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The accused enters the courtroom. Twenty four eyes search to see what every look and expression will reveal. Twelve people will decide: innocent or guilty, deserving freedom, deserving punishment. Twelve people chosen to sit in judgement.

I enter a room. Who shall the jury be? Who will sit in judgement of me? Sometimes I have no choice: a parent, a teacher, a boss, a pastor, - these have been appointed by God, given authority to judge me. God's will is that I listen to what they speak, that I obey and honor them.

But when I enter the room I select every set of eyes to gaze upon me, seeking approval from every one. I let the judgement that comes forth from every tongue be the verdict upon me, stranger and friend alike. I enjoyed the sermon, I appreciated the call, ~~ixkixaxtkx~~ the clothes you are wearing are attractive. I let every one be a jury, wanting to hear that the judgement is a good one.

You can't please everyone. I know that, but I like challenges. O, I know Jesus did not please everyone, some were so displeased with him that they wanted him tortured and dead. But maybe, just maybe I can. Maybe I can make the impossible happen and the whole world will pronounce the verdict, Pleased with me. Good job Lynn. You did best of all.

But sometimes that jury that walks through the door does not enter with a smile. The message that I hear is: I am unhappy with you, with what you have done. It could have been done better, or differently. I feel angry, betrayed, I did my best. How dare you say: "~~Waxt~~ Not good enough." How dare you judge me lacking.

~~Wmaxtime~~ I've seen it in others. She took the toughest job in the whole world when she married him. She was going to love this uncut stone into a perfect jewel. Did he drink too much, did his eyes wander too much, she would give so much love that she would win his heart and his soul. But when

the one she chose for her judge and jury was never won over, then dreams turned to bitterness, hope to despair.

Or the man whose father never smiled on him. He worked morning and afternoon and night for that father, gave more than any man should be asked to give, all for the words, Good job son. But the father never noticed, never cared. The psychiatrists had names for the result, and drugs to mask the pain of a man whose father ~~was too full of himself to have any room in his heart~~ ~~was too full of himself to have any room in his heart~~ for his son.

Have no fear of them, Jesus says. And he never tells us who they are. A congregation sitting in judgement of its pastor, deciding about him. A husband trying to please a wife who will not be pleased, a daughter seeking love from a mother who has no love to give. Have no fear of them. Don't hand them power over you, don't let ~~them~~ them sit in judgement.

A disciple is not above his <sup>teacher</sup> ~~master~~ not a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant to be like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they malign those who his household.

They didn't like Jesus. Everyone of us needs to always remember that. When it was all said and done the ~~words~~ jury of this world could only cry out crucify him. They called him Beelzebub, a prince of demons. And we think that we ought to find a better judgement somewhere in this world. Have no fear of them.

Fear God. Fear him who has power not simply in this world, but for all eternity. Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot ~~kill~~ ~~kill~~ the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in ~~hell~~ hell. Fear God, he has real power.

And real compassion. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows.

Why am I so afraid of what you think, and you, and you? Is it because I do not fear enough what God thinks? Have I grown so accustomed to listening to the judgements of men and women, that I no longer hear the judgement of God? Have no fear of them, says JESUS. Focus your eyes upon God.

A long time ago, God spoke his piece about ~~Mr~~ Lynn Schlessman. Before I knew that he even was, God gave his verdict on my life, his judgement. Redeemed through Jesus Christ. A child of God, an heir of eternal life. It was exactly the same verdict God shall pronounce upon Melinda Jean this morning, the same verdict he has pronounced upon you. Precious, loved, wanted, received, family. Those are the words that describe the judgement of these waters.

Now Melinda and I and you are wise indeed when we heed that judgement, spoken by the one who has power over our every tomorrow.. When we blot out all other judgements, opening our ears only to the voice of the almighty God then we have known the truth that makes us free. *The hope revealed by the opinions of others* We hold our heads up high we walk in faith, not fear.

But every time I forget, Every time I let the world sit in judgement of me there is fear. O, at first it seems that I can win, that I can be every thing I want you to think I am, but the world will ask more and more and more and more will never be enough. For a moment there may be glory, but *my desire for the world is insatiable* when I let the world sit in judgement of me, the end is death.

But the judgement of God is life. *→ a judgement that satisfies my deepest longings*

Fix your hearts and your eyes and your ears upon him. Hear all that he speaks to you in Christ. He who knows the sparrows fall will never disappoint you. He loves you so much that he gave his own son for you. Not death, nor life, not things present nor things to come shall keep him from loving you. ever.

Fear, love trust in God, above anything else. Amen.