

# The Truth, A Millstone, and the Sea

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | June 28, 2008



In a 5-4 ruling the Supreme Court of the US decided Wednesday June 25 that it is not legal to execute someone for raping a child. It was determined that execution would constitute cruel and unusual punishment and as such is unconstitutional.

I will not weigh in on whether their decision is the right decision for the law of the USA, but when I heard the ruling the first thing that came to my mind were Jesus words:

And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. but if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Matthew 18:5,6

Have you ever wondered why Jesus spoke such powerful words regarding hurting little children? In my lecture *Recovering from Sexual Abuse* I explain what happens in the brain of a child when they are abused and explore ways to heal from such trauma. If you would like to listen to this lecture (MP3), click this link: [Recovering from Sexual Abuse](#).

In brief, during childhood the brain is undergoing rapid development. Active neurons are kept, neural circuitry expands, idle neurons are deleted, and idle systems degrade. The neural circuitry of the brain

is being modified by experience, education, and environment. Thus children who are abused not only have psychological damage, relational damage, and self-image damage, they often have over development of anxiety centers and under development of those centers which process emotions and calm the system. This leads to a cascade of hormonal and inflammatory reactions throughout the body and over the course of their life children who are victims of abuse grow up to have higher rates of illness. Finally, because of the damage to the self, the increased fear, insecurity, and damage in the ability to trust, victims of abuse have a more difficult time entering into intimate relationships; relationships with genuine openness and trust. This includes a relationship with God. Many abuse victims grow up with fear of God, anger at God, and distrust of God, but the good news is that the damage can be healed, brain circuitry can be improved, trust can be experienced, and peace can be found.

The above describes, in a very brief overview, some of the damage which occurs and why childhood abuse is so devastating, but it doesn't explain why Jesus said it would be better to be drowned in the ocean than to do this to a child. Most people I have talked to believe Jesus was threatening to inflict severe pain and suffering upon child abusers, but is that what He was saying?

I have many patients who, as children, have suffered abuse from their parents. During the process of healing many wish their parents would simply admit what they have done and ask forgiveness or in some way acknowledge their transgression, but sadly they generally never do. I ask my patients, "What would happen in your mother's mind or your father's heart if they were to acknowledge the severe abuse they perpetrated upon you? What would they have to deal with? Would there be guilt, shame, remorse, self-loathing, self-disgust, and self-hatred?"

There is a truth I tell my patients, "You can never avoid the truth. You can only delay the day you deal with the truth." We can deal with the truth about ourselves, our histories, our characters, and our mistakes here and now and in God's grace experience forgiveness, healing, restoration, regeneration, and ultimately eternal life. Or we can delay dealing with the truth, put it off, deny, externalize, project, blame, and scapegoat others, but if we don't deal with the truth now, one day when Christ comes back each person will then come face to face with ultimate truth. What will it be like on that day for such a mother, for such a father, to look into the mirror of undiluted truth and see their own selves as they really are, no self-distortion, no lies, just the plain truth? What will it be like for such a person to have full awareness of what their actions did to their child? What will it be like to have this truth sear through their mind in front of the entire universe? If you were one of those unhealed, unsaved abusers would you rather drown in the sea than experience the anguish of soul that will be theirs on that day?

**We can never avoid the truth. We can only delay the day we deal with it.**

I invite you to deal with the truth of your life today, under the umbrella of God's grace, God's love, and God's goodness and experience healing, restoration, and ultimately eternal life.