

**Sovereign Grace Church**  
**“Does Capital Punishment Favor Life?”**  
August 28, 2016

**Exodus 20: 13; Leviticus 24: 17**

*Today we will return to our study of the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment, especially as it relates to the controversial issue of capital punishment. There are 31 states which still practice capital punishment. Of the western nations only America still makes use of capital punishment. It would seem that the interest in retaining this form of punishment is waning and that the United States is dragging her feet in her reluctance to let it go.*

*But regardless of the direction of modern societies on this issue they are not the Christians final court of authority. For that we must turn to the Scriptures and there we find that the loving God of the Bible is much more favorable to this form of punishment than we might imagine. Not only does the Bible command this form of punishment for murder but it allows in for a significant number of other crimes.*

*A number of questions arise: Is the biblical support for capital punishment unchanged from the Old Testament? Is the state obligated to follow God on this matter? Is there a suitable replacement for capital punishment that would have the same effect? Since the purpose of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is to protect life....who's life is being protected here? How can we oppose abortion while affirming capital punishment? Doesn't God forgive....even sins as heinous as murder? What if the state gets it wrong? What if the state itself is unjust? We will consider the relationship of the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment to capital punishment in this sermon.*

**1. God clearly commanded capital punishment in the Old Testament Gen. 9:6**

- **Who/What is the authority for instituting capital punishment?**  
Psm 47:2-3,7-8; Dan. 4:37; Rom. 2:5; 13:4; Psm 82: 1-2
  
- **What is the biblical purpose for capital punishment? Gen. 9:6**

**2. Does the New Testament change this requirement?**  
Matt. 5: 38-39; Rom. 13:4

### **3. Other questions that arise**

- **Is it wrong to be against abortion while favoring capital punishment?**
  
- **Is forgiveness available for the one who commits a capital crime?**
  
- **Other questions**

### **Questions for Discussion and Conversation**

- 1. What are your thoughts about capital punishment? Do you have a natural revulsion to the idea? If so, why do you think this is the case, given its presence in the Bible?**
- 2. Recently there have been accounts of Muslim groups utilizing capital punishment using very bizarre & cruel methods. Christian societies have themselves practiced questionable methods of execution in earlier times. Our Constitution excludes “cruel and unusual” punishments. Why do these practices seem cruel to us today when they didn't at an earlier time? Were they biblical then but not now? Or were they unbiblical then? How do you explain this apparent greater sensitivity to cruel and unusual punishment while at the same time we seem to be abandoning all standards for moral right and wrong for the broader society?!**
- 3. Do you think life in prison is an acceptable substitute for capital punishment? Why or why not?**
- 4. How do you explain God as a God of love who also commands that murderers be put to death?**
- 5. Should Iowa re-instate the death penalty?**