

A Gospel Story – “The Loving Judge”

We have all broken the law at some point, right? Have you ever been pulled over? Or maybe not even caught, but you know you have pushed the speed limit at times or performed that ever-too-easy rolling stop at a stop sign.

Imagine one of those times you were speeding 20 miles over the limit. In a school zone. And you hit a kid. In the crosswalk. You know it's bad. You know you're guilty. Not only that, but there are 20 witness that saw you do it. You know there are going to be consequences, you are just not sure what they will be.

When you arrive at court, you're unsure of what to think. You are hoping that maybe it won't be that bad, but your confidence is not very high. You step into the court room and the bailiff barks, “All rise!” You stand, very nervous – until you see the judge enter. A sense of relief washes over you as your dad enters the courtroom and takes his place on the bench. You know he loves you and has always watched out for you and you're certain that this your lucky day.

Your dad declares the charges against you and notes the witnesses that stand by. The kid you hit is even in the courtroom looking on. Your dad tells you that there is no doubt that these charges against you are true. You know he's right, but you're still waiting to see how your dad will help soften the blow.

After reviewing the entire case, your dad, the judge, declares the punishment for the crime. He says that the law states that due to severity of the charges, you are now sentenced to a life without parole in prison. As you wait for him to further explain how this does not apply to you, he suddenly bangs his gavel and states that the case is closed.

Your heart sinks as you feel the world closing in on you. You rush to the bench and ask your dad why he did not let you off. He points out that you broke the law and he as a fair judge must hand out this sentence because of who he is and the job he has to do. You asks if he even loves you at all. “Yes,” he replies immediately as he stands up and removes his gown. He steps down from his bench and tells you, “That is why I am going to serve your entire sentence for you.”

His love overwhelms you as you realize that he had to give out the sentence because the crime was committed, but that he always intended to step into your place. You sob as you tell him not to take your place because he didn't deserve it, but his love is unwavering.

Now your life is forever changed as you remember what your dad did for you. Every time you visit him the same love exudes from him. There is never a trace of doubt or sadness for what he did, his love has never been shaken. This is why you tell everyone about your amazing dad and how he took your place.

Key Points to Share – Romans 3:21-26 (NIV)

- We have all broken the law (v. 23)
- In court, the judge is your dad (v. 21)
- You assume punishment will be less, but it is the same because he is a faithful judge (v. 25b & 26)
- You ask if he loves you. He replies, "Yes," takes off his robe and serves the sentence for you. (v. 22 & 24)
- Usually follow with YOUR story

Romans 3:21-26 *21But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (NIV)*