

Euthanasia - Being Sent on Your Way

The option of assisted suicide should be a permitted right but not a positive right. That is to say, the right to death should be allowed but not compelled by force of law.

Suppose a person is dying in horrific pain and nothing more can be done. Should we administer a drug to them to end their lives and spare them this great suffering?

The problem is the fact that suffering might not be a justification for ending their life. There are people who are not dying and who suffer far worse. They might have an extreme depression. They might be in a Third World Country where there is no hope of therapy or medical assistance.

People who believe that life comes first will say that killing the dying is always wrong no matter how intense the suffering they are in. They say that trying to lessen the suffering of the dying by administering pain killers that bring on death faster but which don't actually directly kill is acceptable. They reason that as long as the intention is to help the sufferer and not to kill its fine because there is no alternative. But if life is as important as they say then there is an alternative which would be not to give the life-shortening drugs.

Giving the drugs is euthanasia for it is assisting nature in killing someone. Nevertheless, it seems that this is the only kind of euthanasia that certainly cannot justly be punished by law. There may be other cases. You must decide.

Whatever you decide it is clear from the following parable that euthanasia must not always be punished and may be understood rather than condemned. Yet we can say it is something that must not be done.

Lazarus and Absalom were very close friends since childhood. They went into the army together. Absalom was mutilated by the enemy and left for dead. He was dying but his death would be slow. Lazarus takes his sword and to save Absalom his pain he decapitates him. Perhaps Lazarus is doing wrong by cutting his head off but he must not be punished or despised for it.