

Out of Court Settlement

Maranatha Media



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TRANSCRIPT FROM PRESENTATION
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OUT OF COURT SETTLEMENT

PREFACE BY MAX MCCLELLAND

This sermon is iconoclastic; that is, "characterized by an attack upon cherished beliefs or institutions." It perfectly tears down the idol of paganism, enthroned in Christian theology through the doctrine of penal substitution. Humanity is obsessed with justice. Justice is good, yes, but the human mind, in its fallen state, has no real idea about justice. Consider the following passages of scripture:

> They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, **that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.** And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. (John 16:2-3)

> But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth, Seeing you hate instruction And cast My words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, And have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; **You thought that I was altogether like you**; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes. (Psalms 50:16-21)
>
> **For my thoughts are not your thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Here we are faced with the harsh reality that the human perspective of justice is in direct opposition to God's perspective. With this in mind let us to consider the Christian/pagan theory of atonement, Penal Substitution:

> "The idea of penal substitutionary atonement is, as the name suggests, the claim that Christ's death paid a penalty ("penal"). As Christ did not deserve a penalty, he was paying it for others ("substitutionary"). And, the result of Christ's paying this price for others is that we are now forgiven ("atonement"). The idea of a "penalty" takes us into the realm of the law-court, the world of crime and punishment. Before the judge, the guilty party is dealt a penalty for their misdeeds, whether that be a fine, a prison sentence, or (depending on the jurisdiction) the death penalty. Does our sin warrant a penalty? The answer (it seems almost too obvious to even have to answer) is "yes". God is the judge of all the earth. He will not leave the guilt unpunished. Notice that the law court image means we are speaking of a judicial rather than natural penalty. A natural penalty is the consequence baked into the act itself. Abuse

> of alcohol leads to bad health outcomes, reckless spending leads to poverty, unkindness leads to a diminished social life. But in this context the penalty means more than "cause-and-effect in a moral universe". It specifically refers to the idea that God our judge applies a judicial penalty to our sins.[1]"

So, in other words, "God's justice" demands that sinners must be punished with death for their sins and that Jesus, as an innocent substitute, takes our place and absorbs the punishment. But notice that the punishment is clearly defined as judicial, that is, it is imposed upon Christ by the Judge. Who is the judge? God. So, although it does not so clearly state it (for the reality of the theory spoken in clear language is horrifying), penal substitution means: "God killed His Son instead of killing me." But this idea of pacifying the wrath of an angry god(s) is the very doctrine of paganism.

Popular Christian Preacher and Theologian John MacArthur expresses the importance of believing and accepting this doctrine:

> "If you don't understand the doctrine of penal substitution, you don't know why Christ died. You would assume that if you're a Christian, you would want to know why Christ died…Penal substitution is not some kind of optional issue. You've got a massive problem if God just says, "Hey, you're forgiven." The character of God would be called into question as to His integrity, His holiness, His virtue, His righteousness, and His perfection. God is so pure and holy that He will punish every single sin ever committed by every person, either in that person or in the substitute for that person. **That is the purest heart of Christianity** and soteriology."

[1] Shiner R. (2022). In My Place Condemned He Stood: Penal Substitutionary Atonement. The Gospel Coalition Australia Ltd. https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/in-my-place-condemned-he-stood-penal-substitutionary-atonement/

When I first became a Christian, I really wanted to understand what it was I was meant to believe in. I encountered this doctrine and I thought it made sense to me. I didn't think to imagine any other form of atonement because it seemed to me that this doctrine was more or less unanimously believed in throughout all the Christian denominations—"the purest heart of Christianity." What really drove this doctrine home for me was Ray Comfort, a preacher and street evangelist. His reasoning made such perfect sense to me that I could not deny it, God killed Jesus instead of killing me. I began to immediately go out onto the streets and imitate Ray Comfort. Here is a basic blueprint for how Ray evangelizes:

> **Ray:** Would you consider yourself to be a good person?
> **Bob:** Oh yes, a very good person.
> **Ray:** Well, can I ask you a few questions to see if that's true?
> **Bob:** Yeah. Go ahead.
> **Ray:** Have you ever told a lie? **Bob:** Yes sir.
> **Ray:** What does that make you? **Bob:** A liar.
> **Ray:** Have you ever stolen anything? **Bob:** Yes.
> **Ray:** What does that make you? **Bob:** A thief.
> **Ray:** Jesus said "whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart." Have you ever done that? **Bob:** Yes sir, plenty of times.
> **Ray:** Bob, by your own admission, you're a lying, thieving, adulterer at heart and you've got to face God on Judgment Day. If He judges you by the Ten Commandments, and I've only looked at three, are you going to be innocent or guilty. **Bob:** Guilty.
> **Ray:** Heaven or hell? **Bob:** Hell. **Ray:** Does that concern you? **Bob:** Yes.
> **Ray:** Do you know what death actually is? According to the Bible?
> **Bob:** No, please explain. **Ray:** The Bible says, "the wages of sin is death." God's given you death as wages for your sin. He's paying you in death. He's given you capital punishment. Like

how a judge looks at a heinous criminal who's raped three girls and then murdered them; he says, "You've earned the death sentence. This is your wages. This is what's due to you." And sin is so serious to a holy God that He's given you capital punishment. **Bob:** Wow, this is serious.

Ray: Do you know what God did for sinners so we wouldn't have to go to hell? **Bob:** No.

Ray: Jesus suffered and died on the cross for the sin of the world. The Ten Commandments are called the moral law. You and I broke the law. Jesus paid the fine. That's what happened on that cross. Bob, if you're in court and someone pays your fine, a judge can let you go; they can say, "Bob, there's a stack of speeding fines here; this is deadly serious, but someone's paid them. You're free to go." and he can do that which is legal and right and just. God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to suffer and die on the cross to take the punishment for the sin of the world. That means you don't have to end up in hell. God can legally forgive your sins because the debt has been paid.

As I began sharing the "gospel" in this way, I found I was able to convince many people. If you watch Ray Comforts videos online, you will find many people go "Ahhhh, I see. That makes sense." I believe a large part of this is due to the easy to swallow framework of a court of law. Religion and politics are the hardest things to talk about and they both incite almost immediate indignation when sharing with people (especially if they are not of the same opinion), but the courtroom is common ground for everybody and justice is like an innate human instinct. So when the gospel is presented in this way the natural biases against religion and spirituality are temporarily disarmed and the mind, instead of being thrust into some ethereal spiritual dimension beyond comprehension (as do many spiritual conversations), is placed in the familiar setting of a court bench. However, because our natural sense of Justice is crooked and the evangelist has almost complete control of the direction of the conversation, the fine print is not read.

The analogy to speeding fines being paid is simply inadequate. Monetary charges and the death sentence are both punishments, yes, but they are two very different things. If someone pays for your speeding fines, that is one thing, but for an innocent person to be killed instead of the guilty is a very different thing. To use one of Ray's examples: If a heinous criminal who's raped three girls and then murdered them is charged with the death sentence and an innocent man stands up in the courtroom and says, "I will die in place of him," will the judge consent? And if the judge consents, is this justice?

I remember listening to a Muslim evangelist debate a Christian. The Muslim clearly had a succinct understanding of the penal substitution theory of atonement and attempted to reframe the "court case" in, what I believe to be, a more honest description. It went something like this:

> "I am a shop owner. You steal from my shop. I am very angry at you. You ask me to forgive you, but I say "No, my sense of justice forbids me. You MUST pay me in full!" But you don't have the money. At this point I am so angry I am ready to kill you. Then my son steps forward and says, "Father, kill me instead." So I take my son and kill him in front of you. Then, once my insatiable desire to inflict punishment on account of sin is appeased, I forgive you."

This analogy is not perfect either, but I think it is more honest to the fact that God is perceived to be bound by justice, to the point of killing His own Son instead of the wrongdoer. The Muslim then goes on to explain that Allah can just freely forgive. And the Muslim makes a good point because forgiveness is not really forgiveness if you demand payment in full—it is revenge. Now, sure, the revenge is not taken out on us and therefore it is proposed to be "mercy," because Jesus took the bullet for us. But the question remains: Why couldn't God simply forgive? Why did He allow His sense of justice to take Him so far as to take the life of an innocent third party?

These are all questions that I have had to seek an answer to. There have been many brilliant books written on the subject, such as Adrian Ebens' *Cross Examined and Cross Encountered*[2] and Kevin Mullins' *Did God Kill Jesus*[3]. I believe the gospel is not constrained to the framework of a judicial court of law and that it can be presented in relational terms—in revealing character and truth and exposing lies—and I had largely laid the concept of making the cross fit into a legal transaction, to settle accounts, in the dust. That was, until I heard this sermon.

THE SERMON

Introduction: Liberty Outside the "Organized Church"

[Rowan]: Today I want to present something that's been on my heart. Okay, now this message could be titled anything, you could call it…you could call it "the gospel," you could call it "the good news," you could call it "the Passover," you could call this message anything…you could call it "Luke 23:34," when Christ said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." You could call this message anything, but I've chosen to call it **"Out-of-Court Settlement"**, which is an interesting term, and this is purposefully meant to be interesting. So, I hope as we go through towards the end, you will see why this is called an "out-of-court settlement".

Now, before I get into the message, one of the things that's been such a blessing to all of us, and to me more than others, is: ironically actually, that I believe the best thing that has happened to me in my study of the Word of God is to move away from the organized church. I know that would sound even blasphemous to some people, but it's been good to

[2] https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/cross-examined-and-cross-encountered
[3] https://lastmessageofmercy.com/book/view/did-god-kill-jesus

me because I've been able to exercise my mind on the Bible without restriction, without the need to conform to some set of principles that somebody has set for me.[4]

[Lorelle, Adrian's wife]: That was my experience.

[Rowan]: That was your experience.

[Adrian]: Liberty of conscience.

[Rowan]: Liberty of conscience, yes… So, I don't have to conform to *this* way of thinking. I can explore *this* way, and I can explore *that* way, and I can explore *that* way without fear.

[Adrian]: And eliminate the bias.

[Rowan]: Of course… And when I say without fear, that's a very important point. Because, not just the fear of judgment from the group, but the fear that I might be tipping off the wagon that God wants me to be in. So, I don't have that fear. Actually, I feel completely relaxed and entitled to be able to explore my Father's message and make a mistake while doing so. Okay. Learn by mistakes. I'm not nervous of making mistakes. I know I can make mistakes and get corrected. And this is one of the days, okay, where if I make a mistake, feel free to correct me.

[4] "The Holy Spirit works upon mind and heart. The time has come when through God's messengers the scroll is being unrolled to the world. Instructors in our schools should never be bound about by being told that they are to teach only what has been taught hitherto. Away with these restrictions. There is a God to give the message His people shall speak. Let not any minister feel under bonds or [be] gauged by men's measurement. The gospel must be fulfilled in accordance with the messages God sends. That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God's message for this time." 5LtMs, Ms 8a, 1888, par. 6

All right. So that's the first thing… So, as I present, I don't mean to be an expert in this message; like what Gavin was saying the other day, that when you prepare a message: often you put it all together nicely with all the verses in there, but then the evening before the presentation you are like, "Nah, not that." Then you start all over again. That's exactly what happened.

And this one is not, the verses are not inserted there, but I'm sure as I speak, you will recall the verses. And if not, we'll try to help each other.

[I, as editor of the transcript, will try my best to put the scripture references in as I go.]

Question: How and When Did Christ Take Our Sins?

So, the thing I want to address today is: I'm trying to answer the question, which I suggested we needed a study for. And this is just the beginning. And I'll be happy to hear what all of you guys' study. And the question came at a good time because it sort of comes together with some of the thoughts that were in me. And this is a question that is very important.

It's a question that I have not heard many people ask, even though it is obviously central to the entire experience of a Christian. The question is: **how and when did Christ take our sins?** I would suppose that everybody would know that, given that this whole [Christian] experience is about our sins being taken away.

And I remember asking one theologian, if I may call him that, who is within our movement, and I said, "Can you answer me this question? When and how did Christ take our sins?" And he said, "Ahhhhh…probably somewhere just before the Garden of Gethsemane. Somewhere there. Probably, somewhere there." At that time, I had not thought about it. But now thinking about it, I think the answer is much bigger and much broader and much more beautiful, than that. In fact, the Garden of Gethsemane is not even a tiny part of it. It's a much, much

broader thing. But to me, I've come to the conclusion that Christ took our sins in this sense: that he shielded us—not once, not twice, but even continually—from the consequences of our sins; or, as I prefer to call them, the *swift* and *immediate* consequences of our sins. This is how he took our sins.

Because, in the past, I've thought of him as sort of taking my adultery, and then taking my theft, and then taking my lying, and all the actual sins by name and placing them upon himself, and now that they are on him, he takes them to the cross. But I don't think that's what it means; the taking of the individual transgressions. I don't think it means this, although that is a part of it. But it's much broader than that. He did not do it in that sense. But he did it in the sense that: the consequences of our sins, that we have incurred, are continually shielded from us.

[Adrian]: So Rowan, you're saying *consequences*, not *punishment*?

[Rowan]: Not punishment, not punishment. That's a very good question. Consequences in the sense of *design law*. Okay? Not in the sense of *imperial law*. All right. In other words: it's consequences in the sense that this is *the natural end* of *the choice that people have made*, rather than this is *the choice of a power to inflict the punishment* on those who have decided to be sinful. This is how I understand it: Christ took our sins in that he shielded us from the legally demanded—from a human perspective; human law perspective—immediate consequences of our sins. And this happened in at least **four ways**, but also, as I say, continually. So I will start here.

Now, remember when we presented last time about the biases and dealing with them, we said that "We want to build doctrine on an axiom, which is a self-evident truth that cannot change." And I don't know if there's anybody who has ever read the Bible, any Christian of any denomination whatsoever, or even those who believe in Judaism, the Messianics and so forth; I don't know if there's anyone who would ever disagree with this statement, that: a sinner cannot stand before God

without being consumed by the brightness of God. That is a self-evident truth. It does not need proving. You don't need to prove it, because if you try to prove it, maybe you will not be successful at proving it (insinuating that you would die in the attempt). You don't have to go before God to prove that you can't stand without being consumed. That's a pure truth. There's no doubt in it. It's absolute; absolute truth. So, we can build on that; we want to reason from that.[5]

The First Way in which Christ Shielded us from the Consequences of Our Sins: Temporarily Bridging the Gap and Maintaining a Connection to the Life Source.

We know that any sin immediately cuts off the sinner from the source of life, such that the sinner is supposed to receive death.[6] Thus no sinner can directly draw life from the Father, nor can appear before the Father's brightness and glory, and live. So it follows, therefore, that if ever the first man was to sin, or any of God's creatures whatsoever was to sin—not just you, okay, but all intelligent free-willed creature, if any one of them was to sin—the only way that such a creature could live is if it were shielded from the immediate death that was a result of that sin. Clear, right? Because the moment you cut yourself off from the source of life, you don't have life. So the only way you can continue to live is if a way could be found by which you could retain some connection to the source of life. Maybe not as good a connection as a direct connection with God, but some connection that will continue to sustain life. And that's the way Christ took our sins.

[Craig]: So Rowan, this is exactly where the crossroads of where Christianity has brought in the doctrine of immortality without God.

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[5] Exodus 33:20 - He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." Also, 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

[6] Remember, Adam and Eve on the day they sinned, death came into effect, but not just that, also the privilege of from eating from the tree of life was lost (Genesis 2:17; 24).

[Rowan]: Without God, yeah. That doctrine contradicts the axiom, and therefore cannot stand, because you can never contradict the axiom, because the axiom says you cannot stand. You see, only one sin is enough, only one is enough to cut you off, and therefore by that one sin alone, immortality is impossible. So, there is need immediately, and this is why we know and we understand that as soon as there was a sinner, there was a savior; because somebody, and Christ did it, had to come into that bridge immediately so that a separation from life would not result in death, so that the sinner could be bought some time to consider reconciliation. And this is what we are. We are living on borrowed time, which was borrowed by that man who took our sins. Because when he took our sins, the law was able to press pause for a while; the law of consequences, was able to press pause for a while, so we can have the time for reconciliation.

[Gavin]: Could we just call that life support?

[Rowan]: So we are on life support, right?

[Liam]: Would it be better said, rather than "he *took* the consequences," that "he continually *takes* the consequences"? Because it's ever-happening? It's not past-sentence.

[Rowan]: Yes, he continues. It's ever-happening. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them [us]." (Hebrews 7:25).

[Daniella]: How does the text, "we reap what we sow" (Galatians 6:7), fit in with the fact that there is a delay in the consequences?

[Rowan]: Good question. So the verse that says, "you reap what you sow" is basically stating the law of consequences, which is a natural law *and* a spiritual law. You'll find that even in the science level they use that law, just as much as we use it in the spiritual sense. But—and this is what is amazing to me, and I'm going to touch on that later on—the law of consequences will give you what you deserve, according to what

you have sown. But the law of faith allows you to re-sow. Okay? You have sown again. You have sown the bad thing, and the law of consequences was leading you to death. But after the pause, you can sow again, and go in a different direction, towards life.

[Adrian]: It's written in the commandments, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, onto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, but showing mercy to them that love me and keep my commandments." So that mitigates consequences.

[Rowan]: That mitigates; that stops the consequences.

[Adrian]: Or reduces.

[Rowan]: But *only* for a time, *except* if you choose Christ. Okay, only for a time, and we'll come to that in my third point.

So, Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. That is to say: to even make the earth and its inhabitants exist, given the risk that at any time rebellion against God could arise, Christ had to be ready and able to reduce the fullness of the glory of God, to allow life from God to continually flow through him, to us—as recipients. So in that case, he shielded us from the immediate consequences of our sins.

[Adrian]: He veiled his divinity with humanity.

[Rowan]: Yes, yes, and not just *after* the incarnation, but *before*, right *from the beginning of the world*.

[Adrian]: Amen.

[Rowan]: Yeah, so that's the first thing we know, and I read some of the things, but I will not read everything [from his notes]. I know you're following.

And as it says in Hebrews 7:25, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." So he shielded us, not because the Father was ready to cut us off, but actually because we'd cut ourselves off, (Psalm 9:16). So it's more like he is holding us back from running away totally, rather than trying to inflict on us the injury because of what we've done, (Rev 7:1). So just as much as the law of consequences would lead the sinner to destruction, Christ made possible—by faith,[7] through the same law of consequences—for men to be reconnected fully to the father. Sinners got a temporary reprieve; a chance to re-sow and redirect the law of consequences to produce life, through faith. That is, if they choose to believe in Christ and learn from him. And this part, ***learn from him***, will become very important as we come to this next point.

The Second Way in which Christ Shielded Us from the Consequences of Our Sins: The Author and Finisher of the Original Condition, Faith.

Now, the second is that Christ's incarnation, by virtue of hereditary law—that is to say, "like begets like"—he took upon himself the nature of Abraham (that is, of fallen man), not the nature of Adam before the fall. And the Bible actually says that, so I'm not making this up. (Hebrews 2:16) "For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham." And that nature, mental faculties and abilities to make right decisions and to resist sin [had depreciated]. Not just "resist sin" in terms of *making the choice to not break the law,* but "resist sin" in the sense of *doing good to overcome sin*. Okay, these are two different things. I hope you see the distinction, okay?

Here's the distinction: There's money on the table. I decide not to steal it, okay? I decided not to steal, although thoughts [to steal it] may have come to my mind, but I decided not to steal it. So that's one thing, okay? But there's resisting evil by doing good, which Matthew chapter five, the sermon on the mount, basically explains… Get one cheek slapped?

[7] That is, by the law of faith (Rom 3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.)

Give him your other one. Not just that. The guy who stole from you? Give him more. Okay? That's what Christ did, isn't it? Yes. Christ takes the very people who were rebellious and he says to them, "Sit with me on my throne." It doesn't just restore the relationship, but it brings them even further, beyond the relationship, which is overcoming or resisting evil by doing good.

This is where, and I don't know if I said it before, but one of the things that happens when you discover that something that you had been taught before was not right, all the doctrines come back under the microscope…all of them. Check everything; put it back under the microscope. And this time the microscope is very magnified; very careful. But I want to comment on **the doctrine of sanctification**.

We've understood the doctrine of sanctification mostly in terms of, "I'm no longer sinning as much as I used to." That's how many people understand the doctrine of sanctification. But I've understood it differently now. Sanctification is growing in doing good, because it is good that overcomes sin. Okay? In other words, the overcoming that sanctification speaks about is not that direct thing. As I was explaining earlier: there's money and they don't want to steal it. No, it's beyond that. It's actively living a life of doing good to others. That is sanctification to me. That's how I understand sanctification now. Actively, and that actively put in bold. **ACTIVELY** living a life of doing good to others, because *that* overcomes sin.

[Adrian]: It's light, not the absence of darkness.

[Rowan]: Yes, exactly, thank you. Good statement. It's light, not the absence of darkness. Do unto others as we want them to do unto you.

[Colin]: Your light shall shine before men that may see your good works, (Matt 5:16).

[Rowan]: Yes, that men may see your good works. So you have all the verses and the quotes, like I said, they're coming to mind as we go without me including them in there, which is good.

[Judy]: And we're motivated to good works because of the light living in us. It's not darkness, but even people with no light will do good. But knowing, on the spiritual side, that we are motivated to do good works and to look after one another and our communities *because* of the light and love living in us.

[Rowan]: Light in us motivates us to do the good. So we're not doing the good *because* the company needs me to do that. I was talking to one friend of mine and he said, "You know the customer service agents, when you're talking to them on the phone? They're the nicest people you'll ever talk to. You get very angry and they'll keep talking to you nicely as if they themselves are not even capable of getting angry." But they're not doing that for the right reasons, right? No, they're doing that because they want a check at the end of the month.
But you could do the same for a totally different reason, because the light in you is saying, "don't get angry." Even the very capacity to get easily upset is not there anymore because of the light that is in you. And I think that's what sanctification leads to.

But let's come back to this. So because Christ had taken the nature of Abraham, the Bible says, "he was tempted as we are." "Yet," he was "without sin," (Hebrews 4:15) because sin never had a stepping stone into his heart. Sin never found somewhere to start. Jesus says, "the devil has nothing in me." (John 14:30). He cannot find somewhere to latch on so he can start doing what he's doing. And this is an important point. And that was only possible because He totally, totally relied on the Father, (John 6:57). And this again, when we were discussing the subject of righteousness by faith, the 1888 message, you will hear some people say that Christ was righteous because he had divine nature; that he used this divine nature to be righteous. If Christ did that, then we have no

chance…we have no chance. Because what it means is: our Father misjudged us.

He thought we could do this, but we can't. Why? Because He had to give us divine nature first, before he asked us to be obedient. But it's the other way around: we are obedient and then we are told that we receive immortality. So, obedience must be possible without divine nature; but by relying on the One who is Himself the divine nature—Christ. So this is a very important point which makes a lot of differences between theologians because there are a lot of arguments about how "righteousness by faith" works.

So, He did not only rely on the Father only to make the choice not to sin, but to use the Father's method of overcoming sin **by doing good**. Matthew chapter 5 again, I think verse 45: **"**Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong." So, now, be like your Father. Be perfect, like your Father. And why should you be perfect like your Father? Because [even] the sinners receive rain. Okay. So they can eat and go and sin again with nice full tummies. Okay. So our Father continually shows us good, even when we are doing bad. And that's the method that Christ was using.

So, as I've already mentioned: it is faith, not the nature, that gives victory over sin. It is the faith in Christ that gives us victory over sin, not the nature that we receive before we get the victory over sin.

So, while Christ took that fallen nature, unlike us, to Him, the propensity to sin did not exist, having been totally extinguished by the total reliance on the full glory of the Father. In doing so, He breached the barrier that sin had erected. That is to say, the fullness of the glory of God and the complete force of His life could be contained by a man without destroying the man. That's who can receive the power of God. That power of God, which when Daniel had an encounter with it, he says he fell flat on his face. (Daniel 8:27).

[Craig]: He was sick.

[Rowan]: The full brightness of the Father. Men can be able to contain that, by faith. They can be able to draw from the source of life, because Christ has made it possible for us to draw from that source of life from which we have been cut off because of the sins of Adam. Thus through His birth in human nature and the accompanying victory over the propensity to sin through the uninterrupted drawing of life from the Father—as He says, "I live by the Father." (John 6:57)—not only were the consequences of our sins taken away, but He became the author of the condition by which men, who were once estranged from God, could once again live before the presence of the glory of God, drawing from the fullness of eternal life and yet without being consumed by that fullness of God.

So, He made that condition, and that condition he made or "produced", by faith. Thus He became "the Author and Finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2). **That's how he took our sins.** That is, by shielding us from the consequences of the sin that was supposed to come before us. But He also reconnected man to the fullness of eternal life, despite man's infirmities—which infirmities were caused by sin. So once again, the law of heredity…and this is an important point…the law of heredity met the law of faith, mercy, grace and justice—that is, the love of God. By the law of heredity, men can be reborn in a different nature by faith, mercy, grace and justice. That is the love of God. Let me explain what I mean.

Remember we say that "the law of consequences depends on how you sow." You sow the bad way, consequences come in that direction. You saw the good way, consequences also come in that direction. The law of heredity, which is "like begets like," operates in exactly the same way. If you become the son of the devil, the law of heredity says "like begets like" and you become like him. But if you **choose** to be the son of the Father, the law of heredity says "like begets like" and you become like

Him. Then John says, "all who are born of God overcome the world," (1 John 5:4) because the law of heredity is working on them to produce that which is like the Father that they've chosen to be of. So, we have a choice: "Who is to be our father?" And when we make that choice, the law of heredity plays the rest of the song and we enjoy the rest of the song.

So, in the second point, basically, in the short of it, were saying: "Christ shielded us from the consequences of our sins when He became like us and showed us how to overcome sin and how to be reconnected to the Father, while He took the nature that we are also in." So, as they say in simple words, "He was not just our Savior, He was also our example." Was both the Savior and the examplar of how to live. He did both. And many people like to call him "the Savior" alone and not call him "the Examplar," you know, but he was also an example of how to do that.

The Third Way in which Christ Shielded us from the Consequences of Our Sins: A Refusal to Seek Legal Retribution.

The third point is: Now let's come to the trial, which is where I intend to spend most of my time. Okay, the trial. So, in the trial, with the subsequent accusations labelled upon Him [Christ] in the name of God, were placed upon Him by men, by men themselves, by the sins of men (chief among them being men's misapprehension of the character of God). In other words, men, acting in a position of authority—as the high priest was—which position of authority he was given by God and having a wrongful and sinful view of what God wants, accused Christ of being contrary to what God wants.

You see that? The men who accused Christ of being contrary to God, were themselves appointed by God. And they were acting on behalf of God. In their position of authority, they were acting as if on behalf of God, and they condemned him on behalf of God, (Luke 22:70,71). And the Bible says, "Those who are going to persecute you will think that they're doing God a service; a favor." (John 16:2). They have some thought that they're doing what God wants, but they're not doing what

God wants. But I want you to follow very carefully what I'm going to say here…

So, because of their misapprehension of God's character, they accused Christ of being contrary to what God wants and condemned Him to death by the law, which men thought was God's desire, yet it was not, which was the very misapprehension of God's character. Yet the law, from a divine perspective, seeing a just man condemned would have condemned the accusers of Christ. When Christ was on the cross, condemned by men from the perspective of what they think God is, the pure law of God looking at Him on the cross could not condemn him; In fact, it exalted him and would have condemned His accusers, right? So, the law would have condemned His accusers and hence bring upon them swift destruction. But He, who is the Law itself, uttered these words—and I think these are probably the most beautiful words in the Bible, because these words explain Colossians 2:14 (And I'll come to that later [page 16])—these words: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they're doing."(Luke 23:24). Okay. Only by mercy was imminent justice towards the accusers of Christ suspended, In the presence of divine law, to buy them time for reconciliation. This is where we started. Remember where we started?

We started with a question: When and how did Christ take our sins? We concluded that, "as soon as there was a sin, there was a savior," because even just one sin brings the swift and immediate consequence of separation from God, our life source. Because of this, Christ had to come and bridge the gap immediately, so that our separation from life would not immediately result in death, that we [the sinner] could be bought some time to consider reconciliation. When He took our sins, the law of consequences was able to press pause for a while, that we could have the time for reconciliation.

[Rowan]: But the law, from a human perspective, which is the perspective that says, "This guy has done something wrong. Kill him… Justice". From a human perspective, the law was more than satisfied. It was, in fact, ashamed, because that law was instead being used by the

unrighteous, on the righteous. Because normally, the law is used by the neutral on the unrighteous, to condemn. But now, it was being used by the unrighteous on the righteous. And the law, even human law would not accept that; even human justice would not accept that.

[Craig]: Pilate pronounced His innocence. (Luke 23:14).

[Rowan]: Yes. He did.

So, the law has the responsibility to protect the right from the wrong. It has the responsibility to protect the wrongfully accused from his accusers. That's what the law is supposed to do. And this is what it was supposed to do on the cross. And that's, I want to say, what it did on the cross. Okay… but in a different way. Let's move on.

Again, only by mercy was the law saved for being used to violate itself,[8] because the righteous Christ, being condemned, gave up his claim to be defended by the law when He uttered the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they're doing." (Luke 23:34)

Because at that time, legally, whether in divine law or from the human perspective of law, Christ had the right to say, "Let's go to court. You against me; you, Jews and Romans, against me. Let's go to court. Let's bring the evidence. Let's marshal the evidence." And they will not win that case. Before the law, they will not win that case. But Christ, instead of proceeding with the court, he pleaded insanity, not for himself, but for us. Yes, he pleaded insanity because he said, "No. They do not know what they are doing. And, I cannot go to court with a people who don't know what they're doing." He refused to go to court with a people who did not know what they were doing. He said, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing."

[8] in other words, the law being used by Christ's accusers, would have turned back on them, to condemn them immediately, killing them.

So by withdrawing and refusing to press charges, which the law allowed him to, which the law demanded him to—from a human perspective of law and justice[9]—because he was righteous, the law demanded that he could press charges because the law is there to protect the wrongfully accused from the accuser. So he had the legal right from any legal perspective to press on with the charges, to go to court on the cross. But he said, "No. I will not go to court with these people because they do not know what they are doing." Now, this opens up a whole new big thing that I want to just quickly explore.

So he could have condemned them on the cross; As he says, "don't you know that I could call my Father and he would send me…" what?

[Audience]: Twelve legions of angels.

[9] Human justice refuses mercy. In a court of law, if a violator of the law goes unpunished, then it is said there is no justice. Human justice demands punishment for wrongs. If one is let go unpunished, they might go and commit the same crime, but this time unrestrained by the fear of punishment. So it is that every violation of human law MUST be punished. This is primarily because the judges of human courts have no power to reform the hearts of men, to perceive whether a person is sincerely sorry for their actions, and they have no legal right to assume responsibility over those who may be harmed if the law-breaker is allowed to go back into society unpunished. For these reasons it is consider wrong for human judges to show mercy, especially when dealing with violent criminals. However, unlike human justice, God's justice is not incompatible with mercy, in fact, God declares that the right (or "just") thing to do is to show mercy; God's justice IS mercy. Indeed, the seat of His Presence, which is directly above the law of God, is called "the Mercy-Seat". God knows what is in the hearts of men and as to if a sinner is truly repentant or not. God also knows whether, like in the case of the cross, they are ignorant of what it is that they are doing. God seeks not so much as to restrict sinners from sinning, but rather to reform sinners' hearts from their predisposition to sin, and He does this by offering mercy. Because God can providentially mitigate the scope of consequences that may result if the sinner refuses to be reformed, it is not considered unjust for Him to manifest mercy to a repentant sinner—ultimately, He suffers the most.

[Rowan]: He could. He was totally legally within his rights to do so, because he was being wrongfully accused. **He had that right, but he didn't take it. And once again, he shielded us from the imminent consequences of our sins.** But it gets better than that. It gets much better than that.

[Audience]: Do you think Christ was revealing good and evil in the literal sense? As if to say, "Here is evil at its best, and I'll stand here to be judged for who I am."

[Rowan]: That's exactly what's happening. I'm refusing the urge to start preaching and go on and on because I will lose the format that I put here. So I'm going to go through the format and then I will just open up. Let's go to number four.

The Fourth Way in which Christ Shielded us from the Consequences of Our Sins: No Heavenly Intervention

We have lived the trial, now we're on the cross. As I said, it was totally legally justifiable for God now, not just for Christ, for God and all the heavenly angels to intervene at the cross. Legally, they had that right according to the law because again, the law has an obligation to protect the wrongfully accused from the accuser. This is what happens in our courts every day. The wrongfully accused must be protected by the law. So the Father and all the hosts of angels, they had a perfect legal right. It was within their rights to stand up and protect Christ.[10] But they too, they didn't. They didn't.

And once again, man was shielded from the consequences of the sins that he has brought upon himself. In fact, in both divine law and the

[10] to protect Christ, not to attack the accusers. However, the very act of protecting Christ by divine power would immediately destroy the sinner, not because it was intentional, but because sinners cannot stand before divine power when manifested in their opposition.

human perspective of law, those laws demanded that if somebody was there who could intervene,[11] they should intervene and rescue Christ. But it didn't happen that way.

But to do so, if the Father had intervened, that would have brought a challenge. Remember when we started, we said, men draw in life from the Father, but now we cannot draw directly from the Father because of sin and there's an intermediate through whom the life of the Father flows to man**.** Now if the Father would have to come to rescue Christ from them, there's no more intermediate between them. In other words; to pronounce it in a different way: If the Father and the heavenly hosts were to appear on the cross to rescue Christ, that would have been the end of it. So because they didn't, once again, man was shielded from the consequences of the choices of the sins that he was making at that particular point.

And it is important to see that if the guy who is defending you has to be rescued from you, this is the problem. If the guy who is defending you has to be rescued from you, then it follows he can no longer defend you. Okay. And that's the end of it. Now there's nothing else; **there's nothing else again to shield us from the consequences of our sins.**

So this court setting here that's being set up here is the ultimate court setting. It is full of intrigue. It is full of situations which cannot be resolved easily without totally losing men forever. Because whilst Christ cannot condemn humanity, the Father also cannot intervene. Because both those acts would mean the destruction of men. So that way he took our sins.

Thus divine justice, i.e. leaving a sinner to face self-inflicted death, was not exercised because of mercy. In other words, faced with the choice of saving his righteous beloved son or his rebellious children, God decided to save the rebellious children so he might convince them that

[11] as police do to protect someone who is being wrongfully attacked by other(s).

his true character is of utmost love towards them and that he never intended to destroy them. For if God had ever had a reason to destroy humanity, there was never a more perfect time to destroy humanity, to find a good reason to do so, than at the cross. And at that particular time, he did not do it.

[Audience]: You would have to assume then that he is also shielding the angels.

[Rowan]: By extension, we have to apply this scenario to angels, in that they too are also being shielded. Because they too, at some point, at least some of them, made the wrong choice when they followed the devil. So I would say "yes," in as far as him shielding them from that, I would say "yes." I think he is the intermediary. As 1st Corinthians 8:5-6 states, particularly the 6th verse, right? Can you read that?

> But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, BY whom *are* all things, and we BY him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

In other words, he stays there as an intermediary, not just to shield the sinner, but also for the purpose of the risk that anyone of God's creation might choose to rebel. He covers that risk. He's the surety of that risk. Because if he was not there, any sin would result in immediate obliteration, if I can use that word. And there would never be an opportunity for the Father to reconcile with anyone of his children who has ever chosen his own path.

[Audience]: So as soon as iniquity was found in Lucifer, he was being shielded?

[Rowan]: He was being shielded. Yes, the devil too was being shielded.

So if God ever had a reason, as I said, to destroy humanity, the cross was the perfect time to do that. And he would be totally justified at that

point. Nobody would accuse him of anything. Because according to the law, which has the responsibility to protect the wrongfully accused from the accusers, God was perfectly holy and just if he had intervened to save Christ…but he didn't.

So if he would not destroy us, even when we were so unrighteous as to destroy his own righteous son, then when was he ever going to find the reason to destroy us? When did he ever intend to do so? Thus, **the cross itself is the very evidence that God does not destroy his people.**

[Adrian]: The thought that God destroys actually destroys God.

[Rowan]: Exactly. Yes. The thought that God destroys, destroys God. I like that quote.

[Audience]: It's interesting too that Peter tried to do exactly what you are talking about in the Garden of Gethsemane when he tried to attack those who came to take Jesus away; he thought this was justifiable. He tried to apply the law. He knew Christ was innocent and they were unholy and he tried to put it right.

[Rowan]: Yes, good point. The point has been made that Peter tried to take things in his own hands and find an opportunity to help the law achieve its ends when he picked up his sword and cut off the ear of that man, but Christ said, "No, put your sword back in its place." Again, he shielded men from the immediate consequences of their sin.

The Victim Closes the Case: Colossians 2:14

Now, when Christ uttered these beautiful words, very beautiful words, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they're doing," he refused to prosecute humanity, even if he was guaranteed to win the case. He took away the record of sins from the accuser. This is how he took away the record of sins from the accuser. This is Colossians 2 verse 14.

I don't know if it's different in some legal jurisdictions, but I know in those that I know, if the person who is entitled to seek redress at the court decides not to prosecute, no one else can prosecute. The case is dead. It doesn't matter how much you wanted it as a third party for the case to go through the court, the moment the person who is the wrongfully accused says, "No, I'm not going on with this court process," the case is dead; It's closed. Why? Because anybody who wants to stand as an accuser can stand in that court if they like, but they will stand with their hands empty, because there's no record of sin because it has been withdrawn by the owner of the record of sin—the owner of the record of sin is the one who has been wronged.

Okay, so Colossians 2 verse 14, Christ was the one who was wronged. And he was the one who was holding the record of sin. And when he withdrew it, nobody could blame us because we don't have that record on us. That's Colossians 2 verse 14. I may address that a little bit later.

So if the one entitled to prosecute chooses not to, then there's no one else who can prosecute. The case is dead. By that, he made a show of the devil. Tony spoke about that just this morning. Because he withdrew the charges—when he was on the cross, he withdrew the charges—the devil and his principalities stood there in that court, which they had set up themselves, by the way, and there were no charges to lay on humanity. Because the one who owned those charges, the one who was the aggrieved party, the one who was the wrongfully accused,[12] had withdrawn them by forgiveness. **It is in forgiveness that mercy equals justice.**

[12] he one who is also the aggrieved part by virtue of being the lawgiver (or authority) of the law that was broken by man.

Because it is JUST not to go to court with a person who is not mentally capable of proceeding with the court proceedings. It is just![13] If you go to any law today and ask any lawyer today, it is just to do that. You cannot go to court with a person who doesn't have the capacity to go through the court proceedings. So the moment he withdrew that, it was no longer possible. The case was dead.

So the only thing the devil and his principalities proved by their presence at that court, which they themselves had set-up at the cross, is that they carry the evil desire to destroy humanity—that's the only thing that they proved. That's why he was able to take them captive[14], because they've been proven, according to the law, which protects the wrongfully accused from the accuser; they've been proven that they are on the wrong side of the law. So they were captured at that point.

[They devil and his principalities used deceit to snare humanity in sin and confuse their minds about the whole matter, then, once humanity had fallen into the trap, the devil took these confused people and placed them in a court to prosecute them. Christ, the only innocent person of the race since the fall, came to place himself at the helm of the race as their representative and the devil manifest the same treatment against him as he did towards those who had sinned. This only revealed that satan's desire to prosecute humanity for their sins was not out of a desire to see true justice fulfilled, but out of an unholy hatred for God's children. The devil was just as willing to have an innocent man condemned as he was a chief of sin. Therefore, it was through the devil's own deceit that his character was exposed and condemned—he was shown to be in violation of the very law he was pressing against the fallen race, yet he, unlike us, was not ignorant of his sins and thus was

[13] which is why we do not prosecute a child even if the child commits a heinous crime. Mercy to the child and justice to the child are the same act executed in the same just and merciful decision.

[14] That's why the Scriptures say: "When he went to the highest place, he took captive those who had captured us and gave gifts to people." (Ephesians 4:8, GOD'S WORD Translation)

not able to receive forgiveness. The devil and his principalities were therefore forever taken captive, their accusations nullified; their insatiable appetite for "justice" fell upon their own heads in the very court they themselves had set-up.]

[Audience]: Rowan, can you say that again please?[15]

[Rowan]: Okay, I'm saying, at the cross, when Christ said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they're doing," he chose not to continue with the court process. If he was to continue the court process and the evidence were to be marshalled against the Jews and the Romans, he would be justified, and they would be condemned by the law. But before he got to that step where they would be condemned by the law, he said, "I cannot go through with that, because they don't know what they're doing." For having said "they don't know what they are doing," it was not possible to continue to the point where people would be condemned because of what they'd done to Christ. And therefore**, the accusations that were labelled** by the devil **against men** were withdrawn. When Christ withdrew them by forgiveness, by the mercy shown them at the cross, the devil did not have anything left to go through with against them in that court case. He could not resuscitate that case. And that case is gone forever. It cannot be resuscitated.

[15] one is captive if his ability to plan and execute own decisions is taken away. Captivity takes away one's resources to act independently. When Christ withdrew the record of sin, which was the only resource by which the devil and his angels relied on to continue to wage their war against God and man, the devil and his angels were left with nothing. They have no resources to persist, thus they are captive. By that they are also captive in time, because the case for which they exist to prove is lost. Thus it is said in Rev_12:12 "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Lacking time is the greatest of all captivities.

> [Christ forgave all our trespasses by] Blotting out **the handwriting of ordinances** that was **against us**, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:14-15)

Because, I don't know if you know, in legislation/in legal jurisdictions, if you choose not to proceed with the case as the accused, you can never restart that case. Okay? Let's suppose you do something to me, maybe you steal from me, and I go with you to court and I say, "Okay, I don't want to proceed now with this court. I'm choosing not to stand in the court as a witness against this person." In some jurisdictions, I have to sign that I'm not going to open that case again. So the case is dead.

[Lorelle]: So, you can't 5 years later decide, "Oh I will go to court with this."

[Rowan]: You can't say, "I've thought about it again and I think we can go to court now on that case. The same case which I had previously said, 'I am not pressing charges.'"

So here's the thing: Christ himself having withdrawn the case—if we're to look at it from the perspective I'm talking about—cannot reopen the case.

[Adrian]: Can I add another layer?

[Rowan]: Sure, please.

[Adrian]: Christ withdrawing the case is still a condescension to human justice, because Christ would never judge anyone. But he speaks in our language [language which speaks to our sense of human justice], so that we might understand, "Oh, he's not prosecuting me."

[Rowan]: Yes. I was trying to capture that. That's why I kept saying either by divine law or by human law perspective. I was trying to capture that. From a divine law perspective, we don't even get to that point. But from a human law perspective, yes, we can get there. And, at least at the cross, we are playing according to the cards of the human law perspective, but there's divine law behind it; It's dictating things from behind.

[Adrian]: Amen.

[Rowan]: So, let me move on… But the devil wanted the case to go ahead. Okay. He wanted Christ to make a decision, either to come down from that cross or to do something. The devil was teasing him to do something. Provoking him to do something. To cast us off or do something. Either proceed with the case or condemn these people so we can get the case done with. But do something. But Christ refused. **And this is once again how he took our sin because he shielded us from the consequences of our sins.**

[Audience]: And isn't this love overruling evil? As opposed to love destroying people?

[Rowan]: Yes, this is it.

[Bronwyn]: Interesting too, another example from Peter: When Jesus told him He was going to die, Peter said, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (Matthew 16:22). And Jesus said to him, "Get behind Me, satan!"

[Rowan]: Because he wanted to change that paradigm.[16] Exactly.

[16] Peter wanted a Lord who operates according to human perspective of justice, to execute violent revenge on their enemies. Peter did not expect a Lord would be

All right. If Christ, at the teasing, provoking, of the devil, had used his own power to come down from the cross, and those beautiful words, "Father forgive them for they know not what they're doing." were not uttered, then, at the very least, the case was undecided. That's at the very least. Okay. The court was only temporarily adjourned because this case is not over. It's not decided. At the very least, the accused (Christ) would have been accused of tightening the legal process. He has refused to go through with the court process. And what happens when you refuse to go through the court process without giving good reason for that? It means you're probably guilty. Okay? If you are interfering with the course of natural justice, you're probably guilty. That would suggest that he was guilty as charged by the devil and men. But he refused to go to court with people for a different reason.

Not because he used his own divine power to come down from the cross. That's not how he refused to go through with the court process. He refused it for a different reason: that men do not have the mental capacity to defend themselves if Christ would lay counter charges in his defence. **That was not just fair, but the very meaning of both mercy and justice.**[17] Because mercy and justice from both a human perspective and a divine perspective, become one when forgiveness is applied. They become one when forgiveness is applied because it is just, as in "just-ice", not to prosecute a person who is unable to be prosecuted.

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beaten up by his enemies without even intimating thoughts of revenge, but rather saying, forgive them for they know not what they do.

[17] In the context of mentally or spiritually limited individuals, as every sinner is by definition, the only way any law or any court can ever be just to them is to be merciful.

[Adrian]: From heaven's perspective. [I figure Pastor Adrian makes this corrective comment[18] in part due to the fact that human justice, in spite of mercy, will often condemn an innocent man for the "greater good" and call it "justice". For example: "And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is better for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.'" (John 11:49-50). This same principle can be clearly seen in the book "The Crucible". The pressures of Satanic justice, that every sin MUST be punished, presses itself upon the human heart and creates a mob mentality that if

[18] Actually, it is both from heaven's perspective and from human perspective. Humans do understand that it is just that a person whose is unable to be prosecuted for mental reasons should not be prosecuted. As I said before, that is how we treat under-age children when they do wrong. So in that case, even human justice applies heaven's perspective of justice through mercy. However, when adults transgress, human law perspective separates justice from mercy, because it is assumed that an adult knows what he is doing, or at least reasonably expected to know. From a theological perspective, Christians assume that God is using their adult version of justice separate from mercy. Yet God ever uses the child form of justice which is the same and mercy. That is because, our children, whom we forgive easily, are not that far from us in terms of mental capability for court proceedings than we are to God. In other words, in God's court process, if there was one, we are worse than children. One might think that this leads to universalism, but no. Instead our sin which ultimately brings destruction is the unpardonable sin, i.e. the sin of refusing to learn from Christ through his Spirit which lights every man that cometh into the world. And that is true in both the divine or child form of justice with mercy as in the human or adult form of justice without mercy. Both systems require the sinner to learn and be transformed such that they do not commit sin again. Hence prison has often been rebranded as correctional service. it is when correction is rejected that the mercy has been rejected and the sinner receives the kind of justice that he wants, i.e. the one without mercy, and that by the law of consequences, which is a design not imperial law.

So, that is my point, that humans acknowledge both forms of justice, one with mercy and one without mercy. They just have not thought about it to the level where they align the justice with mercy with God's form of justice. Hence the use of the human court setting in this sermon, to draw attention to this

SOMEONE does not take the punishment, for whatever sin it is that has been committed, that the law, the very fabric of society, will breakdown. So Adrian makes this corrective statement. But in the same token, it is most common that if some person is wronged and the assailant seeks forgiveness and it is granted it by the victim, it is understood that the assailant is given mercy, yes, but also that justice is satisfied (in the person who was wronged)—but it is well to note that such mercy given is only a direct response to the divine perspective granted the victim, by the spirit of God; that if God were not to impress the parties involved with a sense of divine justice, that even this, would not be considered "justice", from a human law perspective.]

[Rowan]: From heaven's perspective, yes. It is just not to prosecute a person who is not able to be prosecuted. So that is justice, but that is also mercy. So these two become one, not different. Because from a human perspective, justice and mercy have to wait for each other. Mercy is applied until, you know, it becomes too much, then put mercy aside and put justice on the platform. But in this case, mercy and justice become one thing.

[Adrian]: Because God's justice destroyed Satan's justice.

[Rowan]: Yes. God's justice destroyed Satan's justice by mercy. Very important point.

The Out of Court Settlement and Its One Condition: Entering into the School of Christ

[Rowan]: So here's the learning part. Remember I said that the learning part (page 8)? His accusers need capacity building before he can go with them to court. Okay?

But here's the interesting thing, and I say this because it's quite interesting to me: If the sinner listens to Christ to have his capacity developed, by the end of that capacity development, training, teaching,

learning, is there any reason to take the sinner to court? No. Because he's no longer accusing Christ. So again, the case is dead.

[Adrian]: There is no more condemnation. (Romans 8:1).

There's no more condemnation. Yes. That's the theological language. I'm trying to stay away from theological language. But yeah, that's the theological language. There's no more condemnation because now he knows. But even though now the sinner knows/understands, there's no need to take the sinner to court anymore because he's no longer condemning anyone. The record of sin is not there still. So the devil still has nothing to take to court. You see that? Yes.

So if they start knowing what they are doing, then they will not mistreat him; they will not condemn him; they will believe him, in which case he has no need to press charges against them. So the court itself is impossible.

Now here's where the title of the sermon comes from, ***settling out of court***. So Christ chose to settle out of court. But here's the interesting thing about settling out of court: **Normally, the guy who is guilty is the one who pursues the one who has been wrong to settle out of court. But in this case, it's not like that. The guy who is righteous is the one who is pursuing the guy who is wronged to settle out of court.**

[Audience]: And it's called, "mediation."

[Rowan]: Yes, it's called mediation, but it's beyond mediation. It's called "the love of God."

[Rowan]: The person who is aggrieved, the person who is not happy, is more willing to go through the court so he can get a settlement and get paid back. But if he is the one who then chooses to go out of court and have a settlement, a settlement that does not need him to be paid

anything, then that is the love of God. That is the love beyond what I can comprehend and what you can comprehend. And this is the gospel.

This is the good news. Now, the man who was supposed to take us to court because we grieved him, he decided that we settle out of court. **And by settling out of court, he decided he just wanted one thing: <u>that you learn to make your mind right</u>.** As Paul says, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) and Peter too, "be ye of sober minds." (1 Peter 5:8) because that's what Christ is looking for.

So, Christ refused to be vindicated through the destruction of his opponents, but rather to be vindicated by being merciful to his opponents. Thus he shielded, once again, men from their stupidity by which men would have received the swift consequences of their sins. Yet, on another hand, one who chooses not to prosecute is not allowed to reopen the case—I have already talked about—so that means that forgiveness has to be final and irreversible. Therefore, in two ways, the case of the cross cannot be reopened.

(1) *Not even by Christ himself, because he has withdrawn it, and is withdrawn permanently, and is forgiven permanently.*
(2) *But also because if the sinner is to learn from Christ and have his mind renewed by Christ, then there is no need for the court, because he is no longer condemning Christ, neither is he being condemned by Christ. (Christ never condemned anyone from the beginning.)*

The Only Way the Case Can be Reopened…

So in two ways, <u>that case is not coming back, **EXCEPT** for one group of people</u>. Because when we choose to learn from him, and have our minds renewed, the court case cannot come back again. BUT if we choose not to, then we have not accepted the terms of the out-of-court settlement. We want our court day. **Yes, that's the day of judgment.** We want our day in court. From a human perspective, that's the day of judgment. That is, we want to have a showdown with Christ. And doesn't

Revelation then say that at that time they rose up against the city, and wanted to take it? (Revelation 20:7-9). Because they still have a case with him.

[Debbie]: They think they'll win.

{Rowan]: Yes, they want to win the case.

They are the only ones who are willing to reopen the case. But the law, both human law and divine law, is not on their side. Therefore, by the law of consequences, they'll be destroyed by that which is in them. That's what will destroy. You see, the thing is, it's a very simple case for us. It's this simple. The case is: which side do you want to be on? And when you go on that side, that's it. It's just a matter of either be on this side or be on that side.

But when you're on this side, the law of consequences follows as it is on that side, according to what is inside that side. If you are the side of the devil, then the law of consequences will follow accordingly. So believers whose minds have been renewed by him abhor the case and they have no intention of reopening it because they know better.

Thus, in taking away our sins, Christ also offers to teach us. Faith in Christ is the beginning of school time. It's the beginning of learning. It's the beginning of the renewing of the mind. Because only by the renewing of the mind will we know that we don't have a case to reopen. But if our minds have not been renewed, we will still feel that we have a case to reopen.

[Audience]: It is finished. (John 19:30).

[Rowan]: Thank you. I can stop at that point. It is finished. I think I'm almost at the end. Okay, let's cut to the end. That was a good point.

[Adrian]: Can we say, Rowan, that if we say we accept the terms of the out-of-court settlement, and we say we don't want to reopen the case, but when a brother transgresses against us and we want to open a case on them, are we not reopening our own case? [Thus showing that we never truly did accept the terms of the out-of-court settlement.]

[Rowan]: Good point. Because remember the second law, it says "Do unto others as you would what? Have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12). Therefore, every time you steal, you are saying that it's good for me to be stolen from. Every time you kill, you're saying it's good for me to be killed. Every time you don't forgive, you're saying it is good for me not to be forgiven. That is the second law, which is above all the other laws except for the first one, which is to love God with all our strength. The second one, to do unto others as you would want them to do unto you, is above all the other laws that I was mentioning before.

Remember, last time [in a previous sermon called: Biases[19]] we said knowledge is hierarchical. So on the top is the law that says, "Love the God with all your strength and all your mind and all your heart." Below it is number two, "Love others as you would want yourself to be loved." But below that, of course, are all the other laws: law of consequences, law of heritage, and there are many more. We could talk about many of those. And therefore, what we choose to do to others is what we justify that it should be done to us.

So we are definitely reopening the case. Definitely. Yes.

All right. So only those who choose not to believe in Christ are seeking to reopen the case. And when they will ultimately reopen the case on that great day in the final judgment, the law will swiftly take its action. Being sinful and cut away from the source of life, the destruction which is in them will erupt to consume them. By reopening the case against Christ, the sinner decidedly takes the side of the devil in this action to

[19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1hw78DJc0g&t=3009s

petition the Lord to destroy Christ and then destroy creation itself. But that's not going to happen. Creation would not survive without him, of course. So ultimately, the devil's intention is not just to destroy the righteous—I think that's how we think and look at it—but It's actually to destroy both the righteous and the unrighteous. All creation.

[Liam]: Because we bear Christ's image and he hates Christ,
so he wants to destroy everything that bears his image.

[Rowan]: Yes. OK. So I end here.

Love covers many sins. Do you see that? Because by love, mercy and forgiveness are executed. And when mercy and forgiveness are executed, justice and mercy become one thing. And the sins are withdrawn by forgiveness and mercy. It is in forgiveness that mercy and justice, kiss each other and become one—even from the human perspective of justice.

All right. So, again, it is finished. Thank you.

Out of Court Settlement

In the Bible God is described as a Judge, who executes both justice and mercy. God is also described as being Holy. It is often stated that sin is so offensive to a Holy God that He cannot simply forgive the sinner without first satisfying His sense of Divine Justice. And, since the wages of sin is death, the death penalty must be met. So how then does God show mercy to the sinner whilst also executing perfect Holy Justice?

The death of Christ is the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world: past, present and future. It is said that God Himself struck His Son with death upon the cross in order to get revenge for sin and, through this penal substitute, mercy could now be extended to sinners. However, this doctrine has left many Christians cowering under a God who only loves us because He got to vent His wrath against His innocent Son in place of us. It has left many critical atheists mocking.

The Father of Love community has come to understand Jesus' life on earth as a complete revelation of the character of His Father—like father, like son—and by this we know God as One who never gets impatient, never keeps a record of wrongs and most certainly never kills His beloved children. This revelation of God's character is completely inharmonious with the doctrine of penal substitution and for many of us the court has been adjourned…until now.

Rowan's sermon reveals a fresh perspective of the execution of Divine Justice at the cross of calvary. God is the judge, Christ is the victim, we are the offenders of Their Holy Law. Never has the gospel been so clearly articulated in judicial terms as now… Pleas for insanity are made and Christ steps down as plaintiff, the law of consequence is suspended and an out-of-court settlement is made upon one condition…