...

Then in verse 10, John give us one more reminder of an incorrect view of sin and man that is closely related to verse 9 but with a slight difference.

Those in verse 8 reject the idea of sin, the people of verse 10 acknowledged that sin is real, but they maintain their innocence...

And there are even people today who believe that sin is real, but think that they have achieved a life of no sin...

John says to them that they make God a liar with that claim...

Because God says that even man sins and sins to the very end of his life...

Though people can and do experience victory over sins, no one arrives at a place of perfection because the sin nature of every man is still very strong his entire life...

Sinless perfection is not a reality in this life; only in the life to come...

And our bodies groan for that day even now...

And if your body doesn't groan under the weight of sin, you may have a correct view of it, and your salvation may in danger...

You must understand and see the relationship between sin and man in order to be saved...

How do you view yourself tonight?

Are you a sinner?

Is sin a weight on your back?

Have you sinned or simply made bad choices with your life?

There is one final relationship to see in this passage, and it the relationship between sin and salvation...

III. Sin and Salvation (2:1-2)

Let me read verses 1-2 of 1 John 2...

2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an [a]Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the [b]propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

In verse 1, John tells his readers that he is writing to them so that they may not sin...

Now, clearly John is not saying that eliminating all sin from a person's life is possible...

In fact, he just wrote that it isn't.

Everyone sins, but that is not excuse to go on sinning..

The believer is to make it his goal to stop sinning all together....

John wants his readers to stop sinning ,and even though he realizes that is an impossibility, his desire is to see his readers avoid sin in their lives...

You see, this is where we have to return to what the readers of John's letter were experiencing...

They were surrounded by people who were down-playing truths about sin in the world...

These people who came to be known as Gnostics were saying that sin wasn't all that bad...

If you let your minds drift back to the last section, what were these false teachers saying?

Look at verse 6...

They were telling these Christians, "well, its ok to live in sin as long as you say that you have fellowship, you will be fine."

They were telling them in verse 8..

"Look, you aren't really a sinner. That is your flesh doing those bad things. You aren't that bad of a person."

These are the things that John's readers were hearing and beginning to believe, and John is writing to tell them that their low view of sin is incorrect and even opposed to God...

So, he tells them that it is a good thing to stop sinning and to try and put off sinning....

But he follows that up with this...

However, if anyone sins....

In other words, since you will sin, know that you have an Advocate with God, and that Advocate is Jesus Christ...

Now, we could camp on the word Advocate for a while, but let me give you a good definition of it and a good picture of what Jesus as our Advocate does...

An advocate in Greek is simply One who comes along side of...

And advocate stands with someone else and usually in a court or legal setting...

And his job is to speak for you..

To speak on your behalf...

If you are a child advocate, you are a supporter and defender of children and laws regarding children...

So, how is Christ our Advocate?

He stands beside us and pleads our case, and what does he plead on our behalf...

Many people say he pleads our innocence before God, but let me read you what one commentator wrote....

“Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent or tell the Father that our sin wasn’t our fault. Instead, our Advocate acknowledges our guilt and presents His work on the cross as the ground of our acquittal. He stands in the Court of Heaven a Lamb as it had been slain and pleads that His death has paid our penalty.”

Think of it this way, Jesus stands beside us in courtroom of God and doesn’t try to convince the Father that we aren’t guilty. He knows that isn’t true. He simply asks God to accept the penalty he suffered in our place so that we can be set free.

And what John is saying here is beautiful...

When you fall into sin, go to your Advocate and point to Him as the One who has already paid your fine in his blood...

And notice how Jesus is described...

He is the righteous Advocate...

He is not a corrupt lawyer...

He tells the truth and pleads the truth on behalf of his people...

And he stands beside and pleads his righteousness on your behalf...

That is an Advocate like no other....

And this leads to verse 2...

Where John calls Jesus the propitiation for sin....

Propitiation is an interesting word that is found only two places in the NT.

Here and in 1 John 4:10, which we get to eventually.

The word simply means appeasement or satisfaction...

In a very literal sense, Jesus' sacrifice satisfied God's wrath against the guilty sinner....

The slogan for a Snicker's bar is that snickers satisfies...

Well, what does it satisfy?

It satisfies your hunger...

The peanuts, the milk chocolate, the caramel all combine to satisfy your hunger pains for a while....

Jesus' work on the cross satisfied God's wrath toward the sinner...

Propitiation may be hard to say but it is sweet to hear the Jesus' death satisfied the wrath of God....

And then this passage ends with a phrase that has been debated for years...

I will read it to you, offer you the views of it, give you my thoughts and we will make a few concluding thoughts...

John writes that he is the propitiation *for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

The question that surrounds this verse is this...

What did Jesus accomplish in his death on the cross?

Some say that this teaches that Jesus died for the sins of all men and that is what we see here...

Some say that John was writing to Jews here and saying that Jesus not only died for the sins of the Jews who believe in Him, but for the sins of anyone in the world who would believe in Him...

Some say that this is just John's way of saying that the death of Christ goes all over the world to anyone who believes in Christ...

The fancy terms for this is limited and unlimited atonement....

And it is the source of division for many people...

Let me be clear...

You can take any of those views and we can be friends and debate about it later, but here is my view...

I see the death of Jesus only being applied to the lives of those who believe in Him...

Jesus didn't die for every sin that even man has committed because if that were the case, everyone would go to heaven since their sin has been paid for in Christ....

Jesus Himself says in John 10 that he laid his life down for the sheep...

Jesus' propitiation doesn't apply to Hitler.

If that were the case and Jesus died for every sinner that has ever been committed, Hitler would be in heaven since Jesus satisfied God's wrath in his death.

In my opinion, John is writing to people who have a low view of sin....

The false teachers were telling these people that sin was not that big of a deal, but John is saying that the whole world has a huge sin problem...

This statement is supposed to point to the huge problem of sin in the world, but the even bigger satisfaction of sin that came through the death of Christ...

Again, you don't have to share my view, and we can discuss the extent of Jesus' death later if you have more questions...

For now, I simply want you to see that you must have a correct view of sin's relationship to salvation...

And the correct view is that sin is so bad that
Someone had to die to satisfy its penalty.

And that someone was Christ....

Conclusion

John Newton was an interesting man...

We all know him because he wrote what may be the
most well known Christian hymn of all time, Amazing
Grace in 1779...

However in Newton's early years, he was a slave
trader until God intervened in his life during a storm
at sea when Newton was 23.

Newton gave his life to the Lord, gave up the slave
trading business and eventually became a pastor in
1764 at the age of 39..

Newton would pastor for 40+ years until his eye-
sight began to fail in the early 1800s...

Then 4 days before Christmas 1807, Newton's en-
tire body began to fail...

As he lay on his death bed, he called a friend closer
and told him...

“My memory is fading, but two things I remember...

I am a great sinner, but Christ is a great Savior.”

And a short time later, he passed away..

Yet, that quote alone tells me that Newton was truly saved...

For two simple reasons that we learned tonight in 1 John...

#1 - True believers know and see themselves as sinners...

And #2,

#2 - True believers see Christ as a rescue to their sin....

I would simply say this...

If you don't see your sin as a big problem, you won't look for a big Savior..

And if you aren't looking for a Savior, you won't be looking to Christ, and if you aren't looking to Christ, you aren't saved...

True salvation has correct view of Jesus because
salvation has a correct view of sin...

Let us pray.