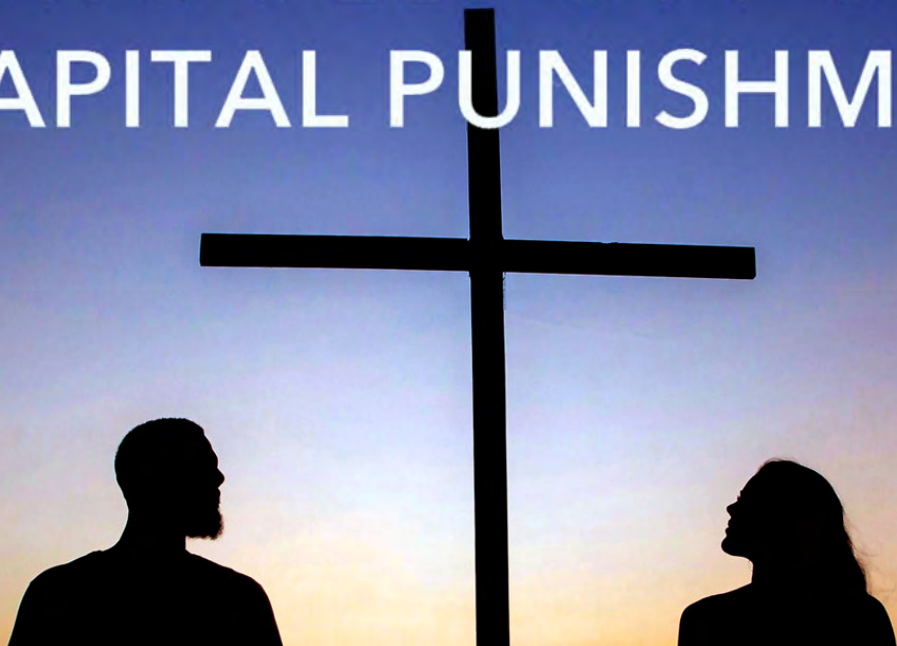


WHY FOLLOWERS OF
Jesus
SHOULD OPPOSE
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT



Presenter: Dale S. Recinella, JD, MTS, Catholic Correctional Chaplain for Florida's Death Row

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National
**Benevolent
Association**

of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



God's
Law

Some Preliminary Assumptions

The death penalty's continued existence in the United States is inextricably tied to notions that God demands it.

Some Assumptions

The erroneous conclusion driven by this erroneous use of Scripture is:

To go against the death penalty is to go against God.



The Biblical Truth About the Death Penalty

Forty-four (44) absolute, non-waive-able, non-negotiable, non-compromise-able elements of procedural and substantive law required by the biblical death penalty.

We are instructed in Exodus 23:7 that we should not have any part in the execution of an **innocent person**.

In the U.S., we don't apply the death penalty to any of these 44 legal requirements. **We are Zero for Forty-four.**

Back to the Naked Truth

In constitution of the U.S., there is no overriding right to not be executed just because you are factually innocent.

Article I.

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States in each State shall have Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years a Citizen of said State, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to

The Disneyland Death Penalty



We want to believe:

- That the death penalty kills neatly and quietly without horrendous botched executions,
- that causes no harm to the innocent family of the condemned and the staff who must kill him or her,
- that it is just and equitable without reference to race or wealth,
- that only those who are guilty are convicted,
- that is only attached to the worst of the worst and
- that it only costs a fraction of life imprisonment

It's just not true. That Disneyland Death Penalty does not exist.



VENGEANCE IS GOD'S

Misuse of the Bible

Prosecutors in the United States have been using biblical quotes to obtain death sentences from juries for years.

The most popular scripture quotes used by prosecutors are those involving vengeance as justice.

The Naked Truth

The modern United States death penalty is a Bible-belt phenomenon. Bible belt states (plus Oklahoma and four slave holding border states) have held 86% of the **1,516** state executions in the US since 1976:

Texas 570

Virginia 113

Oklahoma 112

Florida 99

Missouri 90

Georgia 76

Alabama 67

No. Carolina 43

So. Carolina 43

Arkansas 31

Louisiana 28

Mississippi 21

Tennessee 13

Kentucky 3



The Naked Truth

The death penalty in the Bible has nothing to do with the death penalty used in the United States.

Yes, the Bible permits a death penalty.

The death penalty is not required by God but is only permitted.

The question of the U.S. death penalty is one of policy.



The Naked Truth

As a policy issue, the use of the death penalty should be driven by data.

- Executions cost multiples more than life imprisonment without the possibility of parole
- The U.S. death penalty is hopelessly biased on race and wealth
- There is no positive return to society or the family of the victim but does harm those affected by its use.



“VENGEANCE”
Is The
LORD'S

The Naked Truth

The facts against the death penalty are so damning against its use that supporters have no choice but to argue God demands it.

They argue that no one has any personal responsibility for this killing because God requires it.



**An eye for an eye only ends
up making the whole world
blind.**

Mahatma Gandhi

The Misuse of the Mosaic Law

The Misuse of the Rule of Blood

“Whoever sheds the blood of a human,
by a human shall that person’s blood be shed;
for in his own image
God made humankind.”

Genesis 9:6



Misuse of the Rule of Blood

Problems with using the Rule of Blood to justify the death penalty today:

1. Such attempts in our time are limited to first-degree murder
2. Such attempts have not explained why other portions of the blessing do not also continue to be binding as law
3. If this is indeed God's command, then it must be God's desire that anyone who kills another human being must be executed.

The Misuse of Romans 13

“But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid;
for (government) beareth not the sword in
vain;

for (government) is the minister of God,
a revenger to execute wrath upon him
that doeth evil.”

Romans 13:3-4 (Authorized KJV)



**The Attempt
to Blame Our
Killing on
Jesus Christ**

Conclusion

Join us in proclaiming:

- I never liked the death penalty.
- I was always afraid we would kill an innocent person.
- If I don't have to support it for God, I don't support it.

Hear the Good News: God does not demand these killings.

Resources

- www.IWasInPrison.org
- **Books by Dale S. Recinella:**
 - *The Biblical Truth about America's Death Penalty* (Northeastern University Press, 2004)
 - *Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles into the Arms of a Loving God* (Chosen Books, April 2011)
 - *When We Visit Jesus in Prison: A Guide for Catholic Ministry* (ACTA Publications, August 2016)
- Visit **NBAcares.org** for our educational resources about Prison & Jail Ministries. You'll find past webinars, helpful articles, and the slides and additional handouts from this webinar.

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