

Spiritually Speaking...

Written by James Washington
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I know I've started one or two columns off like this, but with all the legal maneuverings and trials going on, along with supposed "supreme" and final Supreme Court rulings being handed down, I thought I needed to revisit the law, at least from a Christian point of view. They tell me that ignorance of the law is not supposed to be an excuse for breaking the law. So if you ever find yourself in court, telling the judge that you didn't know something, this will not by and of itself get you off the hook. However, depending on the peculiar circumstances, or the predisposition of the presiding judge, or the special talents of an astute lawyer, you might get lighter sentence, or in the case of police shootings, you might get off with an unjustified acquittal. I believe when it comes to your and my spiritual trials, Jesus represents the kind of sentencing that only occurs in Family Court. The more I read scripture, the more I understand the wonderful relationship we have with the Almighty and the extraordinary power of His love for you and me, as demonstrated by our relationship with His only son, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's that blood relative thing that I'm referring to. If you would allow me to use two examples to illustrate my point let me give for your review 1.) Christ on the cross and 2.) Simon Peter's denial of Jesus as the cock crowed.

All of us know that Peter did in fact deny Jesus as predicted. We also know that Peter "wept bitterly" because of it. Now one very good example of God's great capacity to love His children is that this same Peter, once afraid and fearful for his own life, came to witness for the Lord with no fear about his new life whatsoever. It was Peter who, when the day of Pentecost came and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke boldly and without fear of reprisal about the blood bought forgiveness of sins because of Christ's death. He made us eternal members of God's family. You see Jesus is our access. He is our spiritual emissary, our court appointed attorney,

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our intercessor to the Father, our ultimate Judge. Peter acknowledges this when he says, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38. You see what the Holy Spirit did for Peter is what the Holy Spirit will do for you. The key is weeping bitterly. Peter had to first accept and acknowledge his shortcomings and yes, plead guilty. He had to empty himself to make room for the Holy Spirit. Those who recognize this and understand the premise, know firsthand that we are truly family members and weakly professed ignorance is but a poor excuse for one's ultimate acceptance of Christ as Lord. You see God really does know that you know His laws.

In Luke 23:34, Jesus says "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." From the Master's own lips, we know even His captors and persecutors were in line for forgiveness. All anyone has to do is to plead honest ignorance, repent and turn to the Lord. From that point on, let Jesus plead your case. Ain't that something? Blood bought forgiveness and no one, particularly the Judge, expects you to be perfect. The expectation is that you'll be righteous in your acceptance of Jesus, be truthful to your lawyer and sincere in your repentance. That way He can represent you to the Father. Remember, your court appointed attorney has already won your case. But you do have to show up in court, listen and acknowledge that the charges against you are indeed true. Your Honor, yes I denied Him. Yes, I committed the sin. Yes, I was wrong. Yes, I am guilty as charged. And as Jesus told the adulteress, "go and sin no more." He tells us that each and everyday. The key as always is that you and I hear and obey. May you come to understand that the shedding of Christ's blood made you His blood brother, so to speak. And yes, that means God is your Father too. That means court convenes everyday in the living room. What a blessing! In the meantime, never live in ignorance again. Never deny what you know to be true. That's just a lie. May God bless and keep you always.

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James