

Real Disciples (3): The Atoning Sacrifice

(1 John 2:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. Shakespeare has his character Jack Cade in *Henry VI* muse about being the king
 - 1. There would be no need for money—food, clothing, drink would all be free.
 - a. No one would need to steal or beg— “*all the realm shall be in common*”
 - b. So Dick the Butcher says, “*The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.*”
 - 2. So Shakespeare told the first lawyer joke—something that is quite popular
 - a. John McCain (only candidate not a lawyer) was on the Tonight Show
 - 1) What is the difference between a catfish and a lawyer?
 - 2) One is a scum sucking, bottom-dweller scavenger. The other is a fish.
 - b. McCain replied afterward, “*Well, I guess I just lost the lawyer vote!*”
 - 3. Shakespeare’s point is really totally different when taken in context.
 - a. Jack Cade was promising a perfect world in which everything went right
 - b. And in that perfect world, then there would be no need for lawyers!
- B. Well, we don’t live in a perfect world—and the reason is that WE are imperfect.
 - 1. Karl Menninger, a psychiatrist, begins *Whatever Became of Sin* with story
 - a. A slightly deranged, disheveled guy was on a busy street in Chicago
 - b. He would point at people and yell, “*Guilty!*” (OK, very deranged guy)
 - c. But the point was people’s reaction; they acted guilty! “*How did he know?*”
 - 1) We’re ALL guilty; because we’re guilty, we don’t live in perfect world.
 - 2) And so we need lawyers; in fact, we all need a the ultimate Lawyer
 - 2. John wrote to combat the ideas of people who thought they were perfect
 - a. False teacher convinced the church that sin and obedience was no big deal
 - b. They claimed “*to be without sin*” and that “*we have not sinned*” (**1:8, 10**)
 - 1) That message was finding an audience—what people wanted to hear
 - 2) You had the benefits of salvation without the messiness of discipleship
 - 3. John says denying sin makes us liars and God out to be a liar (last week)
 - a. We’re guilty, all of us are guilty—what we need is a really good lawyer
 - b. John portrays Jesus as our Defense Attorney pleading our case (**1 Jn 2:1-2**)

II. Jesus As Our Counselor

- A. When we sin, Jesus is our “*Advocate*” (NAS) or “*Intercessor*” (NET footnote)
1. NIV uses the more descriptive “one who speaks to the Father in our defense”
 - a. Greek word is a familiar, though in a different context— *parakletos*
 - b. The word means “*to call along side*” and was used in a legal context.
 - c. *Parakletos* stood by you, not as legal expert, but to vouch for character.
 2. It’s the word Jesus uses for Spirit as Counselor, Comforter, Helper ([Jn 14:26](#))
 - a. Jesus would send Counselor to guide the apostles in all truth ([Jn 15:26](#))
 - b. Jesus will say its good for Him to leave so that he could send Spirit ([16:7](#))
 - c. Familiar word, but in [1 John](#), the Counselor isn’t the Spirit, but Christ!
 3. That is no surprise— Jesus called Spirit “*another Counselor*” ([John 14:16](#))
 - a. John’s image is of Jesus pleading our case before the Father in heaven.
 - b. We need a lawyer, an advocate to plead our case because we are guilty.
- B. Remember, John’s false teachers were claiming that they were not guilty.
1. People today make the same claim in the same basic two basic ways—
 - a. **Without Sin:** I’m a good person; I do my best (*Denial of basic sin nature*)
 - b. **Haven’t Sinned:** I’m not be perfect, but I’m no sinner (*compared to other*)
 2. What BOTH approaches share in common is they don’t take sin seriously.
 - a. Philosophic system of John’s false teachers claimed sin was no problem
 - b. We just ACT like sin is no real problem—after all, nobody is perfect!
- C. But if we do take our sin very seriously, then we have a HUGE problem
1. If we do take sin seriously, then it is easy to be overwhelmed by imperfection
 - a. John wants us to know that sin is real, but we have an advocate with God
 - b. Sin matters, but we have Counselor/Friend vouching for us before God
 - c. We don’t come to God because we have holiness— we have **connections**
 2. I suppose that I have mentioned at some point that Tressa was at Super Bowl
 - a. After game, she was on the field with all the craziness and the confetti.
 - 1) Big burley security guys were posted to keep people off the field
 - 2) Tank met her at the gate to vouch for her, “*She’s with me*”
 - b. That’s what we have in heaven—Jesus vouching for us before the God!
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III. Jesus as Our Sacrifice (1 John 2:2) What Kind of Sacrifice?

- A. KJV/NASB use the word “*propitiation*” which implies an *appeasement*.
1. Problem with pagan gods was that they were perpetually grumpy
 - a. The propitiation offering was a sacrifice to that appease wrath of gods.
 - b. Before sailing, you poured cup of wine into the sea to appease Poseidon
 2. The word “propitiation” stresses Jesus as appeasing righteous wrath of God
 - a. We don’t turn aside God’s righteous judgment; Jesus did at the cross
 - b. Paul makes a point about God wrath and God’s grace in Eph 2:3-5
- B. So the RSV uses the word “*expiation*” which stresses *satisfaction* (note in NASB)
1. The idea here is of compensation for a wrong as in “*I demand satisfaction!*”
 - a. Dictionary uses the illustration, “*I didn’t get satisfaction from the store*”
 - b. But “*I demand satisfaction*” was preface to a duel. *It demanded blood!*
 2. In the same way, the blood of Christian is the satisfaction for our sin debt.
 - a. J.W. Roberts: Emphasis not on wrath of offended, but the offense of guilty
 - b. *Expiation* stressed that the guilt of sin was satisfied by the cross of Jesus.
 - c. So emphasis isn’t on the **penalty for sin** but on God’s **payment for sin**.
 3. **Problem:** Neither *propitiation* nor *expiation* mean much in modern English!
- C. Newer translations use “*atoning sacrifice*” (NIV), “*sacrifice that atones*” (NLT).
1. That make much sense in English—Jesus paid our price (Heb 9:27-28)
 - a. Unlike the OT sacrifices, Jesus offered Himself one time for all.
 - b. He came once to sacrifice Himself; He comes again to bring salvation.
 2. Jesus offered Himself on the cross as God’s atoning sacrifice (Rom 3:25-26)
 - a. Cross demonstrates God’s righteousness— shows God’s justice.
 - b. It also says something about His wrath— what a high price was paid!
 3. How many of you saw *Passion of the Christ* in a theater when it came out?
 - a. Was your experience like mine? I was in a full theater and felt mostly alone.
 - 1) Nobody talked or got up to leave (theaters lost money on concessions).
 - 2) After it was over, people just sat there in silence—no conversation.
 - b. Why were we so stunned? Violence and gore? Because He did it for us!
 - c. May argue over propitiation vs expiation— we dare not miss the point!

IV. Conclusion

- A. Jesus is our Advocate who vouches for us and Sacrifice who pays our price
 - 1. What we could never hope to do on our own, Jesus does for us in his death
 - 2. We must be careful not to miss the point—point is to obey (**1 John 2:3-6**)
 - a. John began with “*I write this to you so that you will not sin*” (**2:1**)
 - b. It’s easy to hear this message of grace and think obedience is optional
 - 1) Jesus us my advocate to vouch for me; he paid the price as my sacrifice
 - 2) The deal is already done, so it really doesn’t matter how we live
 - c. He says, “*Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*” (**2:6**)
 - 3. But to seriously obey God, we must know we have that advocate with God
 - a. Why did Paul call himself “*the worst*” of all sinners? (**1 Tim 1:15**)
 - 1) He honestly felt that way as he looked at his life; he took sin seriously.
 - 2) More seriously you take obedience, more seriously you take your flaws
 - b. The only way Paul could function is by seeing God’s grace (**1 Cor 15:10**)
By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.
 - 4. We must take obedience seriously, thus we must see our Advocate with God
- B. Martin Luther as a young monk was once obsessed with his sinfulness
 - 1. No matter what he did, he could not accept God forgiveness
 - a. He would stay in confession for 6 hours, wearing out his confessors
 - b. Confessor said, “God is not angry with you: you who are angry with God”
 - c. Luther took sin seriously, but guilt paralyzed his ability to live for God
 - 2. Luther finally began to understand God’s grace and the freedom that gives us
 - a. He came to see that it is by His stripes that we are healed—grace thru faith
 - b. In fact, his guilt and agony over sin was a lack of faith in God’s forgiveness
 - c. He didn’t have to agonize over sin, Jesus did that for him. He said—
To diagnose smallpox you do not have to probe each pustule, nor do you heal each separately
 - 3. Understanding grace frees us to obey God— not FROM the need to obey
 - a. Grace means that obedience becomes POSSIBLE, not less important!
 - b. We don’t have to be perfect—perfection is found only in Jesus
 - c. But to follow Jesus, we must as John says “*walk as Jesus walked*” (**2:6**)
- C. That is the call this morning— look to our Advocate and walk like He walked.