

Justified! The Series: Chapter 2: The First Holy Clap Back!

Description

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax
10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors an
11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, Why does your
12 But when Jesus heard it, He replied, Those who are strong and well (healthy

Matthew 9:10-12

It's funny that chapter 1 in this series was supposed to be an entirely different passage in Matthew inspired by Smokie Norful's single "Justified." However as I was writing the introduction post to this series, I came across this scene in scripture and was like, "hey this falls in line with Jesus being an intercessor for us." Jesus is our advocate to the Father, but he also has another role/position in our spiritual life; he rebukes Satan when he accuses us of being unworthy in an effort to try to convince God to abandon us. It is important that Jesus plays this role as advocate/mediator on our behalf because when this happens, his blood and image is all that God sees meaning that our sins and shortcomings are "hidden" behind him, and his perfection/blamelessness is all that God sees which makes Satan's accusations false. This concept may be difficult for some to understand, so therefore lets look at the verses above for a clearer illustration of this concept in the natural world.

Matthew 9 begins with Jesus healing a paralyzed man who was brought to him. What makes the healing unique is that Jesus 1st tells the man that his sins are forgiven, before he even addresses his physical/natural situation. The pharisees observed this and immediately began to rebuke Jesus (remember this) for his words and actions, while ignoring the fruits of his actions (the paralyzed man was fully healed and his strength restored). Fast forward to the verses above, when Jesus encounters Matthew and we are introduced into the world of tension that remains within the world between believers and non-believers, and even worse within the body of Christ to this day. Jesus invites Matthew to be his disciple; understand that Matthew is a tax collector who works for the Roman empire, which makes him a hated and unclean person in the eyes of other Jews. Jesus sits at the table with other tax collectors, and other "unclean persons, even reclining at the table which would show a level of comfortability for Jesus. This draws even more attention and rebuke from the pharisees, or "religious conservatives/elite" of the day because how could someone who claims to be holy, and representing God be so comfortable "breaking" God's laws, or fellowshiping with "unclean" people? Notice something unique about the actions of the Pharisees; earlier when Jesus healed the paralyzed man, they challenged/rebuked him openly in front of the people, but this time they direct their challenge/questions to the disciples. Realizing they had lost the earlier exchange with Jesus in front of the crowd, they now attempted to attack his "weak links" aka the disciples. I can imagine that the disciples may be sitting or standing separate from the table where Jesus was reclining, kinda like onlookers, where the Pharisees may have assumed that Jesus wouldn't hear them or that they could trap the disciples with their words. They were wrong. Jesus knowing the hearts of people was aware of the pharisees actions, and he jumps into action, demonstrating his role in our lives as advocate.

Advocate: one who pleads the cause of another specifically : one who pleads the cause of another before a [tribunal](#) or judicial court
Merriam-Webster

Why is this important? The pharisees had no issue with the disciples other than their association with Jesus. As a matter of fact, up until this point in scripture the disciples had done nothing other than accompany Jesus during his journey, and witness his miracles. The pharisees had no reason to question the disciples unless they were trying to catch them in their words, or even more likely, they were afraid/hesitant to engage Jesus directly, fearing another embarrassment in front of the people. Jesus aware of their actions, immediately intercedes on behalf of the disciples and engages the pharisees directly before the disciples could even respond. You may be asking yourself again, "Why is this important?" When you make the decision to follow, and submit to Jesus, you therefore come under his covering. When Satan and his followers come to attack you, Jesus being "The Good Shepherd" (John 10:11) who protects his flock from the enemy will repel any attack against you.....when you're in his will. You must understand that when you're doing the will and work of God, Satan's attacks aren't actually directed at you, but actually at God, and you just happen to be the vessel he's attacking. Because Jesus understands this, he intercedes on our behalf and defends us from the accusations and attacks of Satan. When we understand who Jesus is, and our relationship with him then we can rest comfortably in his protection and guidance. Even now Satan acts as the pharisees did in that moment, he observes Jesus "reclining," sees that we are separated from him and assumes that we are "ripe for the picking." What Satan fails to realize is that we're Justified, meaning that we're seen as righteous and protected in the eyes of God. Our mediator/advocate aka Jesus steps in to protect his sheep from the wolf/enemy. You'll learn that you don't have to defend Jesus, or his assignment for you from attack from the enemy because when you're in his will, you benefit from his covering.

Reflection Time

Have you ever been challenged for your beliefs or actions? Was it a Christian or non-Christian that was questioning you? How did you respond? Do you believe that Jesus protects and defends you? Can you recall a situation in your life where you felt that Jesus left you unprotected? If you've felt that way before, why do you think it happened?

Category

1. Faith
2. Justified

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