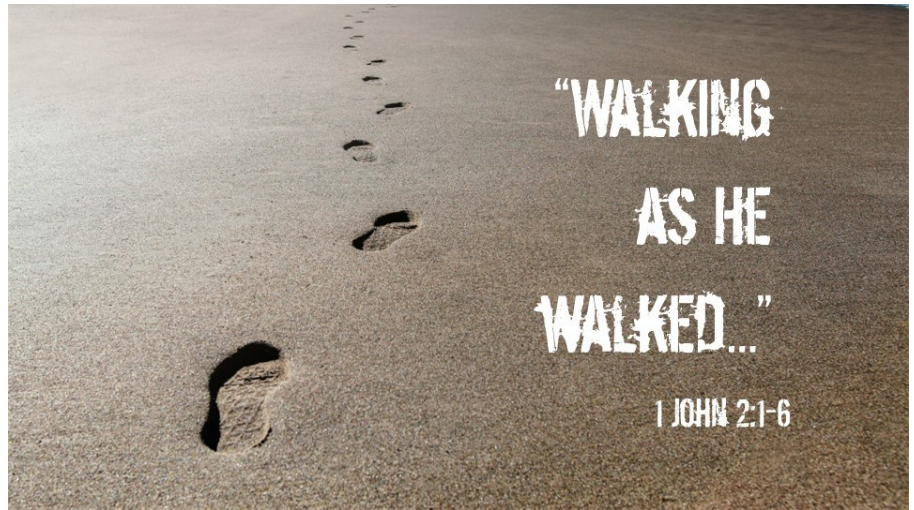


## "Walking as He Walked..."

1 John 2:1-6 on February 8, 2026  
by Pastor Tim Dodson at  
Believers City Church,  
Menomonie, Wi

**1 John 2:1-6** (1) My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (2) And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but

also for the whole world. (3) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. (4) He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (5) But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. (6) He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.



**"My little child"** literally means *"my born ones."* John is now speaking to those who have been "born" in Christ. So, at least in the immediate, John is talking *to* and *about* those who are genuinely born again...and perhaps those who believe themselves to be but are not. That's important as we proceed now into the second chapter of 1 John.

John begins this chapter saying that he is writing this letter because he desires, *quite simply*, that the readers...*that's even us today*, ...*actually do not sin*. It's interesting that we can so often fixate on all the high concepts and deep doctrines that we are apt to believe are critical in living out our faith, when John seems to focus on a rather simplistic and unpretentious concept: *"Stop sinning."* Reading this letter, it does not take us long to gather that John had little patience for the haughty religionist who would feign position and perfection. However, it is clear as we march on, that he also has little tolerance for those who want to claim redemption and salvation membership and yet still engage in sin and the practices of the world.

Despite the rather blunt approach, John doesn't seem to be overtly accusatory or judgmental. He seems to be addressing the *issue of sin* as much as the actual *sinner*...and pointing the way ahead rather than condemning those who have fallen to the side. However, it is clear that John is at the same time cutting no slack. How rare and even refreshing that is in an age where the real issues get lost in the coddling of fragile sensibilities. John clearly established in chapter 1, that there will never be any of us in this life that will walk in sinless perfection. But that's not the whole story. For the fact is, any sin...even a single offense...is not a light issue or something to "let slide." He isn't saying "I am writing all these things to you so you will sin very little or moreover, *"as little as you can."* Thus may we 'keep on the table' the reality (from our last gathering over this letter) that God's standard is *perfection*. The grace we receive for falling short of such is provided through Jesus Christ and the cross. Without such, we would be held to the personal and practical status of perfection in order to ever come into God's presence. Which means, you and I would have a serious problem.

With God, there is no accommodation for sin. Ever. He calls upon us to "be holy as I am holy." And such is hardly a passing request or something to merely aspire to. Know this: Every sin is an offense to God. Every sin an affront to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We are given no room to wiggle. No compromise. No excuse. No 'special dispensation'...no special 'permission.' There never is a 'good reason' to sin. When it comes to sin, the

'line is drawn.' There is no allowance for sin. There is however, a perfect provision in case we "miss the mark." Again, there is no need to sin, no right to sin, no compromise with sin, no license to sin, **but there is a provision in case we do.**

When we *do* fall short of that perfect standard, God is clearly quick to come to the rescue...verse 1 says He is like our attorney on retainer. He is willing and able to forgive, but moreover even to *restore*, when there is confession and repentance on our part. But let us not see such rescue as somehow making this process easy and without ramifications. Our actions...*and His*, do not change the *nature* of sin! The sin doesn't change, nor the magnitude of the offense. What happens *when* we sin will affect our relationship with the King, for good or bad. God's desire in such situations is never to merely "erase the offense from the books." He aims to take that error...that *fall*...the *shortcoming*, and turn it into a "teaching moment" to make us leaner, meaner, and more faithful. His aim is to take us to a place where we grow stronger and able to endure temptation more successfully. Always forward...always upward. Always toward a greater degree of maturity. We aren't to drive crazy because our cars are equipped with seat belts and airbags, so we'll be ok crashing into things. But they are there in case we have an accident and aren't we all so very glad they are!

John is telling us that we must never allow ourselves to become apathetic and complacent about sin, as if it is no "big deal." We cannot treat God's forgiveness in such situations like it's a "get out of jail free card." We must not drift toward a passive approach and think we can just 'confess' to God and we're "good to go." It's easy over time to begin to have too low a view of sin. Such occurs invariably because we have too low a view of the holiness of God and the effect of sin on the Father's heart ...not to mention the grieving of His Spirit!

**"...if anyone sins."** John uses the **aorist tense** here, which leads us to see that he is picturing the act of sin as an isolated one, not as one's normal state. Such is often innocuously described in Christian circles as a 'stumble.' Yet if you are in fact consistently physically stumbling and falling ...over and over again... not only are you going to be perpetually black and blue, but eventually you would have to consider that maybe there is a more serious issue to consider besides being clumsy and you would go see a doctor. But is that our reaction when we find ourselves spiritually face down again and again?

**"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."**

Propitiation is a big biblical term which essential means "payment." It means to be "a sacrifice, a covering, a satisfaction, an appeasement" for sin. The fact is, you and I owed a great debt, and Jesus paid that debt and satisfied an unfathomable standard of holiness for which to approach our Creator. Notice the ever-important last words in that verse, *"not for ours only (the sins of those born again) but also for the whole world."* That means the payment has been made and the door for all humanity to go to God is wide open.

So much for the Calvinist belief that Jesus died and paid for only those who come to Him, and further, those who come to Him are not only uniquely chosen by God but some are uniquely chosen to go to hell without the chance and option for redemption. Let's set down these church doctrines and crazy belief systems and just see what the Bible says: **"He Himself is the payment for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."** Let's just go with what the Bible says, ok?

Now some will however take the next leap and ask "if he died as payment for the sins of the whole world," then how can some be lost eternally and bound for hell? Certainly I would tend to ask that same question, but not for the same reason as others. This, however, is a crucial question, because many folks will take a stance that because of that act of Christ, everyone will be saved in the end, or at least that we are saved through intellectual belief alone...that nothing is required on our part. If that were true, scripture could then be boiled down to a one

verse version; *this verse alone!* No, what remains is our participation in such, or *the lack thereof!* What remains is our **response**. We must enter “through that narrow door.”

**Luke 13:23-27** *Someone asked him, “Lord, will only a few be saved?” He replied, “Work hard to enter the narrow door to God’s Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. When the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Lord, open the door for us!’ But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will say, ‘But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ And he will reply, ‘I tell you, I don’t know you or where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil.’*

As this passage in Luke tells us, as well as verse 3 of our text herein, we must actually "know" Him. We can of course easily **say** that we know Him. But according to scripture we **prove** we do indeed know Him by "keeping His commandments." Thus any attempt to "wash our hands" of personal and individual responsibility and/or participation according to verse 4 is to reject scripture and we make ourselves into liars.

John chapter 15 speaks into this issue in depth. It calls upon us to "abide" in Him. Such means we both **remain in proximity** and **remain faithful**. We, *the redeemed*, are the branch that is “grafted onto the vine.” And having done so, we are clearly called then to "produce fruit." It is a scriptural fact that if we are connected, we *will* produce fruit. It is not merely an issue of struggle, strain...through the “sweat of our brow.” This account is further amplified in the fact that John goes on to tell us that any branch that fails to produce is "*taken away*," ultimately to be "*gathered up and burned*."

So, in this issue lies both life and death. It would eternally behoove us to not allow ourselves to be deceived by those who would try to tell us differently. James 1:15-16 says that "*...sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*" Verse 5 of our text reminds us that "*...whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*"

Verse 6 goes even further to call upon us that claim to love Christ to "walk as He walked." Can there be a more clear and yes *daunting* verse in all of scripture when it comes to the living out of our faith? There are those who claim you do not have to be a disciple in order to be a Christian. What then are we to do with this verse? The word disciple and the person of a disciple in scripture (from the Greek *mathetes*) is a learner, pupil, and dedicated follower who submits to a teacher's authority and adopts their way of life. A Christian disciple is one who follows, trusts, and imitates Jesus Christ, obeying Him as Master over their living.

A disciple of Christ isn't merely a student of facts but is actually transformed by Christ, striving to become like him. Discipleship involves placing Jesus first in all things, which may require sacrifice and abandoning old ways of living. A Christ disciple is an individual who adheres to Jesus' teachings and actively participates in his mission to make more disciples...the ultimate goal being to mimic the character, love, and compassion of Jesus in daily life.

All of that denotes a principle of commitment and, by default, mandates dedication and a living priority in 'all things God.' What does having the love of God perfected in us mean, unless it means quite simply that His love has found root and is reproducing. To be a Christian is to be a disciple. To be a disciple is to seek in all ways to "walk as He walked." Stop for a moment and consider the impact of this description and what it does ...how it effects, the over-all pool of Christendom. Suddenly it is clear... as John seems to be driving home, that the field of authentic reborn followers of Christ just got a whole lot smaller.

So, “walk as He walked.” Does that mean we are to put on a robe and sandals and live as homeless evangelists? If so, what did Paul mean when he said in 1Corinthians 7:24 "*Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called?*" And why did Jesus not let the healed demonic do so, the one who had wandered the tombs as a crazy man until Jesus freed Him? In fact, Jesus told him rather to "*Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.*" No, the answer is not to mimic the **physical** lifestyle of Jesus, but rather to take upon ourselves the spiritual walk...the kingdom priority and call, the 'sold-out' living of Jesus. And, for sure, to “count the cost” of following Him as a disciple, because there is ...by implication as well as practical experience, a very real and daily cost. For John, there was no half-way...no compromise, and no excuse.

The secret of victory over sin is found in the phrase “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7). To walk in the light means to be open and honest, to be sincere. To be living in transparency. To be “without guile.” John says that obedience to God’s Word is proof of our love for Him. There are three motives for obedience. We can obey because we have to, because we need to, or because we want to. “Baby Christians” must constantly be warned or rewarded. Mature Christians listen to God’s Word and obey it simply because they love Him! Christ is not only the “Propitiation”...the *Payment*, for our sins (1 John 2:2)...He is more than the Advocate who represents us before God (1John 2:1)...He is also the perfect Pattern for our daily living.

So let us in closing take a deep breath and ask that "elephant-in-the-room" question: **"Is that me? Am I really seeking to walk as Jesus walked? Or am I in fact, simply a church-goer for which there is no special credit?"**