

[*The People's Court Theme song begins to play and the People's Court logo is seen on the auditorium screens.]*

Balif:

"All rise... please... for the honorable 'Judge Jimmy...'"

[*Judge Jimmy walks in, wearing black robe and with a gavel.*]

Judge Jimmy:

"Please be seated..."

Balif:

[*To the congregation*]

"Would you all please place your left hand on your Bible and raise your right hand?"

[*Play with the audience. Pause and nod and smile to those who actually do raise their hands. Walk down and kindly offer your Bible to someone who did not. Give a few head nods toward the Bible you are holding, and a stern look in your eye that says 'you need to obey', perhaps even with an 'a-hem!'. Feel free to ad-lib as the situation allows.*]

"Do you swear to tell YOURSELF the truth... the whole truth... and nothing but the truth... so help you, God?"

[*Pause. If the response isn't very strong, raise your eyebrow and say...*]

“Don’t make me ask a second time...”

[*Pause... wait for a greater response*]

“Alright... then. As the charges and the evidence is brought against you... will you do all that you can to recognize and speak these truths to your conscience?”

[*Pause*]

[*Music fades and Balif, himself, takes a seat in the congregation*]

Judge Jimmy:

[*Lines for Judge Jimmy ONLY from this point to the end*]

I will NOT presume that each and every one of you... knows exactly why you have been brought here today... nor the seriousness of the charges that are being brought against you.

While I do wear the robe and carry the gavel... let me make clear that it is NOT my job to judge you today. Your judgment has already been rendered. Your sentencing has already been pronounced.

So... why have you been brought here today...?

The purpose of today’s court session... shall be to review all of the judiciary evidence that has been brought against you. You are to be subjected to hearing the charges once again... in order to make sure that you understand the seriousness and the implications of these charges.

Now... do you have understanding of why you are here today?

[*If response from the congregation is weak, Balif will jump out of his seat, come to the front and use non-verbal gestures with sternness, to get a verbal answer from the congregation, such as a raised eyebrow doubletake and fingers calling 'come-on'. Then he returns to his seat.]*

Your complete rehabilitation is completely dependent upon – **NOT ONLY** your understanding the charges and their serious nature... but also upon your open and honest confession... and consistent recognition of their truth.

So... without further adieu... let the proceedings begin!

[*As the gavel bangs...*]

Hear ye! Hear Ye! The People's Court is now in session...

Ladies and Gentlemen... You... (*who are the accused*)... have been brought here today... to be re-examined with regard to your character. But we will not necessarily stop there. There are four matters that we will be re-examining. Your character will be the first. Next... will be your conversations. This will be followed by your conduct. And last... we will re-examine what your motives have been.

Your Prosecuting Attorney today is the Apostle Paul of Tarsus... under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately... Paul of Tarsus is unable to be here with us today (in person.) However he has filed a briefing of Heaven's Evidence... with the court. You should all have received a copy of it... for your references. It is titled the Epistle of Paul to the Romans... chapter three... verses 9 through 20.

I am going to... FIRST... summarize these charges. Then we will go back through them... to look at them a little closer... in hopes of gaining your confession... about the seriousness of their nature.

[*Read fast... and mumbling... as though reviewing*]

Romans 3:9-20

Um... your prosecuting attorney seems to indicate here... (ah... verse nine... I believe... is where I saw the notation)... that there really is no point for further testimony. Yes here's his note: "What then?" (close quote.) ... It is his opinion that enough evidence has been brought forth (already) for him to sufficiently rest his case.

[*gavel pounds*]

Let the court records show that Paul's "*what then*" stands!

Romans 3:9-10

Now... you are charged in verses 9 and 10 of trying to put yourself on a higher plane than others. You have given considerable... and reckless thought... to the notion that (somehow) you are better than others. It says here that you had even been thinking along the lines... that you were favored by God – because of something good that He saw in you. Perhaps you thought He looked at you... and saw a wonderful partner for His work... (someone He was lucky to have laboring for Him... because of the personal sacrifices you have made... maybe some religious activity...?)

Is this true...? Please remember... your fullest rehabilitation is dependent upon your full confession. ... We'll come back to this. ... But for now... we are only giving a summary of the charges before us.

Romans 3:11

Verse 11 charges that you have not been seeking God the way that you should. You have been slack. You read your Bible. You go to church. But there has been very little diligence... seeking him on a daily basis... with the normal affairs of your life. You don't have much desire to develop and keep a close and abiding fellowship with Him.

Romans 3:12

Uh oh! This is bad! Verse 12 says that there has not been enough goodness in your life. Well... not the amount (anyway)... that **He** has expected and spoken with you about (time-and-time-again!) You have intentionally turned away and rejected **His** loving pursuits for you to change. This has not been a mistake. It has been deliberate... and pre-meditated.

Romans 3:13-15

O.K... Now these are really bad! ... (Speaking of turning away...) ... This set of charges allege... that you have not only walked away when Christ was speaking to you... but you have callously walked away from people... leaving them badly injured... (now get this!) – by – your – words!

You must have personally felt better... having told them off... getting things off your chest (and all)... but you have (at times) actually walked away... leaving people absolutely bloodied and shredded... no worse... than if you had slayed them with a sword. You didn't care! "*They had it coming*"... you thought... and you had every right... because of what they did.

You actually ran to the opportunity. You didn't stop to think about the repercussions.

Romans 3:16-17

Now... for this one(?)... I think that I will simply ask you a question... or three. (That should drive the point home.) – Are you ready? - “Just exactly what is your personal record of peacemaking?” ... Is it your personal mission in life to bring peace to others... or does personal enjoyment at the expense of others... carry an equal emphasis...? Do you often agitate someone... just to get a rise... (because it is so fun to see them react)...? “*What’s wrong with having a little fun?*” ... Nothing! ... But do you have any intentional effort to bring peace to others... especially the ultimate peace between God and them...?

Romans 3:18

This charge summarizes every one of the other charges. Do you fear man... more than you fear God? (Now... I am not normally an “*after-the-fact... I-told-you-so... kind-of-guy...*”) but if... indeed... you had feared God more than man... you would not be here today... to face these charges.

... ..

Now you have heard the summary of the charges that are brought against you. I will not (at this time) ask how you plead. Judgment and sentencing has already been pronounced on your behalf. However... personal confession may be in order. I will let you decided on that matter.

CHARGE NUMBER ONE IN THE CASE: HEAVEN VERSES

EVANGELICALS: was that you have given considerable... and reckless thought... to the notion that (somehow) you are better than others.

Let me be as clear as I can possibly be. Hogwash! ... That is purely preposterous! ... We can never obtain a right standing with God by what we do... or anything about us. ... We are only made right with God... by acknowledging our total **depravity** (that we are so decedent... so wicked... and completely void of any quality or ability that pleases God.) We are so helpless... that we all need to prostrate ourselves in humble faith... before a holy God... and ask for His forgiveness... and exchange our depravity for His righteousness.

This is the only way for the Christian life to **begin**. ... AND (now get this!) this is the only way for the Christian life to **continue**! (You see) as Colossians 2:6 says... “Just as you have received Christ, so walk in Him.”

You and I came to Him by recognizing that we are unable (in our own power and ability) to do a single thing that pleases God. Well guess what... Nothing has changed. We are every bit as **unable**. We need His righteousness to be at work in us.

Way too often... Christians (somehow) get to thinking that they have the ability in and of themselves to please God on their own. They will go through their day... trying to live the Christian life... in their own strength and power. Challenges come... and they don't pray. It is like they say to God... “*I've got this one, God. You can take a break...*” No! No! No! Remember Col. 2:6 “Just as you have received Christ, so walk in Him.”

Now this leads us right into the second charge. CHARGE NUMBER TWO IN THE CASE: HEAVEN VERSES EVANGELICALS: was that you have not been seeking God the way that you should. You have been slack.

An objection was made during your trial... but you'll remember that I overruled it. The objection was that since you are already a believer... you are on your way to Heaven... and you no longer need to seek Him. As a believer in Christ... you have already found Him. Why seek what has already been found...?

Excuuuuuuse me...?!!!

The charge will still stand... that you have not made a closer walk with Him... your greatest concern in life. He has been de-throned... as King of your life. You thought that there just wasn't enough time in your day for building and strengthening your relationship with Him. ...And you have left Him out of far too many decisions throughout your day.

During the actual trial (you may also recall) that another objection was raised... at about this point. An objection was made that Paul (your prosecuting attorney) had employed some unnecessary terminology. "Worthless" it was contended was too strong (or harsh) of a word.

At the time... I considered this objection... even looking into the word's usage and its meaning in the language Paul wrote this letter (Greek.) This word ("worthless") was often used to describe milk... that had not only gone sour... but had turned rancid. Have you ever smelled rancid milk...? There is hardly anything like it to repulse your nostrils... and bring your lunch back up!

But having giving it some thought... I decided to overrule the objection once again. And here is the reason why. ... This is a very appropriate term to use for those who refuse to use the spiritual gifting that the Holy Spirit gives to every believer. You are not only useless – you are rancid!

... ..

These are the two charges involving your **character** that have been brought against you. ... Next... we will re-examine your **conversations**.

Paul wrote “Their throat is an open grave.” ... (...Interesting!...) You know... a spiritually **dead** heart - can only generate **dead** words. ... And graves are **never** left open. (That is disgusting!) It is disrespectful to the deceased – and to any passerby. Covering the grave keeps others from smelling the stench of decay... because there is ONE THING that is worse than smelling rancid milk – the smell of a decaying human body!

Your throat was made by God as a fountain to glorify Him. ... But instead... it has the stench beyond the help any mouthwash or breath mint. It is the disgusting odor of rotting flesh – because you have been telling people off. Some of you have used it for telling disgusting jokes... hoping that you would feel accepted by others... and to fit in.

Charges against you **character** have been made... and a charge against your **conversations** is also what you are to consider. ... Now... for your **conduct**. ... This won't take long.

Some of you (on occasion) have stirred the wind behind you... with great turbulence... NOT as you ran **from** sin... but as you ran **toward** a situation where you could get it off your chest and let it all out. And in your wake... you have left a scorched path... littered with hurting people.

Today you are asked to review the charges that have been brought against you... concerning your **character**... your **conversations**... and your **behavior**. And now... the matter of your **motive**.

It is exactly as Paul writes in verse 18... isn't it...? You have feared **man** – more than you have feared **God**. ... What irony... huh? (I mean – to fear much lesser things than ALMIGHTY GOD... (man's ridicule... man's contempt... man's anger...))

You know that you have lost the fear and reverence that you once had for God. Once upon a time... (in your day)... God constantly occupied your thoughts. He was central to all that concerned you on any given day. You were always looking to Him... for where He was already at work... and calling you to join Him. You wanted His guidance... His leading... and certainly not to get it wrong.

.....

Now it is time for the verdict.

Romans 3:19-20

The purpose of the law... is to make people see that they are sinners... and desperately in need of a Savior. The law is to make people (like you and I)... humble... (and yes!) – terrified... bruised... and broken... so that we might be driven to seek God's mercy and grace.

[[Take the robe off](#)]

The purpose of this court-scene trial today... has been for you to place yourself on trial – as the accused – so that BEFORE GOD you can only stand speechless and condemned.

You see... before God can be your friend... you must first see that you had been His enemy. It is only when we stand silent before Him as sinners... that He can save us. As long as we defend ourselves and commend ourselves... we cannot be saved by God's grace.

The best way to close this message would be to ask a simple question: Has your mouth ever been stopped? Are you boasting of your own self-righteousness and defending yourself before God? If so, then I urge you to throw yourself down before the mercy and grace of God. Trust Him for your salvation and not yourself.

Now... as to those who have (at one time in their life already done that... have already come to God as a sinner who needs His forgiveness... and turned your life over to Him)... maybe that was years ago. Some of us... (who have been believers for a very long time) - FORGET the desperate state that we were once in. Our memory fades about all that Christ has forgiven us of. When that happens... we drift off... into dangerous... thankless waters of self-sufficiency. We try to serve God in our own strength... and we find that we get no where.

Today... I urge you to come before the Lord in humble adoration of all that He has forgiven you of. You have been guilty of most (if not all) of these charges.

But God's grace is where you found His forgiveness. And in His grace is where you find the only way to please Him today. So rely ONLY on His strength to live the Christian life every day.

...And let's rely on His grace as we continue now to worship Him. Worship Him with thanksgiving for what He has done for you!