

Guest Preacher - Rev. George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Let's turn to the passage we read in God's Word, and as God would help me later concentrate, on the first two verses of chapter 2. The first epistle, first letter of John, chapter 2, and we'll read again the first two verses.

My little children, I'm 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.

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John tells us that he wrote his gospel. His gospel.

He tells us he wrote it in chapter 20, verse 31. He wrote it so that people would believe. He tells us in his epistle that we're reading, that the reason he wrote his epistle in chapter 5, just a couple of pages, or chapter 5, verse 13.

[1 : 28] He says, I write these things to you who believe. So, you see, when he wrote his gospel, some people did believe.

So, he's writing to those, to Christians who believe. And he's writing to them to assure them that they have eternal life.

Verse 13. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

However, as he says here, if you have eternal life, you should not sin. A supplementary reason is in verse 1 that we read of our text.

My little children, I'm writing these things to you believers, that you may not sin. But, if any one of you believers, he's writing to believers, if any one of you believers does sin, you have to remember two things.

[2 : 41] Quite often, when Christians sin, and they realize their guilt before God, they despair.

And some foolishly say, oh, I can't be a Christian. But here is the apostle teaching us what we're to do, we believers, when we do sin.

And if you're here, and if you're listening to me online, and you're not a believer, think of the tremendous blessings that belong to Christians.

If we Christians sin, what are we to do according to these verses? We are to remember two things. We're to remember, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

And secondly, we're to remember that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. And that's what I want to concentrate on as God will help us.

[3 : 48] Very briefly, that Jesus is an advocate. And then secondly, he's the propitiation. That's a big word that we don't use today, but it is full of meaning and encouragement to God's people.

Briefly, first of all then, if we Christians sin, remember, we have an advocate with the Father.

An advocate with the Father. You see, Christianity is not strictly speaking, strictly speaking, it's not the worship of Jesus, strictly speaking.

Christianity is the worship of the triune God through Jesus. There's only one way to Jesus.

Through Christ. The one who came and became a human being. So that he could die, as I try to explain to the children.

[4 : 58] God cannot die. But if he takes a human nature, that human nature can die. And you see, it was flesh and blood that sinned against God.

So it's flesh and blood that must pay for sin before God. Now we have a picture of what goes on every day and every night.

In Revelation chapter 12, verse 10. We are told there, I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.

That moment of Christ, the great day of Christ, the day of judgment has come. For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down who accuses them day and night before our God.

Do you realize that? Every day, every night, if you're a Christian, the accuser of the brethren goes into the courts of heaven and accuses us of our sins every day and every night.

[6 : 33] And he says something like this. You see, the father is the judge in the courts of heaven. The father is the judge.

Satan is the prosecuting counsel. And Jesus is the defense counsel. The prosecutor comes in and says to the judge, See that child of yours?

They sinned yesterday. I sinned. I'm in hell. Why are they not in hell with me? That's the prosecuting counsel.

That's his case. What happens then? Every day, every night, in the courtroom of heaven. What happens? When Satan tells the truth to a wrong end.

Satan will tell the truth to a wrong end. Yes, his people sinned yesterday. What happens in the courtroom of heaven? The advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous, steps forward and says, Yes, that's right.

[7 : 50] My people sinned this afternoon. But my blood paid for their sins. Let my people go. And that's the end of the case.

It's dismissed. Their sins have been paid for. The advocate with the father is Jesus Christ the righteous.

And the fact that he's called Jesus Christ the righteous is significant. You see, some advocates are not righteous. They're experts in law seeking a loophole in the system whereby they can get their client off the hook.

But Christ, our advocate, is righteous. And the judge of all the earth on the throne is righteous.

And we are to remember that they are both righteous when they acquit believers when they sin.

You see, reverently speaking, when God was planning salvation, reverently speaking, there was this problem.

[9 : 04] If you can talk about a problem in heaven. We've got a talking language we understand. God had to plan a way whereby those who sin could be with him in heaven without him altering a law, without him changing a principle.

You see, God had sworn everyone who sins must die eternally. Must die.

But then he loved sinners so much. He was thinking, how can we get them to be in heaven with us without breaking my laws, without reneging on my promises and commitment?

How can I do it? This was the only way. This was the only way. If my son becomes a human being and he dies in their place, then my law is satisfied.

Their sin has been paid for in blood by death. And that's why we have to remember that our advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, does not plead in the courts of heaven that his client is innocent.

[10 : 33] Because we're not. we do sin still. What does he plead in the courts of heaven? He pleads, the punishment has been paid.

It's vital to grasp that. God has no quarrel. God cannot complain. He's been paid for our sins. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing to be a Christian.

Wonderful to have Jesus Christ as a righteous advocate. Not looking for a loophole in the system, but finding a way where the law and the promises can be kept perfectly.

well, he is our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

But I want to concentrate for the rest of our time on the fact that he is the propitiation for our sins.

Now, as I said, is a word we don't use today, and it's only twice in the Bible, but it's got real meaning.

[11 : 46] And I want to mention some reasons, as God will help me. The first thing that's involved in propitiation is the appeasing of God's anger.

You see, the Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day. How is that anger to be put out?

We are told in Ephesians 2, 3, that we are all, and Ephesians is addressed to Christians as well, and he's saying we Christians were all by nature children of wrath, under God's anger, under God's wrath.

That anger must be put out. and there's nothing that can put it out except the death of Christ, the death of the second person of the Godhead.

The blood of Jesus Christ appeases, placates, puts out the anger of God against us forever.

[13 : 15] Only if you're a believer, of course. Only if you're a believer in Christ. Christ's one sacrifice in Calvary put out God's anger against us.

So, really, throughout the Christian's life, he's never judged. We talk about, oh, it's a judgment. We talk about the pangs being a judgment. That is correct as far as the wicked are concerned, but technically, it's a chastisement on the Lord's people.

Christ took all our punishment. Christ was judged in our place. So, God doesn't judge us.

Christians, God chastises Christians.

That means he corrects. He gives us a difficult providence to put us back into line. If we're not walking in his paths, if we go off astray, then he chastises us to bring us back into line.

Our punishment has been paid. But we are to be corrected. He is the propitiation. He's the one that took our punishment.

[14 : 42] He is the one that put out the anger of God against our sin. That's the first thing. There's a second idea in the word propitiation I want to mention.

It's a word for covering. You see, there's a verse in the Bible that tells us, God cannot look upon sin. Really, it means it cannot look upon it without abhorrence. it is that abominable thing which he hates. So it has to be covered.

It's got to be covered from God the judge's view. God cannot look upon it.

It has to be covered. And nothing you try to cover it with will be anything but transparent. In fact, if you try to cover your sin, it will be like a magnifying glass.

[15 : 48] It will actually increase it. Only Christ can cover it. Only the blood of Christ can cover it.

There's a lot of you here my age, therefore you'll remember in school, I always remember in school, when we were taught to write with ink the first time.

You'd begin writing in pencil, but then we were taught to write in ink, and the key was not to have a blot. You mustn't blot your paper once.

And I remember there was somebody that always did all these papers, not a blot, not a blot, perfect writer. But there was this special exam, and for some reason, this person had a blot on it.

But the teacher knew he was a perfect writer, he was good, there was some explanation for it, I can't remember what it was. And everybody felt so sorry for this person because he knew, fine, he was terrific.

[17 : 01] The teacher went off to the desk, took out, opened the desk and took out a gold star, and she put the gold star over the blot on the paper.

So that when you looked for the blot, what did you see? You saw a gold star, perfect. The blood of Jesus Christ does something like that for every Christian, for every believer.

When God looks on you, he sees the gold star of Christ's perfect righteousness. And the whole principle is there, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

Yes, you deserve death, yes, you did wrong, but when I look at you, I see Christ's perfect righteousness in your place, where there was nothing but your sin.

Covering, covering our sins, that principle is involved in the word propitiation. It means appeasing anger, and it means covering sin.

[18 : 28] Third thing, it has the idea of a debt being paid in full. Our sins in the Bible are called debts.

You'll remember in the Lord's Prayer, which we've repeated, we said what? Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Now, I can't remember, is that Matthew's account or is it Luke's? But anyway, the Lord's Prayer is in both Matthew and Luke, and one of them is called debts, and the other one is called sins.

Our sin is a debt we owe to God. But you know, there's two kinds of debt. Sin is a certain kind of debt.

It is not money debt. Supposing you've no money, and you've run up a bill for a hundred pound in a garage, I can go along to the garage and say, look, I'm so sorry for my friend Fred here who's going through hard times.

[19 : 41] He's no money. How much does he owe you? Oh, he says a hundred pound. I can write a cheque for a hundred pound. There you are. That pays for his debt.

The garage man's happy. My friend's happy. I'm happy. Everyone's happy. You can do that with money debt. Listen, sin is not that kind of debt.

I think the best way to explain it is it's criminal debt. Supposing you kill someone and you're sentenced to life imprisonment.

debt. I cannot do what I did with my friend who had a debt to the garage. I cannot go along to the authorities and say, look, look, look, I'm so sorry for my friend.

Fred here is in jail for the rest of his life. I'll go into jail for him. I'm not going to live much longer anyway. I'll go into prison for him. That would not be allowed because it's not money debt.

[20 : 45] It's a technical, theological name for these kind of debts, but we'll not go into that. It's criminal debt. It has to be paid by the person who committed the sin.

And that is why Jesus, sorry, that is one of the reasons Jesus had to become a human being. Not only so that human beings can die, God can't die, human beings can die, but human beings are flesh and blood.

And I think it's in Hebrews chapter 2, you find out because he had to become flesh and blood because it was flesh and blood that sinned.

Therefore, the price is to be paid by flesh and blood. So if Jesus became one of us, if he became one of us, then his death can be a legitimate substitute for our sins.

that concept is all in the idea of propitiation. There's another idea involved in the word of propitiation.

[22 : 07] Christ is all these things to us. He puts out the anger of God. He covers our sin. He pays the debt of sin in full law so that there can be no complaint, even by God because God's been paid for our sin.

But fourthly, there's this idea of removing the offense. You'll have heard of the text. He made an end of sin.

sin. He will finish transgression. Only Christ can end sin.

Only Christ can finish transgression. This picture of removing the offense was pictured on the great day of atonement in the Bible, in Leviticus chapter 16.

On that great day of atonement, only once a year this happened, the high priest went into the inner sanctuary. The inner sanctuary. And on that day he also made atonement for the sins of the people.

[23 : 25] Two live goats were presented to the high priest. one of them was called the scapegoat. The other was slaughtered.

But the scapegoat, and it's only recently I'd have to confess that I discovered that the term scapegoat is actually a shortened version of the escape goat, the goat that escaped death.

But it's a wonderful picture of what Christ does with our sins when we believe in them. That goat, the scapegoat, the high priest who put his two hands on the head of the live goat.

And with his two hands over the head of the goat he'd confess all the sin of Israel throughout the last years. Confess it all, and as it were, symbolizing transferring the sin of the people onto the live goat.

And then they would get a kind of tether and put it round the neck of the live goat. And they would appoint a strong man in the congregation to lead out the live goat on whom all the sin of the people had been confessed.

[24 : 54] I need to lead the goat out to what the Bible calls in the authorized version, a place uninhabited. And they say, they tell me, that goat was never ever seen again.

You got the picture? Christ taking our sin away to a place where it will never ever be found again. Never seen again. Not even by God. That's the kind of saviour you need if you're not a Christian.

It's the only saviour there is. There's another wonderful picture in Psalm 103 verse 12. As far as east is distant from the west, so far has he from us removed in his love all our iniquities.

As far as east is from the west, not as far as north is from the south. That's why I believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of scripture.

[26 : 17] every word is inspired by God. You see, if it's said as far as north is from the south, think about it. I'm on the north pole and someone removes my sins to the south pole.

That's as far away as you can get in this world. But it can still be found. It can still be traced. There's a spot in the north pole.

There's a spot in the south pole. But when you talk about east and west, it's so different. You put your finger on the globe.

There you are. Now, move east. Move east. Now, where's the west? Oh, the west is round there. Oh, I'll go to the west now. Oh, the west is round there. You go round and round. You never arrive. You never come. There's no east pole or west pole. The west is always round there. So, you carry on going round.

[27 : 21] And that's why the Bible says that's what Christ has done with our sins. As far as east is from the west, so far has he from us removed all our iniquities.

Another thing I want to mention in the word propitiation. Christ does all these things, but you see, there's the idea in propitiation, the idea of a victim.

You see, someone has to pay the price. Strictly speaking, salvation is not free. It's only free to us. It's free to you. It's free to me. but someone has to pay. Someone has to pay. There's a terrible price to pay for sin, and Christ has paid it all.

You know, the children are right when they sing. There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.

[28 : 35] He only could unlock the gates of heaven and let us in. A victim. He is the propitiation.

He is the victim for our sins. And lastly, in propitiation, there's the idea of a meeting place.

a place where we can meet with an angry God in peace, in love, the mercy seat.

That propitiation means the mercy seat. A place where you're immune from prosecution. Isn't that wonderful?

Immune from prosecution. where a sinner can meet an angry God in peace. Where's that place?

[29 : 46] Where's that mercy seat? Where is it? It's the foot of the cross. It's the place where Christ cried out with a loud voice.

It is finished. God, I've paid for all their sins forever. There's no more sacrifice for a sin.

The meeting place for anyone, anywhere, can meet with God in peace. peace. Well, that's it.

But, finally, finally, we must just say a wee bit what, just very, very briefly, this last clause, but also for the sins of the whole world.

What does that mean? Well, I'm not going into that, but sadly, it doesn't mean the whole world is saved. The saviour spoke about those who would be in hell, but it's because the whole world won't have him as saviour.

[31 : 02] You see, I'll just say two things. It means lots of things, and it's a very involved subject, but whatever else it means, it means this. It means two things.

It means there is no other saviour in the whole world. You change your job, you change your home, you go to a village, and you say, where's the village doctor?

Oh, that's a doctor from the village, but he does no good to you unless you go to him. Christ is the saviour of the whole world, if you go to him.

And my friend, the whole world will be saved if the whole world goes to him. But they don't, tragically, tragically.

But he's the saviour for the whole world. And secondly, it means this, surely it means this, that Christ must be preached to the whole world.

[32 : 10] Surely we can't keep this message quiet. It has to be preached to the whole wide world. and whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will definitely be saved.

Whoever they are, whatever they've done, may God, the Holy Spirit, make his word, his truth, effectual to every one of us.

Let's bow our heads. our gracious Father in heaven, we pray for your Holy Spirit to bind your word, your truth upon our hearts and souls.

O gracious God, unite every one of us to your Son and a living, vital faith. Hear us in mercy, answer us in peace, for we pray only in Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll conclude our service of worship by singing to God's praise from the same psalm we've been singing in, Psalm 145 in the Scottish Psalter, the first version, which is the common meter version, page 443, and we sing from verse 17 to the end, Psalm 145, first version, verse 17, the Lord is just in all his ways, holy in his works all, God's near to all that call on him, in truth, that on a call, down to the last verse, my mouth, the praises of the Lord, to publish cease shall never, let all flesh bless his holy name, forever and forever, Psalm 145, verse 17.

[34 : 20] The Lord is just in all his ways, holy in his works all, God's dear holy and kings of mosquMAN He will accomplish the desire of those that do in fear.

He also will deliver them, and He the pride will hear.

The Lord be served so through Him love, that not condemn an eye.
But He, O Lord, will not be in awe, when other seasons dry.
My power of the praises of the Lord, to always cease, shall never.
[36 : 32] Let all the praises holy day, forever and forever.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.