

An Answer For Failure

1 John Series #3

1 Jn 2:1-2

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INTRODUCTION

A. In our last lesson, we discovered that John had three basic things to say to his readers

1. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all
2. You can't claim fellowship with God and walk in the darkness
3. Fellowship with God is found as we walk in the light

B. Now, the huge point of reference for us is what happens as we walk in the light

1. The blood of Jesus cleanses us of all sin
2. Obviously, walking in the light doesn't happen because we're perfectly sinless, else there would be no need for any continual cleansing
3. But, as we strive to know and live God's will, the very one we have put our faith in to save us from sin keeps doing just that
4. The person who avoids the big lie (that he has no sin, or that he does not sin) but rather confesses his sin to God will find the continual forgiveness he needs in Christ

C. The difficult thing for many people is the idea that it is something other than their own Perfection that makes us right with God

1. We say, "Jesus saves," but then we talk and act like Jesus has very little to do with it
2. The evidence for this is found in our discomfort in discussing the subject of salvation
 - a. among churches of Christ, it is common for us to put a far greater emphasis on what we do to be saved than on what Jesus Christ did to save us
 - b. we are uncomfortable saying that we are "saved by grace through faith"
 - c. we hasten to follow that up with firm statements on what we "must" do
 - d. while it is clear that the faith God wants from us involves action on our part, we must get a better understanding of who and what it is that saves
3. Otherwise, we're left with the desperate feeling that somehow it's up to us to live good enough that God will want to save us
 - a. God certainly wants us to live a good life
 - b. but even that is not enough to save us
 - c. we need something better

D. In school, if we want to master a field of study, we usually begin with some basics

1. We might take an introductory course, or a survey course
2. Then we might move on to courses that explain the field in more detail
3. Eventually, we might involve ourselves in research, providing even more information and understanding to our chosen field of study
4. In a way, John is laying out some basics for us

E. I've always felt that 1 Jn 2:1-2 were intended to help us understand two things: the ideal of Christianity and the real of Christianity.

1. I want us to think about these two ideas this morning
2. I believe you will be encouraged when you remember these basics of our faith

I. THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIANITY

A. One of John's stated purposes of the letter is found here, and it's a statement of the ideal of Christianity

1. 1 John 2:1a -- My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. . . . NASB95
2. This statement is about as simple a presentation of God's will for our lives as you will find anywhere in the Bible
 - a. Romans 6:1-4What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. NASB95
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:34Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame. NASB95
 - c. 2 Corinthians 12:20-21For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced. NASB95
 - d. 1 Timothy 5:20Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful *of sinning*. NASB95

B. The import of John's statement is this: "I am writing these things to you so that you might Never sin"

1. That truly is the ideal of Christianity, that we would be a people cleansed from both the guilt and the practice of sin
2. One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake.
-- Billy Sunday

II. THE REAL OF CHRISTIANITY

A. The ideal of Christianity exists alongside the real of Christianity

1. 1 John 2:1b-2 -- . . . And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*. NASB95
2. John acknowledges something that the Gnostics preferred to ignore, deny and even lie about
 - a. we are sinners
 - b. we were sinners before we became Christians
 - c. we continue to be sinners after we become Christians
 - d. Illustration – like the bumper sticker I saw many year ago, “Not perfect, just forgiven”

B. The evidence of this reality is so common and profound, it's amazing that we have such a Problem admitting it

1. The Gnostics did it with theology and philosophy
 - a. some denied they ever sinned, claiming to have risen above sin
 - b. others denied the consequences of sin, claiming that since they were forgiven, it didn't matter what they did because the consequence of sin couldn't reach them
 - c. John has already called those ideas lies
2. But, we're little better today
 - a. we might not have a formal theology or philosophy that we can state or that people can subscribe to
 - b. but, one of the plagues of the church is the thinking of many Christians that they don't sin
 - c. sure, we give lip-service to sin's presence, but we do all we can to minimize it, deny it, cover it up, and disclaim it
3. How often do we see Christians heart-broken because of sin?
 - a. we used to see people asking for prayer that God would forgive their sins, but it has become less and less common
 - b. church-folk often work to present an image of themselves as people who don't have any sin to deal with – that sin is something other people struggle with
 - c. we've even gotten to the point that many of us can't even recognize sin in ourselves when we read pointed verses in the Bible – we just don't do those things!
 - d. this is one of the most dangerous traps we can ever fall into

C. John reminds us of the real answer for the human failure of sin

1. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father

- a. paracletos – one called alongside to help; an advocate, one to plead our case
- b. that advocate is Jesus Christ

2. This is the word John used to communicate what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit

- a. John 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; NASB95
- b. Jesus said, “another helper”
 - 1) another – “allos” which is “another of the same kind”
 - 2) it is not only the Holy Spirit who is our helper, but Christ himself
- c. the sinless, righteous man, Jesus Christ, gave himself on the cross as a sacrifice for us
- d. when it comes to sin, Jesus is one who can stand by our side, intercede for us, and help us find the forgiveness we need

3. Jesus is even more than a helper who intercedes for us – he is the very answer for sin

- a. John’s word is “propitiation” – a word that carries the idea of appeasing or satisfying something
- b. Jesus, himself, was the atoning sacrifice, by which our sins are forgiven
 - 1) 1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*. NASB95
 - 2) 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. NASB95
- c. here is one of those basics that Christians need to learn and remember – Jesus is the only one who answers the problem of sin

4. In fact, the hope of the whole world is Jesus

- a. this verse alone destroys the idea that Jesus died to save on a select few
- b. the truth is that he died for all – not that all will necessarily put their faith in him and be saved, but it is certainly possible for all to be saved
- c. if that is true for “all” it is certainly true for any “one” – including you or me!

CONCLUSION

A. We ain't what we want to be. We ain't what we gonna be. But, thank God, we ain't what we was. -- Martin Luther King, Jr.

B. As we keep moving toward the ideal, Jesus deals with the real – walk in the light and his Blood will keep on cleansing you

C. Invitation