

My Day in Court

Recently, I had a session with my counselor in which I shared my struggle to forgive certain people in my life. I thought I had completed the work of forgiving them, releasing them from my judgments of them, and blessing them. But when someone would mention them, or if I happened to run into one of them, I found that my heart still had some unfinished business.

My counselor shared a very powerful article with me titled, "How Do We Heal When It's Too Much to Forgive?" This article was written by an anonymous writer in response to the Virginia Tech massacre of April 2007. It outlined a hypothetical court scene with the Judge of the Court of Heaven.

This inspired me to lay out my own case against my offenders before the Lord. As I journaled, I allowed myself to "see" what would happen when I took my turn to enter the heavenly courtroom and make my accusations.

This is what I saw and heard:

I ascended the stairs of the courthouse and went through the halls, into the elevator, up to the 7th floor. I came out of the elevator and made a right turn. Then I went through the heavy wooden doors and entered the courtroom. There were rows on each side of the aisle but there were no people sitting in them. There was no jury box, no jury. There was a huge podium or lectern that I knew was where the Judge would sit. There were two tables in front of the rows, on either side of the Judge's podium. I was the prosecution and sat at the table on the right, waiting for the Judge to enter. The defendant was not here; he or she could not say anything in defense because this was going to be a kangaroo court—it was up to me. Someone who I thought was the Judge came in, entering through the door on the left of the courtroom, to the right of the podium. I couldn't see Him clearly but by His long hair I knew it was Jesus. However, He was not going up to the Judge's seat. Instead, He went to the defendant's seat. Now He was sitting to my left with His hands clasped in front of Him. My heart was beating wildly because I realized the Judge was about to enter the courtroom and here I was, presenting a case against His own Son! The Judge came in and He had the head of a lion. I saw His long mane and His huge head, but He had the body of a man. I was so afraid that He would open His mouth and roar because I knew that with one roar I would be blown out of the courtroom. He picked up the gavel and rapped once on the podium. "This court is in session," His deep voice boomed. He looked straight at me and asked, "What is your case?"

"Sir," I said, "I came today to lay charges against Margaret and Sonny [not their real names]."

I knew that my case was futile so I tried to get out of it. "Neither of them is present here, Lord, only your Son who died for them."

The Judge replied, "Nevertheless, present your charges."

"Yes, Sir. Sir, Margaret lied to me and deceived me into thinking she was someone she was not. She accused me of things I didn't do, that I was trying to undermine her and compete with her and no matter what I did it seemed like she thought I was trying to hurt her in some way. It seems like she cannot really see the truth about me and I feel like she is still accusing me. She was very important to me and I have lost her friendship because of what she believes about me. When I tried to tell her the truth and confront her she turned on me and started telling other people lies about me. She made a fool of me and worst of all she didn't believe that I truly wanted to be her friend. She rejected my friendship in the worst way."

While I was talking, Jesus was sitting quietly, His hands still clasped in front of Him on the table. I knew what He was going to say when I finished presenting my charges. I didn't want to keep talking, but the Judge had ordered me to have my say. I continued.

"Sir, Sonny has never loved me. He says he does, but none of his actions would say he does. He has never tried to understand me. If he loved me he would want to know me. How can he love me when he treats me the way he does and when he tongue lashes me with sarcasm at every possible opportunity? He has let his friends vilify me and cut me down and stab me at will. He has let them poison his mind about my motives. He has refused to stand up for me and has shown me that no matter what he says he doesn't really care, or at least that there are no teeth to his kind of caring. Neither Margaret nor Sonny truly see my heart. I rest my case."

The Judge now said, "The defendant may now speak for Himself."

Jesus rose slowly from his seat and instead of presenting His rebuttal, He came over to my side of the court and took me in His arms. He stroked my hair and comforted me. Then He pulled a small dagger out of my heart that had apparently been lodged there. It came out very slowly. He took it to His table and laid the bloody weapon down there.

"Sir," Jesus said, "Guilty as charged. Here is the murder weapon."

The Judge rapped the gavel with great force and proclaimed, "Guilty!"

Jesus then extended His two hands together in front of Him so that He could be taken away in chains.

"Sir, I willingly bear the sentence for these. Will my death on the cross suffice?"

The Judge looked at me.

"What does the prosecution say?"

I had no choice but to say, "Sir, I am satisfied that justice has been done."

The Judge declared, "This case is now closed. Prosecutor, I advise you to remember that the justice that has been carried out here today is the same justice that is carried out for you every time someone forgives *you* and my Son removes the dagger from *their* hearts."

By this time my heart was constricting and I was weeping profusely.

"Sir, I confess my own crime of murder in the first degree. I have murdered Margaret and Sonny countless times in my heart."

I suddenly saw myself now sitting at the defendant's table, with Jesus next to me.

Jesus spoke up. "Sir, I have paid her price too."

In response the Judge said, "Then this court is now adjourned." He rapped the gavel once more and exited the court. This time He was not walking like a man—He was completely a lion, and I watched as His hindquarters disappeared through the door of His chambers.

I turned to Jesus and said "Lord, thank you. Can you forgive me for nailing you to the cross?"

In the kindest tone of voice and with love in His eyes He replied, "I willingly went there for you because of my great love for you. When others don't love you the way you want to be loved, and the way you feel you deserve to be loved, just look at my cross. All the love you need is there."

My day in court ended with humble thanks and wonder at the grace and mercy of Jesus, the Son, and of the great Judge, the Father of lights.

Romans 14:10-13: You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

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