

## **Guilty but Innocent**

**(Luke 17:1-3; 1 John 2:5-6)**

Many years ago, Dr. J. Vernon McGee (Thru the Bible Radio) became the Pastor of a church in Pasadena. A while after, his mentor asked him how things were going. Dr. McGee responded that things were going great; the congregation was being blessed but people were saying many bad and hurtful things about him. His mentor told him, "That is fine; you just make sure that you are innocent of what they say." This little story aptly depicts our message today: Guilty but Innocent.

Anyone trying to work and live God's way must realize that he or she will have to face the world. There will be distractions, nay sayings, and contradictory agendas. Our Lord, Jesus Christ says that offense will come but woe to those through whom it comes (Luke 17:1-3). Following Christ cannot be done through poll numbers. Those that love the Lord and believe in the course of Christ will encourage things of Christ. Others may criticize, some might even go further. The unbelieving world will believe and run with any negative narrative, no matter how senseless, evil, or incredible those narratives may be. I guess this is why the Bible teaches us that, "a good man out of the abundance of his heart brings out good and a bad man brings out bad out of the abundance of his heart." To enter this year's overflow of God's blessing, every child of God must watch his or her heart carefully for out of it springs forth the issues of life.

David, in Psalm 120, was distressed and severely wounded mentally. False accusations, outright evil words, and malice – all were directed at him. No wonder Christ told us that the world will only love its own. The question today is: "Will you then stop living the way of the Lord? Will the fact that lies, innuendos, manipulations, and deceptions are the weapons of today's world discourage you from living honest live where truth is told and pursued daily? God forbid! We must always realize that in the eyes of the unbelieving world, we are already guilty no matter our best intentions. Each of us must eventually realize that no amount of argument and reasoning can sway someone who does not believe in the course you are taking. We just have to be true to God and make sure that in His eyes and by our conscience, we are innocent. As long as that is the case, someday the Lord will bring out the truth to nullify the guilty verdict of this world.

This year then, we must each pursue the truth, shun lies, and avoid schemes that are contrary to the teachings and life of our Master, Jesus Christ. We must be vigilant to recognize and disprove lies and manipulative schemes when they arise. It is said again and again that the end cannot justify the means but many in today's world will still not believe it. Despite this, we must continue to go forth for Christ and set a shining example for the world around us to follow; be it in the church, workplace, marketplace, politics; really in every endeavor of life. Let us draw closer to Jesus and follow His examples because He is the only one who can justify us and He will do so at His time.

Of course, if you are not in Christ, you are already guilty and guilty. You are guilty in the eyes of the world because you can never satisfy everybody around you. You are also guilty in the eyes of God because you have rejected the offer of salvation that He has made available to you. Will you surrender your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior today and let the Holy Spirit take control of your life? Remember, Jesus is waiting and will never cast out those that come to Him! Tomorrow may just be too late! Repent and accept Him today.