

Theme: Faith in Exile – I Peter 1:17-19

Title: Our Advocate – I John 2:1-6

Aim: Explore Christ as our Advocate & how we should live as believers.

Intro: We talk about praying for & otherwise protecting our children. In reality we all need someone to be on our side, to take up our cause, to be there for us, don't we? We're emboldened when we know we have others w/us, who have our interests/best in mind. Soldiers never want to go to battle but they'll not hesitate when they know they have officers leading them & other soldiers fighting beside them whom they trust. How important to have someone(s) who come along side us in a time of need. Theme: Faith in exile. As Christian exiles in an unbelieving world, we need & thank our God we have such an Advocate in the person of Christ, who is ever w/us, for us. I John 2:1-6 [READ]. I) **God's desire & provision for us is that we not sin.** Note John's address to his readers: "Little children." According to Strong's, "In the NT [this phrase] is used as a term of kindly address by teachers to their disciples." It was a term of affection, endearment. John was their elderly bishop who loved those under his care & wanted the best for them. Having written about God making Himself known to us in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, about God being light, in whom is no darkness, then calling for us who believe to "walk in the light as God is in the light" & deal w/sin when we fail, here John tells us about God's desire & design. "Listen, I'm writing these things to you so that you might not sin." What's not written but implied here is that since we are new creations in Christ, we've been brought into not only a new relationship w/God thru faith in Christ but also a new relationship w/sin. We've died to sin, crucified w/Christ. Paul wrote (Rom.6:3-4), "***Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore w/Him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too***

might walk in newness of life.” Again, in Galatians 2:20 – ***“I have been crucified w/Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave Himself for me.”*** We’ve been set free from the dominion of sin & are no longer slaves to sin. It is possible for us not to sin if we are in Christ. If we are being led by the Holy Spirit, giving way to Christ w/in, we will not sin. But John has already acknowledged that sin is part of the believer’s life. We battle the old man & are tempted by Satan as we live in this plain of the now & the not yet. God has left us here that we might spread the gospel & make disciples for the Kingdom of God. John is simply reminding us that we don’t have to sin anymore. Remember that God has given us everything we need to live the Christian life (II Peter 1:3). We have relationship w/God, the Holy Spirit w/in, the Word of God, bro/sis in Christ, the gift of prayer & worship, etc. Yet John knows that as exiles in this world we will sin. As we have already learned, God has made provision for the believer when we sin. Confess & forsake – realign, realign, realign. John then encourages us w/the blessed truth: II) **Christ is our Advocate**. We’re not alone in this battle & we are not helpless before our enemy. An advocate is “one who supports or promotes the interests of a cause or person/group; a person who pleads on someone else’s behalf. In the Greek the word is “parakletos,” the same word used to identify the Holy Spirit in John 14:15. It’s “one called alongside to help;” “another helper; one who pleads another’s cause before a Judge, a pleader, counsel for the defense, an intercessor.” Let’s get it clear in our minds. God the Father is the righteous Judge in this scenario. Satan is the accuser, or in another sense, our own sin accuses us. “I thought you said you were a Christian. How can you, a Christian, do such a thing?” Satan, of course, wants to beat us w/our sin, fill our heads & hearts full of guilt & shame. Mind you, the Holy Spirit convicts us when we sin, in order that we

might confess & repent & realign. Satan just wants to blame us, shame us & lame us, seeking to hinder our fellowship w/God & make us useless in the work of God, or at least make us think that we are. But we have an advocate – Jesus Christ the Righteous. He is the One approved, who is acceptable – faultless, guiltless. Understand this: The Jesus does defend us against Satan’s accusations & sin’s defeat, more importantly, He defends us against God the Father’s condemnation. He is the righteous Judge, before whom we are accountable. And, understand this also: the advocacy of Christ on our behalf is something DONE, not needing to be repeated. Nor does the Father need continual reminder – He doesn’t forget Christ’s payment for our sin, nor His righteousness which counts for us. He does, however, forget our sin against us. We’re the ones who need reminding. We’re the ones deceived by Satan’s lies & our own shame. How is it that Christ can advocate for us? What is it that defends us against God condemning us, our sin defeating us, Satan accusing us? III) **Propitiation makes it possible**. “He is the propitiation for our sins...” Propitiation means “an appeasing, or the means of appeasing. Jesus is the means of appeasing the Father’s wrath, satisfying His righteous anger, by His death for sin.” David Gudzik wrote: “Propitiation has the idea of presenting a gift to the gods, so as to turn away [their] displeasure. The Greeks thought of this in the sense of man essentially bribing the gods into doing favors for man. But in the Christian idea of propitiation, God Himself presents Himself (in Jesus Christ) as that which will turn away His righteous wrath against our sin.” I’ve shown these pictures before, but in Caesaria Phillipi (Northern Palestine) there was a temple to the god Pan (all is god). These are ruins of that temple. The wider view shows a cave on the left side of the ruins of that temple. To appease Pan, they used to offer human sacrifice, throwing the victims off the cliff into the mouth of that cave to their death. That cave was called “the gates of

hell/hades.” They sought to appease Pan by sacrificing. This is where Jesus took His disciples & made the statement in response to Peter’s confession of Him being “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” “Upon this rock (confession) I will build My Church, & the gates of hell/hades will not prevail against it.” No power of hell, death nor all other so-called gods/religions can prevail against the Church. Whereas they sacrificed helpless victims, Jesus presented Himself as the propitiation for our sin, appeasing the Father’s wrath. And Christ’s sacrifice for our sin is sufficient for “the sins of the whole world, but applied/efficient only for those who believe/receive Christ by faith. Therefore, there is always forgiveness for the believer. This, of course, begs 2 very important questions, which encompass our final point: IV) **How do we know we know Him? How should we then live?** John makes it clear & simple. “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.” That word keep means “to attend to carefully, to observe. True regeneration & conversion brings about new life which leads to transformation as the Holy Spirit works w/in. We are given new motivation for living – free from the bondage/slavery to sin; free to live as we ought. And the love of God poured out into our hearts, so that we want to please the One who saved us. That’s immediate in the sense that we are new creations given the ability to obey God & say no to sin, but gradual in the sense that we must learn to think new & live accordingly by the help of the Holy Spirit. That’s the work of sanctification. So the test for the believer is am I obeying God? We say we believe; are we obeying? If not, we lying. The truth is not in us. And if the truth is not in us, we’re not in Christ, not saved! Now, again, this doesn’t mean the Christian is perfect & never sins. It means that sin is not our way of life anymore. Or as Gudzik wrote, the true believer “no longer loves sin; no longer brags about sin; no longer plans to sin; no longer fondly remembers sin; no longer fully enjoys sin; no longer

comfortable w/habitual sin.” Rather the believer abides in Christ – drawing life from Him every day, staying w/Him, keeping in step w/Him. The true believer aims to “walk in the same way as [Jesus] walked.” James Boice wrote that this means “faithful, regular, disciplined life of fellowship (w/Christ & others) & obedience. It doesn’t mean we will be sinless (God has made provision for that), but moving in the direction marked out by the righteousness of God.” Obedience is evidence of faith. One of John’s primary points in this epistle is that the primary commandment of Christ is to love – love God & one another. His love has been poured into our hearts & is perfected, brought to maturity by faithful obedience. As Christian exiles we can be assured that we have One who stands w/us at all times – Jesus Christ the Righteous. The accusations of Satan, true they may be, have no standing in the courtroom of our Father God. His wrath has been appeased; our sin atoned. Now let us live out our faith thru obedience. We must live by faith – faith in exile.