

THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST

By Charles Mwewa

“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,” (1 John 2:1)

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Introduction

Apostle John, in his old age, had come to understand the real meaning of love. He had also come to a critical realization that sinning is inevitable, but with good news. Those who sin have an advocate in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is humanity’s quintessential lawyer – who stands before God pleading for their weaknesses and sins. He is able to make and resolve every case that is brought before the Father on behalf of the humans. Unlike human attorneys (also known as lawyers or advocates), Jesus is also a witness in their defence. He lived, died, and lives again. This, in essence, means that He can vouch for them as the one who took away their sins and presented the evidence of His own blood before His Father, whom the Scriptures call, “The Great Judge.” In this sermon, we consider the following three points: The nature of Jesus’ advocacy; the frequency of Jesus’ advocacy; and the result of Jesus’ advocacy. The points will be discussed in that order before a conclusive application and a related prayer are made.

1. The Nature of Jesus’ Advocacy

God is the Judge: “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.”¹ There are four characteristics that every judge must possess: Objective-open-mindedness (not being biased); fairness; independence (an impartial judge);² and decisiveness. However, any judge who also adds righteousness to these qualities, is a rare gift in any justice system. God is said to be a righteous judge: “God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath every day.”³ This means that God cannot be bribed, and neither does He fall for human intrigues and innuendos.

The quality of righteousness in judgeship, also means that wrong will be punished and good will be rewarded. We know that God does not side with evil, and anyone who considers what is evil to be good is said to be cursed: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”⁴ And God does not change in regard to this: “I the LORD do not change.”⁵ This, essentially, means that when we sin, we must be punished. For there are only two possibilities – it is either we change and behave good to avert God’s wrath and punishment, or God changes and overlooks our evil.

Since, as established, God does not change, it remained that we changed and did good to be saved. However, we were incapable of doing good. God, to save humanity, did not change but He transformed Himself into a man.⁶ As a substitute man, He incurred God’s wrath on the Cross to save humanity: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you

¹ Isaiah 33:22

² See 1 Peter 1:17

³ Psalm 7:11

⁴ Isaiah 5:20

⁵ Malachi 3:6

⁶ See John 1:14 and Philippians 2:8 ff

have been healed.”⁷ The salvation, thus, secured, is total: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”⁸ But it requires positive acceptance for this gift to be effective. Those who reject God’s offer of salvation will still incur God’s wrath.⁹ Those who accept God’s free gift of salvation – or Jesus Christ – remain righteous before God because of the advocacy work of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit actioned process of sanctification.

With regards to sin, God’s wrath still burns. This quality makes God fearful: “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”¹⁰ And again, “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!”¹¹ However, the fear of God is also the basis of His mercy: “And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.”¹² In other words, those who fear, a *fearful* God, can also access His mercy. This balance is what has preserved God’s just rule for millennia. Like God, a good judge should have both wrath and love. Mercy has no value without wrath. Possessing only one without the other, makes justice a mockery.

The balance between wrath and love is called righteousness. God’s throne is founded on righteousness: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne.”¹³ This wrath/love combination of God’s throne, makes advocacy there a challenge for weak, immoral, and frail humanity. Only Jesus Christ possesses the requisite character and quality to advocate before the throne of God.

The thing that separated humanity from God was sin. Christ lived His entire earthly life without sin, yet God made Him sin: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”¹⁴ That simply means that Christ bore all our sins and that sin was dealt with once and for all. And yet, there was no sin found in Jesus: “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”¹⁵ There is just no sin in Him, but He never sinned as well: “Who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”¹⁶ He did not just sin, not because He had no opportunity to sin, He was tempted like us but He overcame all temptations: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”¹⁷

Thus, only Jesus is qualified to appear before a righteous God on our behalf. There is no accusation brought by Satan (accuser of the brethren)¹⁸ that can tilt the scale against man. And the reason is simple, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”¹⁹ The authority to represent those who are in Him, came from Jesus’ redemption work on the Cross: “Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is there to condemn us? For Christ Jesus, who died, and more than that was raised

⁷ 1 Peter 2:24; also see Hebrews 12:2 or Romans 5:8

⁸ 1 Peter 3:18

⁹ See John 3:16

¹⁰ Exodus 15:11

¹¹ Psalm 33:8

¹² Luke 1:50

¹³ Psalms 89:14

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21

¹⁵ 1 John 3:5

¹⁶ 1 Peter 2:22

¹⁷ Hebrews 4:15

¹⁸ Revelation 12:10

¹⁹ Romans 8:1

to life, is at the right hand of God— and He is interceding for us.”²⁰ Our lawyer in Heaven is Jesus Christ, and the authority to represent us was duly earned through His suffering, death and resurrection. No insinuations, no innuendos, no frivolity, and no accusatory oratory of Satan can win against Christ’s advocacy on our behalf.

2. The Frequency of Jesus’ Advocacy

The power and joy of Jesus’ advocacy rests on this verse: “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”²¹ The phrase, “lives to intercede for them,” indicates ministry. Jesus Christ’s ministry or vocation is that of a lawyer. That is the job He currently occupies in Heaven. The denotation in the present tense means that He does this frequently, basically, always. The Bible also says that He is at God’s right hand, “interceding for us.”²² This is denoted in the present-continuous tense – meaning that Jesus Christ undertakes this ministry continuously. He never takes a break; He never goes on vacation. He is always representing us.

3. The Result of Jesus’ Advocacy

There are numerous benefits or results of Jesus Christ advocating on our behalf. Only five will be offered in this discourse. First, Satan’s weapon against us fail: “No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”²³

Second, after Christ took over this duty in Heaven, no longer is Satan a convincing force against believers: “Then the angel showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan: ‘The LORD rebukes you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you! Is not this man a firebrand snatched from the fire?’ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy garments as he stood before the angel.”²⁴ Joshua did not have victory because he stood before God in his own filth. Not now, not anymore. Now, we stand before God through Christ. God sees Christ when we go before Him. Paul prayed, “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.”²⁵ Paul calls the people of God, a “family.” We are adopted into the family of God. We have now intrinsic authority.

Third, we now appear before God within the authority of Jesus Christ and of our membership in God’s family: “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”²⁶ We are no longer outsiders; we belong to the family of God, as such, we have privileges, rights, and authority.

²⁰ Romans 8: 33-34

²¹ Hebrews 7:25

²² Romans 8:34

²³ Isaiah 54:17; see also

²⁴ Zechariah 3:2

²⁵ Ephesians 3:14-15

²⁶ Luke 10:19

Fourth, Jesus Christ accepts to represent us free of charge and at all times: “All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”²⁷ In our earthly affairs, sometimes lawyers are too expensive to represent our interests. Not with Christ, His services are free, and He is available to everyone who needs such legal or advocacy work. He invites, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”²⁸ And He assures, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”²⁹

And fifth, Jesus Christ’s lawyering sets those He represents free: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”³⁰ In other words, Jesus Christ wins all the time. Those He sets free must know they are free, then they will be free, indeed: “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”³¹ This freedom, defeats Satan and death: “For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set you free from the law of sin and death.”³² We are no longer slaves of any man or Satan; we have become slaves of Christ and of righteousness: “For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman. Conversely, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave.”³³ Know this freedom, and stand firm, established in it: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be encumbered once more by a yoke of slavery.”³⁴ How amazing this victory, freedom and advocacy. To Jesus be all the glory.

Conclusion & Application

The new ministry Jesus Christ undertakes on our behalf includes lawyering for us. He represents our spiritual interests before the judgment seat of God. In Christ, we have had mercy, and, therefore, we are triumphant in both death and judgment. And this is literally, we will not be harmed by the Judgment Day – we have passed from death to life. All this is through Christ, our great advocate. This intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ also preserves the accrument of His works of redemption. Christ is a good investor – He does not abandon His investments to chance. He protects His investments and secures their good fortune and profit. He lives for us, and if we sin, we have a ready and available advocate. This way, sin is purged continually. Our role is an easy one – to report to Him so He can open a ticket with the Father. All we have to do is confess and ask for forgiveness each time we sin. Child of God, do not become tired of asking for forgiveness, because He does not become tired of advocating for you. This, too, is a manifestation of His grace – even where sin abounds, His grace just goes further. Jesus, has single-handedly transformed God’s judgment seat into a throne of mercy. Yes, in Christ alone and to Him be all the glory, Amen!

²⁷ John 6:37

²⁸ Matthew 11:28

²⁹ John 14:13

³⁰ John 8:36

³¹ John 8:32

³² Romans 8:2

³³ 1 Corinthians 7:22

³⁴ Galatians 5:1

Related Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

We have many times wondered away from your grace;
We have surely transgressed the beauty of Your place;
Yet, despite all, You have not left us without an advocate;
Oh, LORD, Jesus, and Jesus Christ alone, is adequate.

In the name of Jesus, our Lord,
Amen!