

## The Jury

Court started promptly at nine a.m. The judge instructed the prosecution and defense attorneys to qualify the jury for the trial that was about to take place. The attorneys would ask the prospective jurors questions. They asked if anyone was related to the defendant, the prosecution, or even to the judge. They would also ask if anyone knew anything about the case that was about to be presented before them. With the court assured that everyone was qualified to be a juror and that they would be able to render a fair verdict according to the law, the trial began.

The young man, just twenty-two years old, was on trial for selling drugs. He was considered by the state to be a persistent felon offender. Since the age of sixteen he has been in and out of jail many times and is no stranger to the court system. He had been in trouble for drugs before as well as wanton endangerment. His record included thief by deception and resisting arrest. His record spanned six years and he had been in trouble at least once in each of the six years.

He came from a broken home, in which the father had just up and left never to be heard from again. His family was poor and the mother was also a drug addict. When the mother did work she left the children alone to care for themselves. He was nicely dressed and clean cut looking. He had just become a father a few months earlier. I asked myself how could this happen to such a nice looking young man?

The trial began and the prosecution introduced damaging evidence against the defendant. The police had a video of the drug deal as well as audio. The drug deal had been made to an undercover police officer as other officers stood by waiting for the signal to make the arrest. With all the evidence presented by the prosecution it was the defenses turn to present their side of the case.

The defense questioned the officers and the evidence presented trying to find some legal loophole that might set his client free. But the videotape and the officer's testimonies would not be overcome by the defense. There was no doubt that the defendant and the person in the video were one in the same. The trial was short and both sides, after presenting their closing arguments, rested their case. The judge instructed the jury to determine innocence or guilt according to the evidence presented in accordance with state law. State law required that since he was a persistent felon, if found guilty, be given a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison.

The jury retired to the decision room to determine final judgment for the defendant. It was obvious from the discussions everyone knew beyond a shadow of a doubt by the evidence presented he was guilty. The vote was taken, twelve to zero in favor of a guilty verdict. The sentence would be as the state law required, twenty years in prison. As they left the decision room one juror said, "no mercy for his kind."

I thought about that statement for a moment and realized that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was shown no mercy at his trial. Beaten and whipped until the flesh on his body was literally hanging from his bones. A crown of thorns placed upon his head. Then nailed to a cross and his side pierced with a spear shedding his blood for you and me.

When I think of the sins in my life, I think of how it should have been me they nailed to the cross. Instead it was me that nailed him to that cross. No mercy was given to Jesus. But mercy for you and me through his shed blood for all mankind. I think about the time when everyone will stand before the Lord and his judgment. Today is the time for his mercy and his grace. When you stand before him on that judgment day, his decision will be final. The time for mercy and grace will be over.

The Bible tell us in Revelations 20: 11-15, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Just like the videotape of the young man caught in his crime, God knows each and every time we sin. The Bible says in Numbers 32:23, "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." The Bible also tells us in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Unless you receive Jesus Christ as you Lord and Savior you will not escape the final judgment of God.

There is a price to be paid for sin. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for sin; the living Son of God gave himself for you and me. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:12, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." You may get away with a crime here on earth but you will not get away with sin. But you do have an option and that is doing what the Bible says in Romans 10: 9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

In John 3:16-18, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you will do this the Bible tells us in 1<sup>st</sup>. John 1: 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Also in Hebrews 10: 17, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

There will be no legal loopholes at the judgment. You either know Jesus or you don't. Some people can handle prison but you cannot handle an eternal Hell. The young man received his punishment according to the law. The question is will you receive God's punishment for sin according to his law? Or will you be spared by receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

It is my prayer that you will receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior while you have time. Tomorrow may never come. If you need to rededicate you life to Christ, I pray you will consider doing that today. God has a wonderful plan for your life. May God Bless and keep you.

Inspired by my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
To him I give all the Glory and Praise  
By: G.L.F. Ephesians 2: 8-9