

# Studies in 1 John-01 1 John 1:1-2:2

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores the themes of fellowship, sin, and the advocacy of Christ in 1 John, emphasizing the importance of walking in the light.*

**Duration:** 38:43

**Scripture:** 1 John 1:1

**Topics:** "Incarnation Of Christ", "Salvation Through Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the mystery and wonder of God becoming man in the form of Jesus Christ. He highlights the concept of fellowship as a key theme in the chapter and addresses Christian believers. The preacher acknowledges the sinful nature of humanity and the need for salvation through Jesus' death. He shares a personal experience of realizing the depth of his own sinfulness and the gratitude for Christ's sacrifice for both his actions and his inherent sinful nature. The sermon concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus as Savior and a reminder of the gospel message present throughout the entire Bible.

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## Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to 1 John? I thought in our meetings together now we would take a look at John 1 and we'll read the first chapter and two verses of the second chapter. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled concerning the word of life, the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us. That which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you also may have fellowship with us.

Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. This is the message which we have heard from him and declared to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin.

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 the whole world. Well, as you know, John wrote the gospel, the gospel of John, and he wrote three epistles.

His purpose in writing the gospel. He said many other things that Jesus did on earth. If they were all written in books, the world itself wouldn't be able to contain the books.

These are written, I believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing hath life in his name. In other words, that gospel was written to tell you how to be saved. The first epistle was written to tell you how you can know you're saved.

Keep that in mind. The purpose of John's first epistle was blasphemy. Now, I think it helps a little to know of the background of this.

Written with a certain... ..of the early days of the church. They had wormed their way into local churches. And they professed to have superior knowledge.

That's what the word Gnostic means, the Greek word Gnosis means. And their attitude was, well, what you Christians have is okay, but you never... They thought that knowledge was more important than virtue. They believed that the Christ that is baptism, Christ didn't die, but is the Christ, the identity.

And if you don't believe that Jesus is the Christ, you've got the spirit of antichrist. It's very emphatic. What is interesting to me, and the Mormons as a whole, it's very hard to catalog all the things the Gnostics taught because... And that's an interesting thing to me.

Truth remains the same. Error. If you have a system of error, you've always got to be revising it and adding to it.

Added to the Mary, a Mary ascending. Again, you find it brought out in 2 John, who goes beyond. We should be very grateful for this letter because it answers.

And he goes right at work from the very beginning. He says, that which was from the beginning. He's obviously talking about this, what I call the beginningless beginning.

And yet that's the beginning that you're having. What do you think it is here? That which was from the beginning. Well, I think it's speaking about the eternal.

Say, why do you think that? Because down in verse 2 it says, that eternal life which was with the sufferer involved, beginning which we, the we there, with our eyes, which we have looked on. First of all, which we have heard, the ear, the hearing. They heard him speaking words which no other man had ever spoken.

Which we have seen with our eyes. Sight. Which we have looked upon.

What's the difference between seeing, we gaze on. And it says, our hands have handled. Our hands have handled concerning the word of life.

Of course, the word of life there is the Lord Jesus Christ. One of his names. The life was manifested.

That existed in heaven before. But it was manifested in his incarnation. When he came down to the earth.

Lying in the manger, the life was manifested. And we have seen, again, and bear witness, and declare to you, that eternal life which was with the sufferer. That which we have seen and heard.

Notice that, how he brings the changes on this. Lying in the manger, the union of fear. Very real to us.

That which we have seen and heard, we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us. Fellowship is probably the key word in this first chapter. Fellowship.

What is fellowship? Holding. It means abiding. With us.

And our fellowship is with the Father. And with his Son. The boy may be full.

His light. There is no darkness at all. Not a shade of darkness.

In him. Absolutely perfect. In all his ways.

I think that's wonderful. God is light. And God is love.

He's going to bring that out later on in the epistle. God is light. And God is love.

Now, if we say that we have fellowship, this is going to be a very common theme in this epistle. If we say. There's a difference between professing to be a Christian, and really being a professing Christian.

There's a difference between saying you have fellowship and having fellowship. Those are key words in the epistle. If we say.

If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. You can't do that. Is there something hidden in my life? Is there something under the counter? Is there something I've never dragged out into the open before God had confessed it and forsook it? Forget it.

God doesn't mean I'm not saved, but in this case it means that fellowship is broken. You say, well, what's so bad about that? What's broken fellowship? That puts the believer in a very bad position when his fellowship with God is broken. You say, what happens? Well, first of all, I think in many ways the Bible becomes a closed book for you.

I think your prayer life definitely is hindered, isn't it? Your prayer life is hindered. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Guidance.

You can't expect the guidance of God if you're not walking in fellowship. The meat will be guided and judged. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.

Lean not to thine understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him. He shall direct thy path.

If you fulfill the conditions, he'll guide you. But if there's sin in your life, unconfess, he won't. And then, of course, your testimony.

If there's sin in my life as a believer, forget it. Just people say, what you say and what you are don't match. Or what you say, what you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say.

And an awful lot of damage is done to the cause of the Lord by people who are aggressive witnesses for Jesus. But that's what he's saying here. We lie and do nothing.

If we walk in the light as he is in the light. He doesn't say he walks in the light, he says he's in the light. That's where he is all the time.

No question of getting out of the light as far as he's concerned. But for us to walk in the light means to walk with everything in the open, everything clear, nothing between my soul and the Savior. Not of this world's delusive dreams.

If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. What does that mean? Well, it means that if I daily and hourly, whenever I'm conscious that sin has come into my life, if I get on my knees and confess it to the Lord, all forgiveness is based upon the blood of Christ, isn't it? And so there's a continual cleansing of the blood of Christ.

At times I confess my sin, the sin is forgiven, and it's forgiven on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Now he's going to zero in on that whole subject of sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. In verse 8 it says we have no sin.

In verse 10 it says we have not sin. There's a difference. The first refers to the nature.

The second refers to the act. There's a big difference. If we say we have no sin, verse 8, that means that we don't have a polluted nature.

This is very real to me, these two verses. I thank God for these two verses because I was brought up, as I've often told many of you, I was brought up in a very strict home. And I can honestly say that as far as terrible outward acts of sin, you know what I mean, gross sin, she raised us with a thing from the shows, playing cards in the home.

When I was 18 years of age, God, by the Holy Spirit of God, gave me a terrible revelation of what I was in. He showed me that what I was inside was far worse than anything I'd ever done. That's what John is speaking about here, what we are inside.

That's when I was in a hurry to get saved. That's what brought conviction to me. And I thank God today.

Christ died for what I am. Two sides of that, of his death for us. He died for that rotten, evil nature that I am.

Well, it's wonderful, isn't it? So if I deny, if anybody denies that he has that nature, I was thinking this morning when I was reading this this morning. A man walks into the schoolhouse in Scotland, in Dunblane, Scotland. He opens fire and kills, what, 14, 16 children and the teacher.

I mean, what a mindless thing, nature that he had. I read all of these terrible things that happen. I read about the Holocaust and everything on that.

Any sin in the book. That's really, mostly the fear of punishment that keeps most people from, and when they lose that fear of punishment, all hell breaks out in the world. So that was wonderful for me to realize that when the Lord Jesus died, he died for peace, didn't it? If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

It's just a vain delusion. People say, well, what is sin anyway? What is sin? Read the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle. You'll find out what sin is.

It's all sin. And we got to point the accusing finger. I can say, you know, I've never committed adultery.

No. But have you ever looked at a woman with lust? Have you ever coveted? So angry with a person that you hated that person. The seed of murder.

Guess what we mean when we come to this verse is that the capacity for evil in every human heart, if we confess our sin, this is a wonderful, a wonderful verse. If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Notice it doesn't say if we beg him for forgiveness.

It doesn't say that. You don't have to get down on your knees and plead with God to forgive you. All you have to do is, if you're a believer, just end confession with the idea of forsaking.

You don't confess with the idea that you're going to go on in that sin, but you confess it with the determination to make a break with that sin. You confess our sin. Sin.

He is faithful. How is he faithful? Well, he promised to forgive, and he's faithful to his promise. If he says it, he'll do it.

He's faithful and just. What does that mean? He's righteous. It means he has a righteous way of forgiving our sins.

Why? Because that gives God the Father a righteous way. He doesn't condone my sin. He doesn't wink at my sin.

He doesn't pass over my sin. The penalty for my sin was paid there at the cross of Calvary, and God can righteously forgive those sins now. Forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That's wonderful. There's a difference between forgiving and cleansing, isn't there? Forgiving has to do with the penalty of sin. Cleansing has to do with the pollution of sin.

I like that. Forgiveness has to do with the penalty of sin. Cleansing has to do with the pollution of sin.

Then he says, if we say we have not sinned, this refers to acts of sin, as I said. Not the nature so much as the act. If we make him a liar and his word is not in us, he says we have sinned.

All have sinned. We've come short of the glory of God. There are dozens of scriptures that says we have sinned.

We shouldn't have to be reminded of the fact. So, this certainly disproves any thought of sinless perfection. There are some dear Christian people that believe in sinless perfection.

They base it a lot on chapter 3 in this same book. So we'll see that when we come to it. My little children.

Verse 1 of chapter 2. You can tell he's writing to believers here. My little children. And that means all believers.

Sometimes in this book when he uses the word children, it means children younger in the faith. Here it means all believers. My little children.

These things write I unto you that you may not sin. This is God's will for his people that we should not sin, that we may not sin. I like the old King James.

It says, these things write unto you that you sin not. Supposing it is said that you sin as little as possible. Well, God would no longer excuse sin.

He's going to say, oh, well, they're nice people, those people. And when I read that in the Bible, I'm tempted to say, doesn't he know I have to sin? The language, Bible, don't misunderstand me. I do sin.

I sin every day in thought, word, and deed. But I mustn't say I have to sin, because, look, when that temptation comes, if I say I have to sin, it means the Holy Spirit of God is not powerful. The Holy Spirit is given to us.

He's our paraclete. He comes alongside to help in that moment. I can honestly say as I stand here, I do sin.

But there's never been a time when I asked the Lord to save me from sin. The only time I sin is when I want to. Thank God, largely, he took the want to out of me.

My little children, these things are right in you. I mean, that's God's will. But God makes provision.

What a wonderful book the Bible is. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ.

Now, you read the first part of the verse. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. An advocate there, well, the closest word I guess we have is a lawyer.

The word is paraclete. It means one who comes alongside to help. I've used the illustration of a nurse in the hospital.

You're there. You need help. Push the button.

It also means that the Lord Jesus is in heaven now pleading your cause. You're a believer. He's there pleading your cause.

Satan comes before God day and night, accusing the brethren in a very real way. We have an advocate. I like that.

We have an advocate with the Father. You know what that teaches? It teaches that even when a Christian sins, it doesn't say we have an advocate with God. He is God.

Put that into the emphasis here. Even when you sin, if you're a believer, you have an advocate with the Father, which teaches that sin breaks fellowship, but it doesn't break relationship. When you're born again, you're born a child of God.

You faith in the Lord Jesus and you can't undo a birth. Once you're born again, nothing can ever change you. So it's marvelous the perfection with which the Word of God is written.

It's beautiful. We have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous.

Not all lawyers are righteous. In fact, I get kind of a kick out of it. You mustn't vote for 203 or something.

And this kind of attitude today, well, if the lawyers are against it, I'm going to vote for it. There's kind of an anti-lawyer sentiment in California at the moment. The Father's the judge.

His son is the lawyer. He himself is the propitiation presence. When you study the Bible, you get used to some different words, don't you? That's not a word that's used commonly in the world today, propitiation.

Well, just let me give you a synonym for it. It's not a complete definition, but when you think of propitiation, if you think of the word satisfaction, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary satisfied God as far as all my sins were concerned. His sacrifice was sufficient.

God is completely satisfied with Jesus. He himself is the propitiation for our sins. The satisfaction, not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world.

You say, well, that means all the world is saved. No. No, the satisfaction has been made, but you've got to accept this.

All that was necessary for your salvation was accomplished at the cross of Calvary and in the resurrection of Christ. That doesn't save people automatically. God doesn't take people to heaven who don't want to be there, does he? No, he doesn't.

And so you have to come by a definite act of faith. There has to be a time in your life when you say, this is it. And when you say, Lord Jesus, what you say about me is true.

I am a guilty sinner. I don't deserve anything but hell. But I believe you died for me, and I believe that your work was the satisfaction for all my sins.

And I take you now. And when you do that, you know what happens? It's a new birth. You're born again.

What a wonderful book this is. By the will of God, we're going to go on from verse 3 of chapter 2 next time. And our souls will be fed.

And there's enough gospel in every passage for anyone who's not saved.

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