

You Need a Lawyer!

Gregory E. Reynolds

You Need a Lawyer!

"How could that be?" you ask. "I haven't committed a crime. I haven't been contacted by the IRS or been sued by anyone. And you don't even know me. What do you mean, I need a lawyer?"

Well, of course, people need lawyers for many reasons. Sometimes lawyers are needed to write a will or to help transact a real estate purchase. In other cases they may be needed to defend a person against an unjust accusation. And, of course, a person may actually be guilty of a crime and need a lawyer to help him through the legal system. In an imperfect world, where justice is not always done, skillful lawyers can get a guilty person acquitted.

But I want to warn you that the ultimate reason *you* need a lawyer is that you are guilty of things for which the human justice system will never indict you. And there is no possibility that you can be acquitted. No possibility! That is, unless you engage the lawyer I recommend to you. And he will not contradict justice to defend you. No other lawyer in the universe can defend you against these charges.

"What charges?" you ask. The Bible, God's infallible Word, teaches that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "There is none righteous, no not one" (Ps. 14:3). In case you do not believe in God and do not think that the Bible is his Word, listen to what he says: "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God' " (Ps. 14:1). God's creation, in which you live, and your own existence—in other words all of created reality—reveal that the God of the Bible is the true and living God. "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and deity, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20). In fact, you have spent your whole life suppressing this reality, because you know you are guilty.

God's law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, teaches that "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" and "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Furthermore, you have an innate sense of right and wrong, because you are made in God's image. Romans 2:15 teaches that your conscience carries on a running debate about whether what you are doing or not doing is right or wrong. There is no escaping this.

Meanwhile, "man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). God, through his Word, "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:12-13). So none of the pride, lust or hatred in your heart escapes God's notice. He knows you inside and out. He is aware of every one of your selfish thoughts, words and deeds. You cannot do enough good to make up for your guilt. And even the good that you do is not done out of love for God. God's law is the standard of love and righteousness. It was given so that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). And

on the day of judgment, "when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16), you will not have any excuses, because you know what God expects and you have refused to obey him.

But because God is perfectly loving in his awesome holiness, he has not abandoned humanity in this desperate situation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The Bible teaches that God the Father has provided a lawyer for all who turn from their sin, confess their guilt and beg for mercy. In 1 John 2:1-2 we are told, "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he himself is the propitiation for our sins."

The word "Advocate" here means *pleader* or *counselor*. Each of these words is a synonym for *lawyer*. What makes Jesus Christ a unique lawyer is that he actually paid the penalty for the guilt of each of his clients; and the Judge appointed him to do this in order to maintain justice. Not even a righteous lawyer would do this for a client. What a magnificent display of God's love! The eternal Son took to himself a complete human nature—yet without sin—and came into this world to live a perfect life of love and truth; and he died to satisfy the justice of God. It is mind-boggling, but true.

Will you be a fool and try to defend yourself before Almighty God on the day of judgment, or will you accept the Advocate that God has appointed to plead the cause of sinners? No other advocate will be sufficient on that dreadful day. You can engage this wonderful Advocate today, without cost, by turning from your sins, confessing them honestly to God and putting your trust in Jesus Christ.

Simply pray, "Lord, I am a sinner. I need an advocate. Please, forgive me for my sins, change my heart and be my Lord and Savior."

If this is your prayer and you mean it, then you have been forgiven and you have become a follower of Jesus Christ. This means that you need to associate with his people in his church, where his infallible Word the Bible is faithfully preached and practiced. He says, "Take up the cross and follow me" (Mark 10:21).