

My Dear Jesus

1 John #2

1 John 2:1-2

For He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. And he is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead, so that in everything he might have supremacy.

In my hands this morning is one of my most prized possessions. It's the Bible I've preached from often since I received it well over 25 years ago at my ordination in Houma, Louisiana. There is no other Bible on earth like it because it has my name in it. It is mine. Bibles will be published and printed long after I'm gone. But this one will not. It is mine. This Bible I have in my hands this morning is not only one of my most prized possessions. It's also one of my most dear possessions. It's pages curl from the tape marks it has inherited over the years from the sermon notes inside. It has pen markings. It has food markings. It has Diet Coke markings. It smells like life, and I still use it after all these years – in spite of all the advances in handheld technology available to preachers – because it gives life. It's the Bible of my affection. It is dear. It's not only one of my most prized and dear possessions, it is also the B.I.B.L.E. It has 66 books with over 40 authors. It was compiled on 3 different continents over a period of 4000 years in 3 different languages. But most importantly, My Dear Bible has a feature no other book on earth has: 456 prophecies in the first section of it that speak the Lamb of God who will take away my sin, the first of which was made over 4000 years before this Lamb ever walked the earth. It's My Dear Bible. And it testifies about My Dear Jesus. 25 years ago.

When last we gathered at the river, we opened Our Dear Bibles to the rubber meets the road book in the Scriptures that defines for us what professing to follow Our Dear Jesus is all about. It was written by John the Apostle. He wrote it for three reasons: (1) To remind us that not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a Christian. (2) To tell us what a Christian as biblically defined really is. (3) To assure those who really are one that they have eternal life. I want to tell you today that assurance of faith stops and starts with having the right view of Our Dear Jesus. We have to get Jesus right in order for everything else to follow. What makes him dear to John, dear to me, and dear to you is that Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor (my dear children, I write this to you that you will not sin). He is our Righteous Advocate (But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate before the Father – Jesus, the Righteous One). He is our Sufficient Sacrifice (He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins). He is our Ark of Assurance (We have come to know him if we keep his commands). My dear Jesus. Your dear Jesus. John's dear Jesus. Because we are His dear children. Please turn with me to 1 John 2:1-6.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.⁴ Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God^[a] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him.⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

1. Wonderful Counselor (2:1a)

- **Kindergarten Education:** (1) When kids are in kindergarten, the most important lesson they learn is how to read. (2) Right under it is learning how to correctly diagnose the teacher's vocal inflection and act accordingly. (3) If the teacher says in a gentle voice: "Ok children, listen closely," they look up and listen, usually with a smile. If the teacher uses a higher decibel, they look down and say "oh no. We are in trouble." (4) If the teacher says it somewhere in the middle, they know what's about to come from the teacher's mouth is very important for them to put into practice.
- **All Three Words are Important to Put into Practice:** (1) "My" – A term of possession. You belong to Jesus. He is the Shepherd. You are one of his sheep. And the sheep hear his voice. (2) "Dear" – A term of affection. You not only belong to Jesus, but you are also precious in his sight – fearfully and wonderfully made – and he loves you more than you will ever know. (3) "Children" – "to as many as have received him, he gave the right to become children of God, children not born of flesh, but of spirit.
- **But, Wait a Minute, Derrick. These Look like the Words of John, Not Jesus.** (2) John's audience was primarily Jewish Christians scattered throughout the various portions of the Roman Empire after the temple was destroyed. (3) Those three words "My Dear Children" would have brought to mind one book from the OT compiled by Solomon that was written from the perspective of a father to a child: Proverbs. It concerns what it means to be wise vs what it means to be a fool. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, fools despise knowledge and instruction. (4) Remember that John is writing to guard his audience against Gnosticism. There were people calling themselves Christians who said they had secret knowledge that commoners don't have. And the salvation of your soul depended on you believing what they have to say. And they said Jesus didn't come in the flesh. He only came in the spirit. (5) Consequently, just as God spoke through Solomon to all of Israel, Jesus is speaking to us through John telling us all that we would be a fool to listen and follow the advice of anyone who causes us to sin. "My. Dear. Children. I, Jesus, and by extension John. Write to you that you will not sin. That's wonderful counsel from the Wonderful Counselor.
- **App:** "My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life. They will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand" (Jn 10:27-28). The question for you is this: Is your belief in Jesus great enough that you will follow when you hear his voice?

2. Righteous Advocate (2:1b)

- **Perry Mason:** (1) “Objection, your Honor. Incompetent, irrelevant, immaterial, and improper questioning in that it takes up matters not part of the direct examination.” (2) That quote almost inspired me to be a lawyer, but God had other plans. (3) It came from the greatest TV court room advocate of all time: Perry Mason. (4) Jesus Christ, friend, is our great advocate, not in front of a television camera, but in front of the Father in heaven.
- **We Call Jesus Many Names in Our Lives:** (1) We call him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Our Prophet, Our Priest, Our King, Our Lord, and Our Savior. But our “advocate” is not a name we call him often. But it’s the first proper name John calls Jesus in 1st John. And what a name it is! (2) It’s a legal term. In the ancient world, an advocate functioned much like a modern defense attorney but with one key difference: The advocate pleaded the defendant’s case before one judge, not a jury composed of peers. The judge had the power to condemn or acquit. (3) But here is the kicker: Jesus’ clients are not innocent. They are guilty. And the judge, the Father in heaven, has every reason in the world to declare them guilty and impose sentence. (4) So, what this advocate, Jesus Christ, did instead was use his own righteousness and innocence to plead for us, the criminals. (5) But it gets even better, because Jesus used his righteousness and innocence to plead our case, instead of giving us what we deserve, the Judge has not only spared us, but he has also done what an earthly judge would never do for a guilty criminal: He’s adopted us into his family. That’s our Jesus. He is our advocate.
- **App:** “If God is for us, who can be against us.” Since he is our advocate, those feelings of guilt and remorse that you live with over things that have been washed in the blood, don’t come from our advocate. They come from our adversary. So make sure you are listening to the voice of the advocate, not the adversary in your life.

3. Sufficient Sacrifice (2:2)

- **That’s One of Those Three Dollar Words:** (1) In case you haven’t noticed, preachers can sometimes be guilty of using what folks in Houma, La call “three dollar” words. (2) They are words like expiation, propitiation, and atonement, that they’ve learned to incorporate into their lexicon to make them sound smarter than they really are. (3) When I first started preaching, I used to hear from every Boudreaux and Thibodeaux in the congregation that I used one of those “three dollar” words again.
- **John Uses a Three-Dollar Word in v2 That’s So Rare, It Should Be Revalued at \$77,777 Dollars:** (1) Some translations say: “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (2) Others say: “He is the propitiation for our sins.” (3) A few even say: “he is the expiation for our sins.” (4) I’d say the word John used to motivate translators to find an English equivalent is a three-dollar word, wouldn’t you? (5) It’s so rare that it used here and only here in the NT. But oh, what a word it is. It is the word *hilasmos*. It means that Jesus removes our guilt for our sin (expiation). But that’s not all, he satisfies the wrath of God for our sin (propitiation). For, like the song says: “on the cross that Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied. But that’s not all. He also covers over our sin (He atones).
- **App:** He is the *hilasmos* for our sins. He removed our guilt. He satisfied the wrath of God by being the object of it himself. And he covers over it. It reaches to the highest mountain. It stretches to the lowest valley. Oh, the blood that gives us strength from day to day shall never lose its power.

4. Ark of Assurance (2:3-6)

- **No Pegs on the Outside:** (1) If you read the story of Noah’s Ark, you’ll see a lot of instructions: (a) Build it with this type of wood, Noah; (b) make sure you get every kind of animal, Noah. (2) But you will never find God giving instructions to put a peg on the outside of the ark to hang onto. Salvation isn’t dependent on our holding on to the peg on the outside of the ark. It’s dependent on Jesus putting us inside the ark. John concludes this passage by telling us how we can know we are in the ark.
- **Inside the Ark vs Trying to Find a Peg:** (1) You evaluating your eternal destination is so important to John that he introduces us a phrase in v3 he’s going to come back to in various forms throughout the book: “We know that we have come to know him if.” (2) That’s important because the “Gnostics” got their name from the Greek word for knowledge. John takes the word back from them and phrases it in this way: “We know (in the present; today; here right now) that we have come to know him (that moment in the past) if...we keep his commands.
- **How Do We Know in the Present:** Keeping his commands, just as Jesus did. Keeping his commands will always be expressed in love for Christ as John and the rest of the apostles defined Him and a love for your brothers and sisters. Those commands are not burdensome. That’s how you know.
- **These Commands in Light of Who Jesus is:** (1) Has a negative reality: “Whoever says ‘I know him but does not do what he commands is a liar. (2) And a positive reality: Anyone who obeys his word, love for God is made complete in them. (3) And an exemplified reality: “Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.” In other words, Jesus obeyed. So do we. That’s how we know we know him.
- **App:** The great Billy Sunday said: “There are 256 names given in the Bible for the Lord Jesus Christ, and I suppose that was because He was infinitely beyond all that any one name could express.” That’s the Jesus who calls us to believe. That’s the Jesus who is our Counselor, our Advocate, our Expiation, our Propitiation, our Atonement, and the One who calls us to believe, to trust, to obey so that we will “know.” That’s Our Dear Jesus.