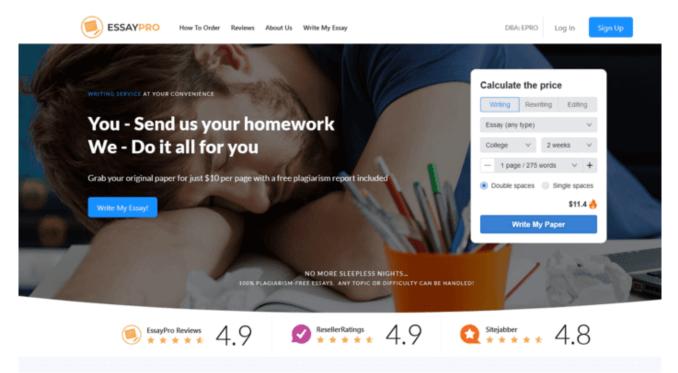
Television Crime Series



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Television Crime Series

Television crime series are inherently religious. They present disturbing questions of death, guilt, justice, mercy, confession and absolution, and hope or hopelessness. One episode may be viewed as a parable, with the center as the courtroom scene with its "moment of truth" when the norm inverts and strangeness enters, as in a parable. They are <u>parables</u>, for parables are the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God is here and now as Jesus said, Mk1:14-15. It breaks into our world and inhabits it while remaining holy.

A parable is the language of Jesus, himself a parable of God. A parable is often introduced by, "The kingdom of God is like . . ." It is without much specific <u>detail</u> and it has a single point of view. Many parables are open-ended and rather mysterious even as they remain attached to nature or the simple life. They are lively and arresting and easy to remember as lessons and they are puzzling.

A short description of the Parable of the Mustard Seed will suffice now; later it will be compared to the crime episode. Briefly, the smallest of seeds, the Mustard, is planted and

produces a great shrub or tree where birds can nest. It is labeled a parable of growth but it could also be called a parable of reversal i.e. from small to large, from a dried-up seed of stored life to fecundity.

The crime series receives equally brief treatment until the pivotal courtroom courtroom scene. The characters are two detectives, four attorneys, a grieving mother and her two children, an infant and a boy, both shot: the infant dead, the boy maimed; a wealthy African-American drug dealer and his "errand" boy of thirteen years who did the shootings for his employer and is now on the stand watched over by the evil dealer who lounges impassively in his cashmere <u>coat</u>.

We have come to the courtroom scene in which justice will out, Mark 1:14-15 The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is near; repent. . .

All characters are present and the only action is the expressions which cross their faces. The boy's face shines under his knit cap; he appears innocent, amoral at most. He does not seem to understand the proceedings. He said he had received written instructions and an address to "clean the residence" of a customer behind on his payments. The District Attorney wants to indict the dealer and he introduces, not new evidence, but two different typed sheets which he hands to the boy to read.

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