



Touching Lives
with James Merritt



SERMON SINGLES

Get Off The Guilt Trip

Zechariah 3:1-7

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

In today's key passage of Scripture, we see a picture of a defendant in God's courtroom. This courtroom has everything you would imagine. There is a judge. There is a defendant (that's you). There is a prosecuting attorney. And as the defendant, you're facing the question: will the verdict be "guilty" or "not guilty?" The answer to this question all depends on who you are and where you stand with the judge (God) before you enter that courtroom. Standing before the judge, we learn who our prosecuting attorney is going to be (Satan) and who our defense attorney will be (Jesus). So as we dive into this message and study this passage of Scripture, we are going to see how you can make sure when you stand before the supreme judge, you will hear the words, "Not guilty! Case dismissed." Specifically, three things must happen for that to be the case.

KEY POINTS

1. We All Must Admit Our Guilt Before God

For starters, we must understand the difference between Satanic accusation and Holy Spirit conviction when it comes to guilt. When you do something wrong as a follower of Christ, when you commit sin, the Holy Spirit will convict you and let you know you've fallen short. This happens so you can confess your sin and repent so that you do not stay stuck in a pattern of sin.

On the other hand, there is Satanic accusation. This is when the enemy points his finger at you, reminding you over and over again how you've messed up. He lies to you, trying to convince you that you'll never recover from the wrong you've done. He wants to trap you in your guilt so you can't experience freedom. But that's not the kind of guilt that's healthy for you to experience. Instead, the Lord wants you to acknowledge your guilt and your sin when you've made a mistake, confess, and turn from your sin so that you can experience the freedom He offers you in Christ. There is no reason to stay stuck in your guilt.

2. We All Need The Grace Of God

Zechariah 3:3 says, "Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel." The word "filthy" is not a very nice word. It literally means "to be covered with human excrement." In other words, these clothes were not just dirty; they were smelly. They stunk because sin is repulsive and noxious to a Holy God.

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Then notice what happens next. “The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes” (Zechariah 3:4). The judge is about to take away the only case that Satan had. Why? Was there some new defensible evidence? No. Had the law been changed? No. Was the judge crooked? No. Had he accepted a bribe? No. Then why was Joshua stripped freely of those filthy garments? There is only one explanation: the wonderful grace of God.

There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. There is nothing we can do to defend ourselves. It is only by the grace of God that we are cleansed and set free from the penalty of sin we all deserve. We all need the grace of God.

3. We Can All Experience The Goodness Of God

God cannot use you unless you are exercising His divine authority in your life. If there is sin in your life you lose that authority. It is so vitally important that as followers of Christ we know of no unconfessed sin in our lives when we go about our day. We need to make it our top priority to get right with God if we're not already so that we can experience His goodness.

The biggest problem of the average Christian, and the reason why so many have little real power in their life, is because of unconfessed sin, unrepented sin, and unacknowledged sin. They live in the power of the flesh and not the power of the Spirit. When God takes your case, and God cleans you up, you can live in the goodness of God. You can thrive in His will for your life, and you can experience all that He has in store for you!

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In your own words, how would you define the difference between Holy Spirit conviction and Satanic accusation?
2. When was a time someone showed you grace when you didn't deserve it? How did that experience paint a picture of God's grace in your life?
3. Is there any unconfessed or unacknowledged sin in your life right now? If so, I would challenge you to confess that sin right now and repent of it so you can experience the full goodness of God.
