

What are crime and punishment?

Crime: an offence which is punishable by law, for example stealing, murder

Punishment: something legally done to somebody as a result of being found guilty of breaking the law

Evil: the opposite of good, a force or the personification of negative power that is seen in many traditions as destructive and against God

Examples of crimes:

Hate crimes, murder, and theft

How do we punish criminals?

By sending them to prison, giving them fines, giving them community service. In other countries around the world they can also be given capital punishment or corporal punishment.

Why do people commit crimes?

Poverty: being without money, food or basic needs of life

Mental illness: a medical condition that affects a person's feelings, emotions or moods, and perhaps their ability to relate to others

Addiction: physical or mental dependency on a substance or activity which is very difficult to overcome

Greed: selfish desire for something

Religious responses

Christians and Jewish responses: Both would be against committing crimes, however are sympathetic to reasons including campaigning against an unjust law. They believe they should help those living in poverty and support those with mental health issues and addiction.

They are against committing crimes motivated by greed it breaks one of the Ten Commandments 'Do not be jealous of your neighbours possessions'

What are the Christian and Jewish attitudes to lawbreakers?



Hate crimes: crimes, often including violence, that are usually targeted at a person because of their race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender

Why are laws important?

Protect us/keep us safe, hold people accountable for their actions, society would be chaos without them and to teach people the difference between right and wrong

Christian responses to lawbreakers

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats makes it clear that helping prisoners is helping Jesus: "I was in prison and you came to visit me" Matthew 25:36 NIV. Some Christians believe that the punishment should be as severe as the crime committed.

Jewish responses to lawbreakers

Individuals should take responsibility for their own behaviour and if they do wrong, they should try to make amends for their crime.

What are the aims of punishment?



Retribution: an aim of punishment – to get your own back

Deterrence: an aim of punishment – to put people off committing crimes

Reformation: an aim of punishment – to change someone's behaviour for the better

Why do we punish criminals?

- Ensure justice is served to the victim
- Reform the criminal
- Put people off committing crimes
- To protect society

Key quotes:

'An eye for an eye'

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself"

What are the religious attitudes to suffering?

Free will: the ability of people to make decisions for themselves without constraint

Suffering: undergoing pain, distress or hardship

Why do people suffer?

Due to natural evil, greed, hatred, prejudice, class system

Christian responses to suffering:

Christians can try to heal the wrong that has been done and the suffering that has been caused. Jesus taught that people should love and respect each other and not use violence because it may increase suffering

Jewish responses to suffering:

They accept suffering is caused by human evil as a result of free will, not by G-d

How should we treat criminals?



Prison: a secure building where offenders are kept for a period of time

Corporal punishment: punishment of an offender by causing them pain

Community service: punishing offenders by making them do unpaid work in the community

Type of punishment	Advantages	Disadvantages
Prison	It gives offenders a chance to reflect on their behaviour and to reform	Prison is sometimes too nice for the prisoner.
Corporal punishment	It would be more effective than prison as people fear pain.	Inhumane.
Community service	Seen as more positive than prison and the judge might think that it could have a better effect than sending them to prison.	Some believe this is too soft of a punishment.

What is forgiveness?



Forgiveness: Letting go of blame against a person for wrongs they have done; moving on.

Quote	What does it teach about forgiveness?
'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' Luke 23:34	When he was dying on the cross, Jesus forgave those who crucified him
'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us' The Lord's Prayer	God expects Christians to show forgiveness to others, no matter what they have done as God forgives them.
"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself" Leviticus 19:18	Treat others as you wish to be treated. If you had made a mistake you would hope someone would forgive you.

What is the death penalty?

Capital Punishment: the death penalty, the execution of a criminal which is sanctioned by the state.

Principle of utility: The concept of acting out of the greater good for the most people. (e.g. removing a dangerous criminal from society in order to protect others).

Arguments for	Arguments against
Deterrence – put others off committing crimes	It is not right to take another person's life. This does not show compassion or forgiveness.
Justified retribution for those that commit worst crimes	There is a chance of killing an innocent person.
It protects society by getting rid of worst type of criminals	Society can still be protected by imprisoning criminals instead of executing them.

Religious responses to the death penalty

Quote	What does it mean? Does it agree/disagree with the death penalty?
"do not kill" Exodus 20:13	One of the Ten Commandments – applicable to both Christians and Jews. Means that they should not kill therefore the death penalty is wrong.
"An eye for an eye" Exodus 21:24	A teaching for both Christians and Jews – focuses on retribution. If they take a life their life should be taken. Will support the death penalty.
"Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed" Genesis 9:6 [NIV]	Teaching from the Old Testament – if they take a life, their life should be taken. Supports the death penalty.