

WD December 9, 2024

“Representing Jesus”

Recently, I drove to Indianapolis which is about two hours from home. Along the way I saw a multitude of billboards advertising law firms. One had an Italian looking fellow holding a hammer promising to take on those who have hurt you in an accident. Another had an older fellow, with a little photo shopping, looking similar to Santa Claus with big words saying, “Feliz LawVidad.” How clever. There were at least a dozen other billboards of other lawyers all looking tough and ready to take your case and to represent you as your champion for justice. If that were not enough, the radio broadcasted a steady flow of lawyer commercials all promising to “get the compensation you deserve.”

Well, my wife happens to be in the legal world. She will be the first to tell you that most of them will represent you if your case is considered weak. Unless they feel like they can win a settlement and profit from your misery then they will likely not represent you. And because of this the sift cases that come through their offices for those that are worth their time. This also means that you are not necessarily represented as a person but as a means to an end.

If we are in a position where we need an attorney, and I pray that you will never need one for a bad situation, what most of us imagine is someone who will go the distance for us, someone that is invested in us. I’m not saying that all attorneys are in it just for the money but the ones who are dominate the market and give off the impression that all are not there “for the people” as they claim. We want someone who will not just settle for the quickest deal but someone who believes in our case as much as we do, especially if it is a life altering situation. That’s what we expect.

Well there is no more of a life altering situation then sin. So isn’t it good to know that you have a true representative in the biggest trial on the planet. Let’s consider together 1 John 2:1-2 which says, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Now let’s think on this. We are in the season of Advent. It’s a time of anticipation and hope. It is also a time that reminds us that Jesus will come back to judge the living and the dead just as we confess in the Creed. Judgement Day is described as horrifying by Jesus Himself. Judgement is coming. However, in Christ we face judgement day with Jesus at our side. He believes in us. He believes we are worth saving. This is why 1 John 2 speaks of Jesus as our advocate. He is in effect our defense attorney. He is standing before the Father making our defense in heaven’s court. We will recall in Acts 7:55 as Stephen saw Jesus standing at the Father’s side. It’s a picture of Jesus advocating, mediating for Stephen in his defense. For evidence Jesus no doubt shows His Father His wounds in his hands and side. Paid in full. This one is innocent in Jesus. Believers no longer have a debt to pay because we stand under grace and not under the law (Ephesians 2.5-9).

Scripture reminds us that Jesus represents His people. But scripture also encourages us to represent Jesus as Light and Salt. 1 John 2 argues its case to be people of the Light. 1 John 2:3-6 tells us, “³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴ Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”

As believers we stand in the righteousness of Jesus. This is not just a someday thing but is for today too. Jesus regularly tells us to be awake and alert, ready that any moment Jesus will return. It is our duty and call as Christians to represent the Lord. But too often life gets in the way, the stuff of life whittles away the hours, our energy, and our interest in holy things. The stuff of life fills us with fear, or business, or some thing that gets more attention that Jesus today. We know we should do better but we often just don’t get around to it.

John the Baptist had it right when in John 3:30 he says, “Jesus must become greater and I must become less.” This is exactly the way in which one overcomes the stuff of life. If anyone lived in a court of public opinion it was John. Yet John stuck to the message and mission—“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Is this not our mission and focus as well? If we leave an impression of Jesus wherever

we go then we are doing it right; to leave this impression upon our children, our spouse, our families, our friends and coworkers. Light and Salt stuff. It's a game changer.

John the Baptist and the Apostle John were of the same frame of mind. Both of them wanted others to see Jesus when others looked at them too. 1 John 2 tell us that obedience defined Jesus love for the Father. Obedience to the Word defines true love for Jesus. Obedience makes us genuine representatives in Christ whatever court we stand in. This is what John means when he says, "If anyone obeys His Word, love for God is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him." Love and obedience are our billboards. And our message is simple when it is focused on Jesus. We know He represents us faithfully. By God's grace perhaps, in spite of all the pressures to do otherwise, we too may stand with the Apostle John and with John the Baptist as true representatives today, tomorrow, and the next day. God' willing in Jesus.