

Ever feel outmatched by life? Up against what seems to be impossible odds? Depressed? Downhearted? Hopeless and helpless? And it's all because YOU goofed up! You may have betrayed an intimate trust. Or, you may have been caught in a serious lie. Or, you may have compromised your family's good name. You may have cheated, stole, slandered, been unfaithful—in other words, you sinned and you realize the damage you have done because of your weakness.

At times like these, do not give up hope, or beat yourself up, because the Bible tells us: “if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” This means that Jesus has made our atonement. He has made amends or reparation for us.

When we hear the word "advocate" many people think of a lawyer. An advocate stands up in a court of law and explains to the judge or jury how things are from his or her client's point of view. The advocate pleads the case. An advocate is someone who pleads the case for another. Or more particularly, an advocate is one who gives voice to the voiceless.

We have an advocate in Jesus. He is the righteous one who gives a voice to the voiceless unrighteous. He pleads our cause before the throne of God. In fact, in Him our debt has been paid. In Him, we have been raised up.

God knows we are imperfect. That's why Jesus had to come to us—why He had to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. God is not looking for perfect people, but for people who will accept His Son, Jesus Christ, as their Lord and Savior.

Because of Jesus, you are not to feel defeated, guilty, or condemned because your blunders and serious mistakes. And, when the thought comes "I don't deserve God's blessings," you are to respond with, "I am exactly right. I know I don't deserve it, but that's what God's mercy is all about! I have Jesus as my Advocate." The fact is, the grace of God will make miracles out of your mistakes. St. Paul tells us: “Where sin abounded, grace abounds more exceedingly.” Romans 5:20

Easter is a season of victory celebration. Jesus is victorious over our sin. He comes to us and says “Peace be with you!”—no matter what our sin is. Jesus did not berate his disciples for their cowardice, their denial and desertion. He extended his peace to them. And, the Lord does the same to us.

However, you cannot remain in your sin. Again, in the first letter of John, we are told to “obey his commandments.” For if you do, you will know Jesus Christ working in your life. What's more, “whoever obeys his word, the love of God will reach perfection in this person.”

Easter changes everything. Because of Jesus' Resurrection, we do have the power to obey His commandments. And, when we slip up, Jesus is our Advocate. And, as our Advocate, He does

not get us “off the hook” of our sin, He wants us to avoid the sin completely, and be the disciple He wants you to be.