

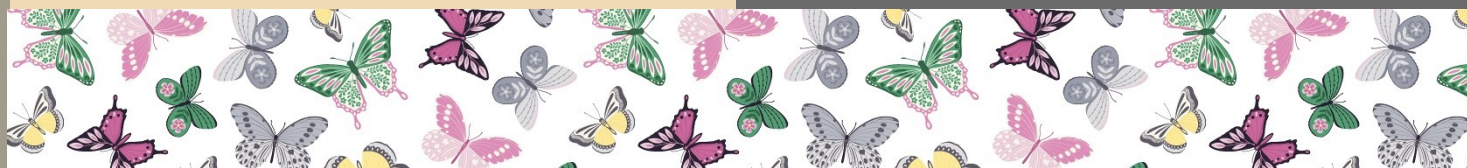
Kootenai Communicator

The monthly newsletter of Kootenai Community Church, Kootenai, Idaho

Important Dates <<<

10–11 Manuscript Workshop, see p. 4
 12 Mother's Day
 18 Bridal Shower—*Amelia Black*
 27 Memorial Day
 31 High School Graduation Celebration

*Expounding the Scriptures,
 Equipping the Saints,
 Exalting the Savior*



When Christians Sin, Jesus Is Our Advocate

By Owen Strachan, 2024 Conference Speaker

KCC family, below is an article¹ by Owen Strachan, our guest speaker for the 2024 Equipping Conference (June 7–8). I would encourage you to follow Owen on various social media platforms and check out his articles on Substack². Owen is the author of *The War on Men* and *The Warrior Savior*. -Jim Osman

Here is one of the trickiest questions in the Christian life: how do Christians handle their ongoing sin?

Conservative evangelicals often have two big reactions to sin. Firstly, some Christians react to their sin in **depressive terms**. They stumble, and then cascade into shame, grief, and even despair. In spiritual terms, they lacerate themselves like the medieval monks with their flesh-tearing whips. Desiring in genuine terms to honor God after failing, they believe that they are supposed to descend into the pit of misery over sin, stay there for a long time, and live in a kind of mourning state. This they do until the fugue gradually dissipates, like fog in a spring morning. Life is a cycle of sin, then despair, then sin, then despair, repeating *ad infinitum*.

Other Christians respond to sin in **transactional terms**. They do something genuinely bad, and then they feel guilty. Their response is to ratchet up good works, acts of service, Bible reading, church attendance, and all the rest. Spiritual deeds that may be needful and good end up being something more than just living worship; they become living penitence that atones for evil. This system is quite similar to acts of satisfaction as found in the Catholic religion. Life is a

cycle of sin, then works of penitence, then sin, then penitence, repeating *ad infinitum*.

It is right to feel deep sorrow over our sin. We should—always! God uses shame in appropriate doses (sometimes weighty ones) to wake us up and turn us back to himself. So too is it right to seek to honor God through a life of devoted, even dogged, service. But both of these approaches suffer from a common failing, and a big one at that.

Here is the shared failing: *neither one has Christ at the center*. Instead, man is at the center. To be more precise, *we* are the center. Our actions have center stage, and Christ is reduced to a bit player. He is a member of the cast, but he barely has a speaking part. He says very little, in truth, and only appears on stage for fleeting moments in the drama of our life. The shocking reality is this: in our spiritual practice, sin has the major role, really.

This is not a small imbalance. It is a big one. This is a consequential problem indeed. It leads to either despair or legalism. But here is some great news: the Scripture gives us a better approach to our sin. It is one that is firmly anchored in the finished work and ongoing intercession of Christ. To use my going metaphor, Jesus is the lead actor in the grand drama of our existence. He looms largest, not us, nor our sin.

Our life matters greatly to God; we all have our meaningful part to play in God's unfolding story. But as the alpha and the omega, Jesus has center stage, and no one else comes close to his role. This is not my theological gloss on the matter; this is the express witness of 1 John 2:1–2.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you

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may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Many Christians, I sense, know of this passage, but few of them put it front and center in their daily battle with the flesh. In what follows, I am going to list five glorious truths in brief form that this passage offers you and me as Christians.

Five Truths About Christ Our Advocate

First, we want to avoid sin. That's the whole point of this short section from John. He wrote to his beloved subjects—calling them “little children” (v. 1)—so that “you may not sin.” This shows us that killing sin, or avoiding sin, is of great importance for believers. We are not indifferent to sin; we do not sin that grace may abound (Romans 6:1). Instead, we work against our sin, fighting it and strategizing against it. This is not an optional upgrade to the normal Christian life; this *is* the Christian life.

Second, we all do sin. It's right to hate sin and not want to sin. What a good instinct! Truly, such an inclination comes from the Spirit. But here's the deal: John helps us see that we *do* sin. He puts it this way: “If anyone does sin” (v. 1). This isn't some super-unusual bug in the system. This is what happens to you and me every day we live.

We sin by intentional acts (sins of commission, they're often called). We sin by simply not worshipping God with our whole being every minute we live (sins of omission, they're often called). Yet sad as this is, the Bible does not plunge us into an existential crisis over this situation. The Bible does not lead us into a basement dungeon when we sin, lock the door, and offer no hope to us. In God's Word, sin is not treated *casually*; it is, however, handled *honestly*.

Speaking in love, I fear that a good number of conservative evangelicals and Reformed folks falter here. They do not confess formal belief in their sinlessness, of course. They do, however, act as if they (or the people around them) should be functionally perfect, or pretty close. But I cannot say this enough: this is not an honest or biblically sound approach. John's handling of sin is way better, frankly.

Third, when we sin, we are not our advocate. Here is where the plot shifts, and gloriously so. When we wrong God, it turns out that we are not the ones who plead our case before the Father. It is not our shame that we offer to God as an offering to atone for sin (though it is right to feel appropriate doses of shame over sin). It is not our good works that we offer to God as the acts of penitence to balance out our sin (though it is right and good and necessary to obey God).

From the quill of John, mark this, believer: you are not your advocate with the Father (v. 1). This is true of **atonement** firstly. God does not expect you to atone for your sin. God does not ask you to atone for your sin. God knows you cannot atone for your sin. God

knows you never will atone for your sin; you will never, even in just one single instance, clear your soul of wrongdoing.

This is true of **advocacy** secondly. You cannot advocate for yourself when you sin. You do not have standing in the courtroom of God. You have no credentials that will allow you to argue your case. As a sinful creature, you do not have the ability to enter the presence of Almighty God; left to your own merits, you could never enter the throne room of the Most High God. God does not ask you to enter his dwelling place, and God does not receive you as an equal in his place of justice.

Fourth, when we sin, Jesus is our advocate. The preceding truth was a bit of bad news for you and me, admittedly. Here is glorious good news for us: Jesus *can* enter the Father's presence. Jesus is the one the Father sent to be the “propitiation” or satisfaction for our transgressions (v. 2). As noted, the Father didn't send you to the cross, nor did the Father send me. Nor has the Father asked us to be our own advocate. This is Jesus's role, and Jesus's role alone.

This has great cash value for our ordinary struggles. When you sin, believer, don't turn inward. Don't lock yourself in the dungeon for four days, gloomy and despairing, unable—and unwilling—to function. You will feel real and deep sorrow as you come to terms with your failings. But then, like a kite sent rocketing into the sky by a sudden blast of wind, you must look to Christ. You must fix your eyes on him.

You must see that he is there with you in your just shame and just guilt. He is not just sitting there beside you, though. He is an active Savior. He is an interceding Lord. He is a compassionate Advocate. He is an effectual Mediator. He is a willing friend. He will not forget your cause, leaving you in the basement like Joseph. No, he knows your name. He loves to take up your plight. This is not an inconvenience to Jesus; he is not checking his Apple watch as you draw near to him, tears flowing like rivers on your face, agony clutching your heart in an iron grip.

All that comes to sweet relief in the presence of the “gentle and lowly” Jesus (Matthew 11:29). Jesus does not in any way affirm your sin, but he lived the life you could not live so that you would not have to do so, and Jesus has died the atoning death you could not die to secure your forgiveness. This mattered in your initial conversion, absolutely. But here is a second remarkable truth: this matters *now*.

Jesus died to plead your case *now*. He is not a Savior sufficient only for the initial moment of saving faith; he is the Savior sufficient for *this moment*. He finds great joy in pleading your case to the Father; it is quite literally what he came to earth to do. Jesus is the one who—in never-breaking love—intercedes for us with the Father. Jesus, unlike us, is fitted for this role.

Jesus, you must remember, is the God-man. Jesus is the warrior-savior. Jesus is the greater David. Jesus is the great high priest. Jesus is the slain lamb. Jesus is the Father's beloved Son. Jesus is our elder brother, strong and attentive, mighty in kindness, the watchman on the wall who keeps the night shift as the storm

Sunday School

10th–12th Grade: Jay and Jana Cates

Teen Sunday school is currently going through the Book of Acts to complement what we learned in Matthew's Gospel. It's crucial for young believers (teens) to understand the events that happened after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the Great Commission He gave to go and make disciples. These events include the appearances He made to His closest friends, including the apostles and sometimes large groups in Galilee; His ascension; and the first fruits of the church at Pentecost, including the meaning and relevance of the sign gifts validating the good news of the gospel and proclaiming it to the world.



**Sunday
school
begins at
9:30 a.m.**

>>> Special Report: Meal Ministry



MEAL MINISTRY

Our church's meal ministry provided over 150 meals in the last 12 months. We want to thank all the volunteers who made and delivered those meals. Your sacrifice of time, effort, and money has been a blessing to our church body.

We are now using an online tool called "Take Them a Meal." **You can sign up in the foyer to be notified when a meal is needed.** Administrators of the ministry are Kaitie Forsyth (208-603-2223) and Andrea Kinne (text 208-290-2312 or call 208-265-0102), and either of them can be contacted in case of questions, a need for meals, or if you want to volunteer to make a meal now and then. Kaitie sets up and oversees the online schedules, and Andrea calls volunteers who are not online or prefer a phone call to an email and enters them in the schedule.

In the event of a need (illness, surgery, or a new baby in our church family), an email is sent out to a list of volunteers stating the need, any dietary issues, number of persons in the family, etc. A schedule is attached, and volunteers can enter their name and phone number on a date on the schedule if they want to take a meal. It is just one meal, usually dinner, delivered in the afternoon or evening and may or may not include dessert. Volunteers do not have to respond to every need that comes up, and any help, even a store-bought meal or a frozen casserole for the church freezer in case of a cancellation or emergencies, is much appreciated.

*This ministry is truly a blessing
to both the providers and recipients of the meals.*

>>> Young Adult/Young Married Fellowship

YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP

For information, contact
Olga Curiel at 909-996-5770
or Gerimiah Pennell at 208-920-3426.



YOUNG MARRIED FELLOWSHIP

Contact Gina Hall
for more information.
713-292-6562

Women's Ministry <<<



Bridal shower for
Amelia Black
May 18
at 10:00 a.m.

She is registered at Amazon
and Crate & Barrel.



Manuscript Workshop

TITUS

When: May 10, 7-9 p.m.
May 11, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Where: At the church

What: An in-depth study on the book of Titus
led by Taryn Adams and Emily Hill

Who: KCC women, youth group ages and up

No lunch is provided. You are welcome to bring your lunch or eat out.

Thursday Moms' Group

Moms with children five and under are invited to
a playgroup on Thursday mornings from 9:30-
11:30 a.m. to visit and let the kids play!

Please contact Emily Hill at 208-596-6904

with any
questions.



Do you have extra tomato plants? Is there
a flower garden you want to visit? Need a
hand putting a roof on your shed? Having
a yard sale? Put it on the ...

"KCC Activity Board" on Facebook!

>>> Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp

Please visit the camp website at clbcamp.org for more details.

Spring Scrapbook Retreat

May 10-11

For all ladies 13 and up.

Contact the office to register.

(208) 263-3912



Men's Spring Retreat

May 17-18

For all men 13 and up.

Contact the office to register.

(208) 263-3912

Student Ministries <<<

Manuscript Workshop

TITUS

When: May 10, 7-9 p.m.
May 11, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Where: At the church

What: An in-depth study on the book of Titus led by Taryn Adams and Emily Hill

Who: KCC women, youth group ages and up

No lunch is provided. You are welcome to bring your lunch or eat out.



MAY

1 Bible Studies, 7:30-9 p.m.
8 Youth Group, 7-9 p.m.
10-11 Manuscript Workshop
15 Bible Studies, 7:30-9 p.m.
22 Youth Group, 7-9 p.m.



>>>Kootenai Thunder

kootenaithunder.com

For the most current information, please check our website and Facebook page.

JR. HIGH SEASON CONCLUDES

The JH sports season came to a close with our Mountain Christian League end-of-season tournament on April 5 and 6. The teams did great and had a blast. Check out our Facebook page to see some awesome pictures Jason Duchow was able to take during the tournament.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are starting to look forward to next fall's sports. We will be offering girls volleyball for ages ten years through twelfth grade. For boys there will be soccer for grades seventh through twelfth. We are also looking into cross-country with some of the other MCL schools. Stay tuned.

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

There may be some open gyms throughout the summer. We are still working out details of summer events, but you can check the Facebook page or contact Tracy Jensen for details.

VOLUNTEER/FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

We would like to team up with the camp and fix a few things in the gymnasium before next season. We are currently raising money for soccer goals and some basketball hoops for the side walls in the camp gym. These will really benefit the Thunder program but will also be helpful to the summer camps. If anyone is able to put in some time working on some projects or would be able to contribute financially, it would be a huge blessing to the camp and the Thunder program. If you would like to donate to either of those projects, please contact Tracy Jensen.



Kootenai Classifieds >>>

SHARPENING SERVICES

We sharpen knives, scissors, lawn mower blades, hatchets, axes, and garden tools. Reasonable rates. Call or text for an appointment. David Forsyth (208-610-1532)



To have your items listed in this section, please send your information to Lisa Slippy by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Email her at

lisaslippy@gmail.com.



>>>Adventure Club News

Questions? Call Lori Thomson (208-610-1916) or Emily Brambila (208-304-6881), or email ac@kootenaichurch.org

ADVENTURE CLUB NEWS:

Year 4 of Adventure Club (AC) is complete! We had forty-eight Leaders and LITs (Leaders-in-training) serving in the areas of teaching, leading small group, music, snacks, games, teardown, and setup, as well as twelve families providing Leader Feeder meals throughout the year, and we can't forget to mention the families that have financially supported and prayed for this ministry throughout. How blessed and supported the eighty-three children who attended this year were, as well as the volunteers who worked together week after week for God's glory! We want to thank everyone who participated in AC this year and ensured a fruitful and fun-filled year for all.

Church News<<<



New groups forming NOW!
Runs May–August.
Sign up at the Welcome Table.

RIDE-SHARING OPPORTUNITY

If you are interested in being paired up with others from your area for this purpose, contact Debi Owinyo at debiowinyo@icloud.com or Kathy Conger at secretary@kootenai.church.



Church Prayer Chain

If you would like to be added to the email list and receive prayer requests from our church body, please email Maryanne Britten at marianabritten@hotmail.com or Aaron Kin at kinfamily@icloud.com.



Come celebrate the high school graduation of
Erik Haymond
Aurla Palmer
John Pranaitis
Ryan Rasor
Iola Yandt

Friday, May 31, 7:00 p.m.
At the church



HAVE YOU SIGNED UP TO BE IN THE ONLINE CHURCH DIRECTORY?

If not . . .

Please give your information to Kathy Conger or email her at secretary@kootenai.church. Also email her a photo!

rages all around him so that we can sleep soundly in our beds. Jesus is our peace; Jesus is our hope; Jesus is our continual Sabbath rest. There is no end to the goodness and mercy of Jesus.

For these reasons and many more, when you sin, Christian: don't look to yourself. Look to Jesus.

Fifth, Jesus is our advocate through our loving Father's appointment. We must be very careful here. If we are not watching ourselves, we might think that Jesus is loving, yes, but the Father is wrathful toward his wayward people. We might wrongly conclude that the Father has appointed Christ to be our advocate so that the Father can have his Son talk the Father—foaming with wrath and blustering in rage—off the ledge. This is deeply wrong, though it is a common vision of the Father.

God the Father is magnificent in his love and kindness toward his chosen. We only have Jesus as our perfect mediator and intercessor because of the Father's will, plan, and commissioning (Ephesians 1:3–14). This explodes the common falsehood that the Father is a raging God who loves nothing more than attacking his wayward children. That is completely wrong, and I do not write that lightly.

It is wrong from biblical start to biblical finish. All the way back in Exodus 34, Yahweh presented himself not as *quick to anger*, but *slow to anger* (v. 6). Instead of delighting to pour out vindictive justice on his straying people, Yahweh delighted to show them steadfast love (v. 7). Even as Israel left their deliverer, choosing paganism over the pleasures of God, the Lord said this to his exilic people: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jeremiah 31:3).

God will definitively judge the wicked and unrepentant. This the Bible teaches from cover to cover, and strikingly so. Yet we cannot miss that the dominant message of the Scripture is the love of God. This is true of all three Trinitarian Persons. God the Father has acted in love to give us Christ; God the Son has acted in love to die for us; God the Spirit acts in love to minister to us on a minute-by-minute basis. We are loved by the three-in-one God; we could not be loved any more than we are, in sum.

Our sins grieve God (Ephesians 4:30). We must fight our sin and strive in the power of grace to be holy. No one will see God without holiness (Hebrews 12:14). Yet our heavenly Father does not hate us when we sin. This is a common failing of conservative evangelical theology and spirituality. Our heavenly Father has lovingly summoned Christ to advocate for us—to plead his blood afresh—when we disobey him.

You could say it this way: all the provision we need has been given us by the one we have offended.

Conclusion

We all sin, sadly. In doing so, we are reminded that we are not yet home. We seek the heavenly city; here we have no lasting city (Hebrews 13:12–14). We long to be rid of our sin; here we sin on a daily basis. We yearn to be clean forevermore; here we must continually claim

the righteous life and cleansing blood of Christ. What we could not do, Jesus did, and thereby made a way for us to obey God in spirit and in truth. It is not our performance in the grand drama that has center stage; it is the work of Christ that looms largest.

In the simplest terms, when we sin, we must run to Jesus. There is nowhere else to go; there is no one else who can plead their perfect atonement for our iniquities. Mary cannot intercede for us; we cannot intercede for ourselves; no priest or pastor can intercede for us. But here is the good news, friend: the Son of God *loves* to advocate for us, and God the Father is glad to receive his pleas on our behalf.

In thankfulness and the relief of salvation, we must remember John's words. We must cling to them every day we live, for they are good and true: *if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father.*

His name? *Jesus Christ the righteous.*

¹<https://owenstrachan.substack.com/p/when-christians-sin-jesus-is-our>

²owenstrachan.substack.com



ATTENTION, PARENTS

Here at KCC, we love and welcome the entire family to our worship services, including babies and toddlers. We are committed to standing by parents in helping them train their little ones to sit quietly in the service. Whereas a little noise as you are trying to soothe a fussy or talkative child is OK, it does become a distraction and disservice to the rest of the congregation when the noise is prolonged. Our nursery has been set up to accommodate parents who don't want to miss out on the service while taking fussy children out for a time to calm them down. The service is broadcast through speakers, and the windows allow a view of the sanctuary. Parents are welcome to drop their children off with the nursery staff at any point in the service, or stay with them. Also, please keep in mind that **children should not run in any part of the building at any time.** We want to be mindful of those who may not be steady on their feet and might fall if a child runs into them or startles them. Children are also not allowed on the stage. **Please monitor your children between and after the services.**



Kootenai Community Church

P.O. Box 593

Kootenai, ID 83840

208-255-5668

<https://kootenaichurch.org/contact>

www.kootenaichurch.org



Sign up online at
kootenaichurch.org,
or in the foyer.



2024 EQUIPPING CONFERENCE

HUMAN SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND GOD'S CREATION

WITH OWEN STRACHAN

JUNE 7-8