Hosea and The Epistles of John: *Hesed*, God's Covenant Love

Lesson 5: Covenant Abiding

Key Verse: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.~1 John 2.1

Love changes the flavor of your baking. When someone asks for the secret ingredient added to create a marvelous dish or scrumptious baked treat, the answer is often summed up as, "It's love"[1]! In truth, some have mastered the art of spices and unique additions to foods that please a crowd. Even so, their reason for doing so remains rooted in their love for those they are feeding. Likewise, God's covenant Love (*hesed*) is the root reason He sent His Son as the **propitiation** for our sins, or to pay the penalty for our sin thereby turning God's wrath away from sinners. Now the secret ingredient to living in the fullness of His Joy is the assurance we have that Jesus is our **Advocate** *even as we sin.* Love changes the flavor of your life!

Our Husband, who chose to be our Advocate, Thank You for paying for our sins. Thank you for providing us the ability to live as faithful, single-hearted servants of the one true God. Thank You for betrothing Yourself to us. Thank You for repentance so we can know You, and so our lips can say, "You are my God." We love You because You first loved us. Hallelujah to our God and King!

1 John 2.1-6 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, **5** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

By this we may know that we are in him: **6** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Diamonds: John's letter shifts from highlighting the bad theology and incongruent lifestyle of those living in darkness to the comfort found in Christ for those living in God's Light. John shifts his readers' minds first by addressing them using an intimate term of endearment, and then by using a newly repeated phrase: "by this we know".

1. Read 1 John 2.1-6 using an additional translation such as The Message (MSG), New Living Translation (NLT), or The Amplified Bible (AMP). What phrases or words leap off the page? What comfort do you discover in this passage?

John's pragmatic and empathic approach to his readers is found in his recognition and acknowledgment that Christ-followers continue to sin (2.1). Having written about those living in darkness, John wants to assure his readers that living in God's Light isn't a lifestyle of perfection. Sin remains. And yet, he doesn't want to be misunderstood as being permissive of sin. In the beginning of his letter, he addresses the budding spiritual philosophy of Gnosticism, which allowed a spiritual caste system based on one's resolution of their own sin problem through higher spiritual "understanding". Having called out the clear lies of Gnosticism, John now addresses its philosophical cousin: antinomianism, or "against law".[2] "The antinomians made light of sin in a believer's life."[3] This mindset believes the eternal security provided in Jesus allows them to live as they please. The consequences of their sin have been paid through Jesus, so they are free to sin, or not sin. It's as if they have a sin "debt" that Jesus is going to cover no matter what.

2. Using your answers to Questions 3-5 found in Lesson 4: Covenant Rejected, what does Hosea 2 teach us about God's viewpoint of and response to the sins of His people?

[1] The day group experiences this special ingredient every Wednesday with Gayle's good cookin'!

[2] Allen, p. 66

[3] Allen, p. 66

There are two dangerous misunderstandings about Jesus' legal payment for sin that antinomianism promotes: 1. God is cool with our sins because our sins provide Jesus the opportunity to demonstrate that "grace wins"! (Romans 5.20-21), and 2. God doesn't take sin seriously anymore because Jesus freed us from the "law of sin and death"! (Romans 8.2) However, Dr. Allen clarifies[4], "Christians are saved *from* sin, not *to* sin."

The false theology of antinomianism is further reinforced by the unintentional confusion created by John stating that Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins...but also for the sins *of the whole world*." (V 2, italics added) Theologians confirm John is referencing the global idea of the "world" rather than a narrow reference to God's "elect".[5] However, the idea is not a universal salvation. Dr. Allen explains[6], "Jesus satisfied the legal debt of sin for all, such that all humanity is savable should they meet God's condition for salvation, which is repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ…These verses all affirm that God desires the salvation of all people." John challenges his readers to find their security in Christ's salvation rather than contorted, self-righteous theology through two great spiritual assurances prefaced by the phrase "by this we know…" (V 3, 5b): obedience to God's commands and living as Jesus lived. Obedience to God's commands and living as Jesus lived may feel nebulous in John's writing here in 1 John 2.3-6. However, John experienced Jesus in His humanity, living out God's Love and His law in real time. As such, John understood the danger of hypocrisy while also deeply understanding the need for knowing that despite our moments of hypocrisy, the penalty for our sin has been legally paid (V 2) so that we may know God and be assured that we are in Him (V 3, 5b).

3. Jesus summed up His Father's commands for us in Mark 12.30-31. Read this passage using several translations of the Bible. While the command is mercifully simple to understand, living out this Godly obedience is challenging. How do you approach this challenge to live as He commands? What have you done, or will you do, to obey Jesus' command?

Rather than straining under the weight of legalism, today you are free to love God even though you sin. Today you are free to obey God in the eternal security of His Presence, even as your circumstances reveal your depth of depravity and the unrelenting ruin of sin. This freedom to unabashedly love God with single-hearted devotion isn't secured in your politics, the economy, or the country of your citizenship. It is secured in your Advocate, Jesus Christ, the propitiation for your sins (1 John 2.1-2).

4. Recall your personal invitation to join God's wedding feast found in Hosea 2.21-23, alongside His RSVP request in Revelation 19.6-9. Your answer of "YES!", will be expressed through every minute of your life. Consider the past week of your life. What are the practical ways you are living out your "YES" to God? In other words, in what practical ways have you loved God with single-hearted devotion and, in turn, unselfishly loved those He has placed in your life?

There is a great comfort in the "My Husband" (Lesson 4, "Covenant Rejected") vibe of this passage As you enter the study of the deity and doctrine this week, note that both propitiation and advocacy are provisions of "My Husband" – corporately in Hosea and personally in 1 John. What a *great* comfort God has provided to His people first in His Promises, and now in Jesus. What an extraordinary "Husband" we serve.

Deity: Advocate[7]~ (1 John 2.1) "Why is it we can have our sins forgiven? John says it is because we have an advocate. That word 'advocate' means 'one who is called alongside to help in a time of need.' John used this word several times in

[4] Allen, p. 50

[5] Allen, p. 54; MacArthur, p. 49

[6] Allen, p. 55

[7] Allen, pp. 50-52

John 14-16 concerning the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. The word there is translated, 'Helper'. Here the word is rightly translated, 'advocate' because it means not only one called alongside to help, but one who lends his voice in our defense, one who speaks up on our behalf. Jesus is our advocate. Therefore, as a believer you have two advocates. You have an advocate in your life indwelling you in the person of the Holy Spirit. He speaks on behalf of God to you and convicts you of sin. You also have an advocate in Heaven, Jesus Christ, who speaks to God on your behalf (Hebrews 7.25)...The reason Jesus alone is my advocate is because He alone paid the price for my sins."

5. What scripture(s) from Question 8 in Lesson 4: Covenant Rejected, confirms the truth of Jesus as your Advocate who has paid for your sins?

Heaven's court violates the rules we abide by in our earthly court system (Matthew 10.28). In our courts, the defense attorney defends based on the actions, or merits, of their client. Though Satan (rightly) accuses us before God (Revelation 12.10), Jesus defends as our case before His Father, God, based not on our merit or worth, but on His merit as the righteous payment for our sin. In addition, in our courts judges must recuse themselves if they are related to the defense attorney. However, in God's court, "Jesus, the Son who loves the Father, and the Father, who loves the Son, serve as advocate and judge. Jesus, our Advocate can stand 'face to face' with God as Son in relationship and fellowship because He is divine." Even more, "Jesus can represent us as our advocate because he is fully human, calls us his brothers (Hebrews 2.12-13), and...understands what it means to be tempted (Hebrews 4.15). As a man, he too was tempted; but he never sinned. Jesus' intercession for us is not temporary, and it is never interrupted (can we get a Hallelujah?!). Though accomplished in time, it is eternally valid and continuous."

6. What happens when Satan enters God's court to tell Him of the sins you have committed today? What does Jesus say about you? How does God rule in the case of Satan v. you? (suggested verses to guide your thoughts: Isaiah 53; Jeremiah 31.31-34; Luke 22.19-20; John 3.16-18; Romans 8.1, 33-39; Revelation 3.5, 20.11-21.4)

<u>Doctrine</u>: Propitiation[8]**~** (1 John 2.2) "Propitiation through the death of Christ is one of the critical doctrines of the Christian faith, at the very center of God's redemptive plan (Leviticus 17.11; Matthew 26.28)."

7. According to God in Leviticus 17.11 and Jesus in Matthew 26.28, what is the legal significance of blood?

"Christ's sacrificial death on the cross satisfied the demands of God's justice, thus appeasing His Holy wrath against believers' sins." Its direct translation means "appeasement" or "satisfaction" (*hilasmos*). "Propitiation is necessary because of sins. Sinners continually shatter God's perfect law (Matthew 15.18-19) and He, as the righteously offended Creator (Genesis 3.8-24; Luke 16.15), must react justly in Holy anger, wrath and judgment (Isaiah 59). God's justice must be satisfied (Jeremiah 10.10). Every sin ever committed by every person who has ever lived will be punished in one of two ways (John 3.36; Romans 2.5-8). Either God's wrath will be satisfied when all unrepentant and unbelieving sinners suffer eternally in hell (Nahum 1.2-3; Luke 13.23-28), or for all who, by the convicting and regenerating power of the Spirit, repent and believe savingly in Jesus, God's wrath is satisfied by the punishment of Christ Himself on the cross (Isaiah 53; John 3.16-21, 19.30; 1 John 2.2)."

"By God's design, pictured in the law's requirement of the lamb without blemish (Numbers 6.14; John 1.29), the Lord Jesus Christ has to be sinless. Otherwise, He would not have been acceptable to the Father and would have been subject to the judgment of God for His own sins. But He is righteous (Isaiah 53.11), holy (Revelation 3.7), innocent (John 8.46, 18.37-38), undefiled (Hebrews 7.26), and separate from sinners – not merely the agent who made propitiation for sinners, He *is* the propitiation." Jesus is *the* payment for sin, not just a payment for sin!

8. John intimately understood Jesus as the propitiation. He was there (John 16-19). What intimacy is created between you and Jesus as you too understand Jesus as the propitiation?

[8] MacArthur, p. 46-48

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:

Lecture Outline:

Aim: God provides all we need to pursue a life of holiness.

I. The Sin Problem (1 John 2.1-2) **T1:** God provides an Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous, Who is also the blood sacrifice to atone for all sin for all time.
   a. How seriously do you take your sin problem? Too seriously or not seriously enough?
   b. How might you be downplaying the seriousness of your sin?
   c. And how might you incorporate the truth of Jesus Christ's propitiation for the sins of the WHOLE world into your walking sermon?

II. The Surety Problem (1 John 2.3-6) **T2:** God provides a test to assure us of our salvation: obedience to His commands.
   a. What motivates your obedience to God's commands? Are you obeying because you have to, need to, or WANT to?
   b. What changes will you make to more fully abide in Christ?

Allberry, Sam, *1, 2, & 3 John For You* (Charlotte, NC: the good book company, 2025) pp. 41-44
Allen, David L., *Fellowship in God's Family: Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013) pp. 49-71
MacArthur, John, *1-3 John: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, 2007) pp. 41-60