

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Drawn from “Dignity Despite Depravity,” A Sermon on Deut 21:22-23

Pastor Nicoletti @ Faith Pres Tacoma

Nov 16, 2025 AM

1. This week’s sermon text and Bible passage focused on the treatment of dead bodies. Talk about a memorable experience of being around a dead body.
2. Compare verse 23 of the sermon text with the following verses, which use the same Hebrew word translated in the ESV as “defile”: Genesis 34:5 (translated as “defiled”), Leviticus 11:24-28 (translated as “become unclean”), Leviticus 13:18-23 (translated as “pronounce unclean”), Lev 12:2-5 (translated as “be unclean”) and Num 5:3 (translated as “defile”). With that context in mind, look again at verse 23: in what sense does it “defile the land” to leave a dead body hanging on a tree?
3. Compare verse 23 with the following passages, which record deaths associated with God’s curse and subsequent burials: Joshua 7:25-26, Joshua 8:28-29, 2 Samuel 18:9-10 & 17, 2 Samuel 21:3-6 & 13, Matthew 27:5, Galatians 3:13-14. With that context in mind, look again at verse 23: in what sense is burial an answer to the problem of defilement?
4. In the sermon, Pastor Nicoletti argued that the image of God is not limited to spiritual or intellectual capacities (i.e. the mind/soul) but includes the human body. Do you agree? Why or why not? Support your answer with Scripture.
5. In the sermon, Pastor Nicoletti argued that Deuteronomy requires God’s people to treat even the very worst of criminals with dignity, including their dead bodies. How does this principle fit the most extreme statements of the imprecatory Psalms, specifically with Psalm 137:9 and Psalm 58:10-11?

6. Talk about the various options in today's culture for dealing with dead bodies (cremation, composting, burial, donation, cryonics, aquamation, mushroom suits etc). Is it preferable, normative, and/or obligatory for Christians to **bury** the dead, instead of using one of these other methods? Explain and prove your answer by pointing to theological principles and/or biblical texts.

7. In the sermon, Pastor Nicoletti said, "There is something sacred about the human body." Do you agree? Why or why not? How can Christians maintain a high view of the human body without falling into the idolatry of body which is so prevalent in the worldly culture around us?

8. In the sermon, Pastor Nicoletti warned against two opposite errors: failing to punish evildoers versus over-punishing. In your opinion and experience, where do we tend to err? In your answer, speak specifically to the three spheres of Biblical government: the church, the state, and the family.

9. In the sermon, Pastor Nicoletti argued that legal/criminal labels can have a dehumanizing, degrading effect on offenders, potentially "defining the entire identity of the criminal...forever." How should churches think about such labels when it comes to integrating criminal offenders into their membership?

10. Is it ever appropriate, righteous, and/or helpful for authority figures to intentionally inflict shame on those who are being disciplined and/or punished? Answer the question with respect to the three main spheres of Biblical government: the church, the state, and the family. Use Scripture in your answer.