

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

WORSHIP

See the Light, Your Love Awakens Me, What He's Done, You Are Holy, his Mercy is More

WELCOME

What is the most memorable courtroom drama or movie that you have seen and why?

WORD

(READ ROMANS 2:5-3:8)
ROMANS 2:5-10

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: ⁷ to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. ⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

There are many shows and movies that are based on courtroom dramas. In a courtroom, the goal is to find out the truth. In life we too want to know what's true, but the question is—can we handle it? The wonderful thing about the Bible, is that when it comes to bad news, we also see the good news of the gospel as Jesus Himself was described as full of grace and truth. But are we guilty or not guilty under God's laws?

1. DAY OF JUDGEMENT

There will be a judgment day because of our stubbornness and unrepentant heart (**Romans 2:5-6**). Our salvation is by faith, but judgment of believers will be according to our deeds. If we are truly saved by faith, it will show in our transformed lives. Similarly, if we are not saved by faith, it will also be revealed in our works (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). The reality is that we cannot stand before God and reason that He should let us in His heaven on account of our goodness or say that we are a better person than someone else. Our works are not a means to be saved, rather it is an outflow or the evidence of our salvation (**Romans 2:7-10**).

In **Romans 2:11-13**, Paul was addressing both the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul addressed the Gentiles as those “without the law”. In our context today they are whom we call as “moralists”. The Gentiles are those who live by their conscience, not the Bible. While the Jews are those who are “under the law”. In today's context they are whom we perceive as the “religious” ones. Their defense is in how they faithfully practice their religion.

2. DEFENSE #1: “I LIVE A GOOD LIFE!”

The Gentiles are those who instinctively live a good and moral life. Their basis for their actions is their conscience, but will living a good life with a good conscience bring us to heaven? In **Romans 2:14-16**, we see that this is not enough as our conscience will either accuse us or defend us. Having our conscience as our guide simply means that we won't always do the right thing.

The dictionary definition for conscience is “An inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior.” While HELP Word Studies defined it as “A spiritual or moral consciousness that is a result of having been created in God's image, and therefore unique to human beings.” If we were to be judged by our conscience, we will be accountable for two things: first is that if we knew what was right or wrong, and secondly, after knowing what was right and wrong, did we do what was right. To which in most cases, we would fail.

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3. DEFENSE #2: "I PRACTICE MY RELIGION!"

Paul addressed the Jews as those who have been entrusted with the Law. Paul reminds us that our religiosity should not make us proud and arrogant, nor be the basis for salvation because if following the Law would be the basis of our salvation then we should be able to follow it perfectly all the time, to which we are sure to fall short. It's not just about what we see on the outside, but what's in our hearts (**Romans 2:17-22**). Paul sternly reminds us that religion doesn't automatically translate to genuine Christianity (**Romans 2:23-24**). If we are true followers of Jesus, we must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit; remembering that our salvation is by faith in Christ alone. We cannot boastfully come to God and say that we follow the Bible, because that cannot be the basis for our eternal destiny. In **Romans 2:25-27**, Paul talks about circumcision (as it was sacred to the Jews). However, Paul is saying that circumcision is only of value if Jews practiced the law. If they we're only focused on the outward act of circumcision, they were missing the point! In the Old Testament, God says that He will circumcise the hearts of His people—the outward ceremony is just a symbol of an inward transformation that can only take place in a personal relationship with God. We know that change has taken place in our hearts by the Holy Spirit when we no longer seek the praise of men, but the approval of God (**Romans 2:28-29**). The reality is that some people will believe the gospel, while some will not, but God holds us responsible to believe His gospel. In **Romans 3:1-4**, Paul presents a case: if our unrighteousness validates God's holiness, is God not unjust? Why will He still judge us? The truth is this: apart from our faith in Jesus, we are all guilty without excuse (**Romans 3:5-8**).

4. DESPERATE FOR THE JUDGE'S MERCY

If the verdict for us is guilty, where does this leave us? Our only recourse is to now throw ourselves to the mercy of the court (**Romans 3:9**). How can we get out of our dilemma? You and I have no choice but to fall and plead for God's mercy through our regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (**Titus 3:4-5**). How did God set this in motion for us? In a courtroom 2000 years ago, Pilate released Barabbas, and Jesus went to the cross (**Matthew 27:26**). He took the sin of Barabbas to the cross, the same way that He also took your sin and mine to the cross. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we are now declared not guilty (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Today, if you are a follower of Christ, be humble. Don't look down on others and remember that you are saved only by grace. Go the extra mile and tell others about Jesus. And if you're not yet a follower of Christ, stop making excuses and stop relying on your morals and religion for salvation. Take that step of faith today and surrender your life to Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. Self-Check.**
On what/who are you relying to go to heaven? Why?
- 2. Setting It Right.**
Briefly share your salvation testimony: What was your life like before you accepted Christ? What was your turning point? What changed in you after giving your life to Christ?
- 3. Living It Out.**
Who will you tell about Jesus this week?

WORKS PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those who are blinded by their own "goodness" or religion, trusting these for their salvation. Pray for open hearts as you invite them to Sunday service or attend a Dgroup. Be a good testimony for them on what it means to follow Jesus. Take the opportunity to share God's truth and grace to them through the gospel message.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

- I. Thanksgiving**
 - Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives
- II. Country and the World**
 - Upright and moral governance public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines and Canada.
 - For the Russian invasion of Ukraine to stop; peace and order be restored, lives spared. Russian and Ukrainian soldiers, families, leaders to turn to Christ; refugees be given safe passage into surrounding nations.
- III. Church**
 - That CCFE Members would honor and love God and make disciples
 - Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
 - Ministries and Churches worldwide
- IV. CCFE Facilities**
 - Worship and Training Center
- V. Personal Concerns**
 - Deeper intimate relationship with God
 - Righteous living
 - Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE ROMANS 2:11-12

For there is no partiality with God. For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.