

Explore the Bible: May 7

Accused • John 18:28-40

By Clay Anthony



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Each player in this scene has a role to play. Each character is fulfilling a role that was set in motion before time began. Sinful humanity is now coming to odds against the justice of God. The requirements of God's law are now being settled by a willing player, even if the rest of the characters do not recognize Him to be so.

We can be sure there is no background music playing during this scene but if it was, it would not be hard to hum along: "Oh the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh, the grace that brought it down to man."

This scene is not without movements. This transaction is not one without transfer. It would seem that no one on the stage is exactly sure what to do with this one willing character. He is quiet. He puts up no fight. He even orders His friends not to resist what is happening.

Shakespeare could not pen a more open-and-shut scene, and yet the players move from one point to the next as if they are confused. A thick question hangs in the air above all the players – who exactly is in charge? Who in the scene can answer questions and take control of the great transaction that needs to occur?

The willing participant mentioned earlier is central to calming all parties down. It is horrific to think of what will be required of Him to bring peace to the rest of the players. In fact, it is so harsh a script that it is unmentionable.

He is facing the death penalty, and the form of death is excruciating. The trouble with this staged scene is that no person in the act can name one reason for this willing character to face such a death. Perhaps a trial would provide reasons for His guilt.

If the first part of this scene is known for its movement, the next part can only be described for its interrogation. A negotiation is defined by two parties attempting to come to terms of a settlement that is pleasing for both parties. An interrogation is much different. Questions are asked of one party that will only appease an opposing party.

All around this stage are players asking questions. Information is sought from the accusing party and the defendant alike. Remember – of all the characters in this scene, only one is willing to be a part of what is happening.

He knows all too well that this scene was written with His part to play before eternity was marked. This is what makes His role so remarkable. He knows what is coming. He knows that

even the word, "excruciate," is from the root word for "cross" and yet He plays His role to perfection.

The trial portion of the scene proves to be kangaroo court at best and illegal at worst. The only definite answer to come from the trial is that the accusing party has such a deep-seeded hate toward the accused that they had rather a true criminal be granted freedom so that this One can be dealt with.

As the accused stands innocent, the accusing party demands no less than death. The one with seemingly all the power reveals himself to be helpless when fighting back the notion of killing an innocent man.

Today's Scripture is a perfect microcosm of how humanity treats the mercy and kindness of a loving Heavenly Father. We are the guilty ones. We are the sin-filled creatures. Jesus is the innocent one who did not deserve to die. We are the ones who deserve death, but our voices blend in with the others demanding to trade God's grace for something of infinitely less value.

As the curtain closes on this scene, please know that the play is not over. 1 John 2:2 contains a word that is peppered throughout the New Testament, and we would do well to think on it.

As the last verse of today's Scripture reports, Jesus was traded for Barabbas the criminal. You do realize that your name can be placed there as well, right? Your sin can be listed in that verse too.

Lest I forget, Jesus was just as traded for me too.

Anthony is missions pastor at Harrisburg Church, Tupelo. He may be contacted at claynell@aol.com.