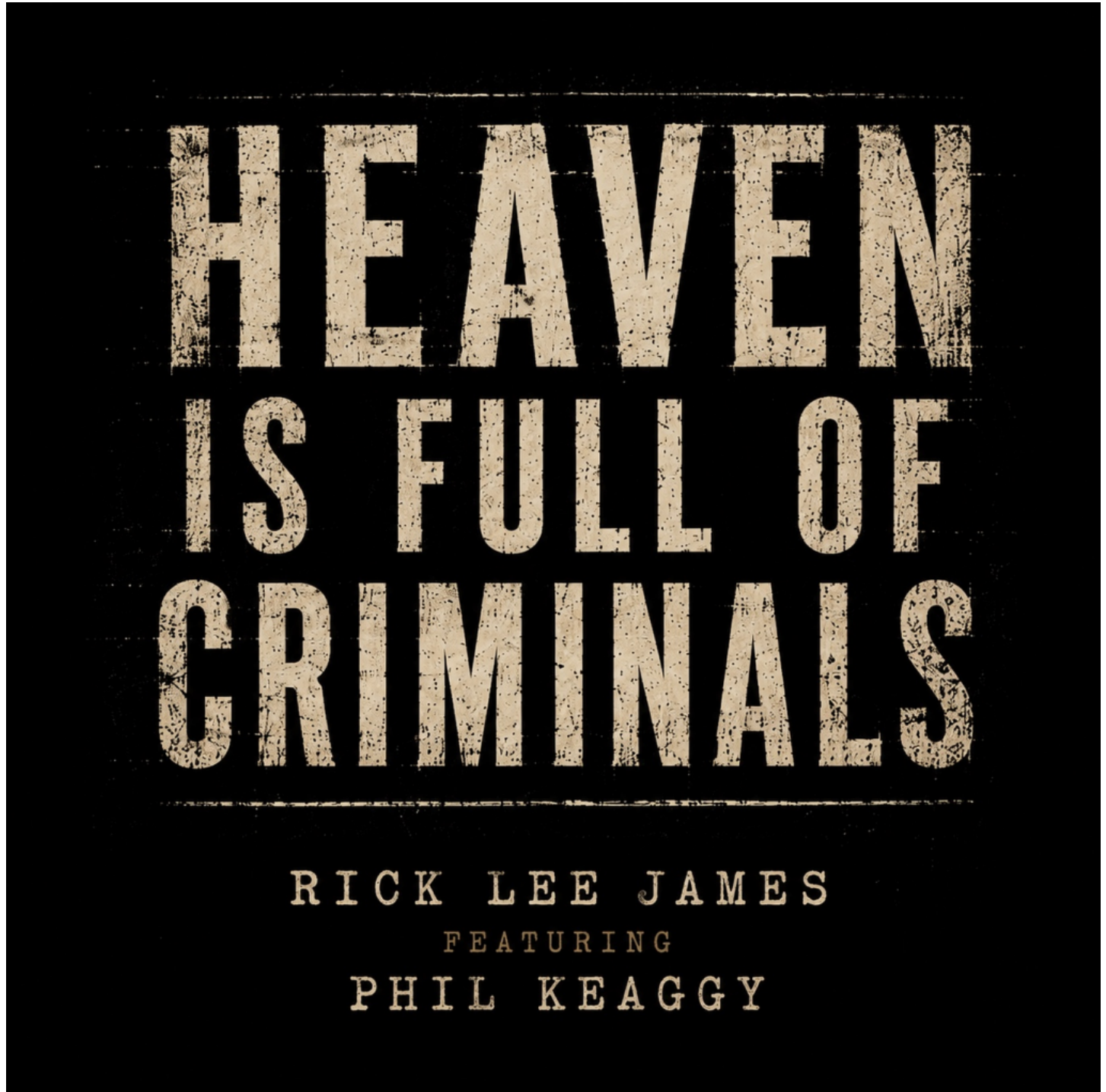


RICK LEE JAMES TEAMS WITH PHIL KEAGGY FOR “HEAVEN IS FULL OF CRIMINALS,” A SONG OF GRACE, REDEMPTION, AND HOPE

Charting in the Top 10 for PLAY MPE this past week for streams and downloads



Springfield, Ohio Jul 14, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - Singer/songwriter, author, podcaster, and hospital chaplain Rick Lee James will release his new single, "Heaven Is Full of Criminals," on July 24, 2026. Featuring legendary guitarist Phil Keaggy, the Americana-flavored Christian folk song explores the

surprising breadth of God's mercy through the lens of the thief on the cross in Luke 23.

"There is a quote attributed to St. Augustine that says, 'Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned,'" says James. "This song is my attempt to sit with that mystery. It invites us to consider the wideness of Christ's mercy and to imagine, with hope, the breadth of His welcome. Jesus continues to extend His invitation to all people, calling fallen humanity to Himself with grace, redemption, and love."

Blending acoustic storytelling, roots influences, and expressive guitar work, "Heaven Is Full of Criminals" invites listeners to consider the radical mercy of God and the possibility that no one is beyond hope.

"I think many of us secretly wonder if we've gone too far, failed too much, or somehow become disqualified from God's love," James explains. "'Heaven Is Full of Criminals' is my way of singing that grace is wider than we imagine and that redemption remains possible because of Christ."

The single features the unmistakable guitar work of Phil Keaggy, one of the most influential and respected musicians in Christian music history.

Keaggy says, "I'm excited about this new song by Rick Lee James called 'Heaven Is Full Of Criminals!' Give it a good listen, as it really tells the story of mercy and redemption... whoever you are, whatever you have done against God's loving commandments, still His mercy endures forever!"

"Having Phil Keaggy play on this recording is truly an honor," says James. "His musicianship and spirit brought something special to this song, and his encouragement means more to me than I can say."

Rick Lee James is a singer/songwriter, author, speaker, hospital chaplain, and host of the Voices In My Head podcast. In addition to his own recordings, James recently contributed electric guitar to "Guitar Tree" from Antonio Vergara's Grammy-nominated album The Fury.

Following the release of "Heaven Is Full of Criminals," James is also scheduled to appear on CFN Live, the flagship television program of the Catholic Faith Network, on August 11, 2026.

"Heaven Is Full of Criminals" will be available on all digital streaming platforms on July 24, 2026.

WATCH PHIL KEAGGY SHARE HIS THOUGHTS ON "HEAVEN IS FULL OF CRIMINALS"
<https://youtube.com/shorts/GNN95caOkSs>

MEDIA ASSETS (FOR PRESS USE ONLY)

WATCH THE OFFICIAL LYRIC VIDEO FOR "HEAVEN IS FULL OF CRIMINALS"
<https://youtu.be/gAroFyT16ZI>

DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT (EPK)
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/8vqpuvsd4afcb946dsbyb/ADocqv1nzOYw7sWRmyHyyn0>

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