

Man in the Mirror Bible Study

Speaker Series

Special Guest Speaker: Desmond Meade

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley/Desmond Meade

Patrick Morley:

Now it's my honor to introduce our distinguished guest this morning. So, in this quarterly speaker series, which this has now we've been doing it for one year, we decided that we would start celebrating Black History Month. And so quite coincidentally, heard about the incredible accomplishments of Desmond Meade, who has been voted as one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World, for 2019.

And that happened because he spent a decade or so of his life, and he's going to tell us his own story, of course, working to have the voter rights of convicted felons restored. So basically, if you happen to steal a car, or as Desmond said, God forbid a cellphone at the age of 18, and spent 15 months in prison, then that means you would never have any ability to participate in public life for the rest of your life. And so I voted for the voter rights Restoration Act.

And so, Desmond is himself formerly homeless and himself a returning citizen. That was the first time I heard that term. So this is the largest voter rights restoration or act that's taken place in a half century in our country. And he's been also voted the Floridian of the Year. He's been voted the Central Floridian of the Year. He's testified before Congress. He's been involved in a White House meeting.

He has been part of a delegation to the United Nations to talk about these issues. He's appeared on Al Jazeera, on MSNBC and on Fox, so he's got everybody covered, I guess. And so he's a guest columnist with the Huffington Post, and is married with five beautiful children. And so I wonder if you'd join me in giving a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to **Desmond Meade**.

Desmond Meade:

Thank you. Thank you. Good morning. So, let me start by I want to clarify that scenario that Patrick talked about, because there's an element that is not necessarily needed there. He talked about if a young man 18 were to steal a car, I prefer talking about him taking a telephone. Can we turn the volume up just a little bit if you can. But that gentleman does not have to go to jail. As a matter of fact, over 75% of people who are convicted of felonies in the state of Florida do not go to prison. So where do you think they go? Where do you think they're at? Not in jail. They're in our communities. They're in our homes. They're in our aggregations. They're right here among us. A lot of times when we think about felon disenfranchisement, when we think about crime, we always most often think of the worst things and think that everyone had to go to prison, and they did this horrible offense. But we had a few years back, I remember meeting Mr. Charles in Hillsborough County, Florida, and he couldn't vote because eight years prior, he was convicted of driving with a suspended license.

And so believe me, those stories are not few and far between. But I'm not here to talk about that, believe it or not. I'm not here to talk about that. This is no disrespect to how I approach my work, but nine times out of ... Matter of fact, almost always I never prepare what I'm going to say, and the reason why is that what I've found to be so effective is just allowing God to lead me.

And so when I walk into a space and I have some moment, I'll take a moment to myself, and I speak to God and I always ask Him this, "Listen, tell me what to say." Because He knows better than I do who in this audience need to hear certain things this morning. I was sitting there and I was like, man, it looks like I might be preaching to the choir, because number one I walk in and what I feel is love, right? And that is what sometimes some folks call me the love activist, because I talk about love so much, right? I don't talk about the ... I don't try to encourage division or fear, or hatred. What I encourage is love, that love can conquer all, and that God is love.

And so I felt that. I felt that. And then, I was like, well, maybe, I could talk to these guys about forgiveness. And then you have Jimmy, where's Jimmy at? It's you, Jimmy, right? The kingpin Jimmy in the house, you went from a kingpin to the kingdom, right? And so I was like, okay, then we have some people in here like me who have fallen short, who have known they've fallen short, because I think we all have, but some of us don't admit it, right? I'm like, okay, I'm at home. So what do I talk about?

Well, let me start with my story. And then God is going to take me, I think, where some of you all might need for me to go. I don't know. So I'll just start with that. In August of 2005, I found myself standing in front of railroad tracks on a hot, humid day in South Florida, waiting on a train to come so I can jump in front of it. That day I stood there, my mind went back to my parents, I was raised in a Christian family. My father was a pastor of a church, and I knew right from wrong, and I knew that my parents did not raise me to be in that position.

But there I was that day, a broken man. I was homeless. I was addicted to crack cocaine. I was unemployed. I was recently released from prison. And the only thing I owned were the clothes that was on my back, and all I could think about was, when that train hit me whether or not I was going to feel pain, and if I did, how long was I was going to be experiencing that pain? And even the thought of me having to feel that hard steel wheel just severing my body was not enough to make me move, and I stood there and I waited, and I waited, and I waited. I didn't have any more hope. I didn't have any more self-esteem.

To tell you, the night before, the night before, matter of fact, let me go back to the day before when I was standing in front of those railroad tracks. I remember I think I wanted to get high, and I wanted some money, and I called a friend of mine, called him J Dog. And I called him to ask him for some money. And what he told me was, "Listen, I know this apostle, that man, if you could just go to her and ask her for prayer, you're going to be all right." And something said, that's what I'm going to do. When I searched my pockets, all I had was enough bus fare to get halfway there.

I remember getting on the bus and close to downtown Miami and catching it all the way to I think 100 and Third Street and then I had to walk the rest of the way. But I had to get to this apostle, who was having a Bible study of services that night and I had to get prayer because I was at my wit's end. I remember I walked into church, and it was just starting service. And I went, and I sat in the back and I sat through the whole service. It was a beautiful service. I mean, it was praise and worship, and she taught well from the Bible. Everything was great.

At the end of service, I waited for people to give their greetings to the pastor and then leave and go home. While a couple of people were still in the building, I walked up to this pastor, this preacher and I said, "Pastor, I don't want any money. I don't want any clothes. I'm homeless, and I'm addicted to drugs, and a friend of mine told me that if I could just come here and ask you to pray for me, it's going to be okay." And she put her hand on my shoulder and she pointed to a gentleman that was a little, maybe

about 10 feet away. And she said, "You see that gentleman over there?" I was like, "Yes, ma'am." "Go to him and set up an appointment for tomorrow."

Now, when she told me that, I don't want to repeat the words that went through my head. But I was like, "What the heck? Pastor, I need prayer now. Right now. I'm suffering right now and you're going to tell me that I have to wait till tomorrow for prayer?" And I remember walking out of that church saying even God has turned His back on me. And so that very next day, that very next day, I was standing in front of those tracks, I literally had no hope. Not even God wanted to deal with me, I thought, and so I was ready. I was ready.

I waited on that train. But it didn't come. It didn't come. God had other plans for me. I didn't know it at the time. And so I crossed those tracks and I walked a few blocks further and I checked myself into drug treatment. I was there for about four months and after completing drug treatment, I moved into a homeless shelter and while there, I just didn't want to get high anymore. I was tired of that vicious cycle, that relapse that you would use drugs that will take you to a low end something, another would allow you to stop long enough to start having your life improve, and then something would happen and you're right back where you started or even worse. Over and over and over and over and I was tired, I was tired.

I was like, "Man, I need to do something because if I get back to those railroad tracks again this time, I might not be as lucky." And so I decided maybe I can go to school, I could raise my level of self-esteem and I won't have to go back to those tracks. And so I wrote at the local college Miami Dade College in the paralegal program, ended up graduating at the top of my class. My professors encouraged me to continue my education, so I pursued a bachelor's degree in public safety management with a concentration in criminal justice.

Now, I chose that because I had a lot of experience getting arrested and appearing before judges. And I figured that that was going to help me out in the class. And it did. I ended up graduating with highest honors again, and I was eventually accepted into law school and in May of 2014, I graduated with a law degree, and praise God, right? Praise God.

When I get to this part of the story, sometimes I say, well, you know what, my story does not have a happy ending because in spite of overcoming all of these obstacles and dedicating my life to giving back to the community because I live in state of Florida, I still can't practice law. Because my civil rights have not been restored. I lose those for life. It's not just the right to vote, you lose your civil rights for life. But I don't say that anymore, my story not having a happy ending, because every day I wake up is a happy ending. Every day that God allowed me to open my eyes, especially when I open my eyes and see my beautiful wife, oh, really, it's a great day. It's a great ending.

But I want to go back though, because the part that I really want to talk about, and it's too and like I said, I'm just being led this way, is what happened after I crossed the tracks, right? And that was I actually stopped and looked back at the tracks and asked myself one question, Desmond, if that train would have killed you, how many people would come to your funeral? The immediate answer was zero.

I didn't like that. It felt so empty and so I change the scenario around. So okay, Desmond, the train killed you, and your face is on the front page, top of the fold of the Miami Herald, Desmond killed by train, how many people would come? I thought long and hard and only came up with four people. Four. Out of that four, maybe two would have shed a tear. That thought hit me in the gut like a Mike Tyson blow. And I started questioning myself, Desmond, after all these years of living on this planet, after all these relationships that you had and the places that you traveled, and all of the people that you've encountered, you mean to tell me that only four people will care if you died? Have your life been that insignificant?

I remember taking that feeling with me into treatment. And it just so happened that while I was in treatment, Civil Rights icon by the name of Rosa Parks passed away. I remember they had her body lay state in the return of the Capitol. And one day, I was sitting in a room by myself watching and I was seeing so many people that was paying their respects and with tears in their eyes, and something just hit me and I jumped up out of my chair and I started screaming at the TV. That's it. That's it. That's it. That's what I want.

I started planning my own funeral. My mind is racing. I'm like, okay, where am I going to have this thing? I couldn't figure out then it finally landed on me. I'm going to have it where the Dolphins play football at Joe Robbie Stadium, right? You can't have it in no small. I needed a big venue and Joe Robbie Stadium was it. I'm going to have it at Joe Robbie, and I'm going to pack it up. I'm going to pack it up. People are going to be on the field, in chairs, and there's not going to be a dry eye in the house. That's what I'm going to do.

Then the question comes, what type of person could command that type of audience at a funeral? I had like deja vu just a few days ago, because I landed up with two types of people, an athlete or a movie star. I remember when I was looking at Kobe Bryant's memorial service, it just hit me like Desmond, that's what you was planning. So if any of you all seen the Kobe Bryant, that's what was going on in my head back then. And so I knew I couldn't be an athlete anymore. I played a little football in high school, but the knees were kind of bad. Who laughed? You laughed?

It still could have been probably a little bit good enough to still help the Dolphins out because they weren't too good. Don't laugh. Some of y'all are Tampa Bay Buc fans. All right, but I couldn't play football. So my mind went to a movie star. Now, I don't know about the rest of you guys, but when I think of movie star, the first name that popped in my head back then was Denzel Washington, right? Now, I don't think I'm a bad looking guy, right? But I didn't think that I was Denzel Washington type of handsome, right?

I tell folks, thank God I didn't think of Forest Whitaker because I know I got him ... You guys know, I got him beat, hands down. But I didn't think of him. I thought of Denzel. And so I got depressed because I couldn't be an athlete and I couldn't be a movie star. And I'm like, well, I can't have the big audience. But my mind went back to Rosa Parks, and Rosa Parks committed one act that, as a result of that one act, it contributed to a lot of good things that's happened in our society.

And so I thought about maybe if I could take that pain and that suffering and that low self-esteem that led me to the railroad tracks, and package it in such a way to help others, so they won't have to go to those railroad tracks, and they can help others and so on and so on. Pretty soon, it might be a bunch of people, man that when I die would say, "Man, we're sure going to miss Desmond. Man, if it wasn't for him, my life would have been different or whatever, you know."

I figured, okay, that's the way to go. I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know anything. And then one day, while still in treatment, a young man approached me after a group session and told me that something that I said during the session caused him to experience a paradigm shift, caused him to have a different perspective of life, caused him to have hope. When he told me that, something erupted in my gut, that had never felt in my life before. And it just blew me away.

Today I can tell you that I was experiencing a joy that I didn't even know existed. I was experiencing a joy that I was chasing all my life and didn't even know I was chasing it. That day I discovered what God's purpose for me was. And then I stopped and I looked around at everything that God had created, and what I was seeing was that everything took a little [inaudible 00:26:37], that God's purpose for me, no matter what my station was in life, was to give back. That no matter how rich or how poor, or whatever title or non title I may have, that there's always someone that was going to be worse off than me. That there was always someone that was there for me to serve.

And then everything that my parents taught me as a child started rushing back to me. When Jesus said that if you love me, you feed my lamb. If you love me, you feed my sheep. And so much as you have done to the least among you, that's what you've done to me. Then the last thing that came to just seal up the whole deal, to putting in so much perspective, was 1 Corinthians 13, that though I may speak with the tongues of men and angels, and I can sing and I can prophesy and I can preach and I donate a lot of money to the church, and all that good stuff man is nothing if I don't have love.

If I don't have not love for me, but love for the prostitute, and for the drug dealer, and for the homeless, and for the convicted felon. If I don't have that kind of love for them, then all of that other stuff is like what? Sounding brass, tinkling cymbal. It's just noise. It's just noise. And all of that I was experiencing and I understood. At that moment I understood that all of the suffering, all of the pain and humiliation that I'd gone through, all became worthwhile if it would help just one soul.

I realized I didn't need a big funeral. I don't need it. My life became worthwhile, my time on this earth became worthwhile, because it was used to improve the life of at least one person. Just one. Just one. And that feeling was so good. I didn't want to let go. I tell you that everything, even from this campaign, and my life as it is now, I remember going to bed at night and waking up in the morning. And when I was there on my knees, I prayed and I asked God to give me strength, give me wisdom, give me stamina to do His work.

I remember this country western song. Some of you might know it, where they have a part that says, "If you ever want to hear God laugh, all you got to do is tell Him your plans." Right? That it was not about what I wanted to do. It was about what He wanted me to do. I'm here today, because I chose to follow His will. I'm here today because I chose to walk the path that He laid out for me, knowing that it all wasn't going to be easy. But it was the path that I had to walk. When I was on my knees, and I was praying, right, especially in the morning, guess what? I didn't even know you and I was praying for each and every one of you in this room. Because I love you.

I don't have to know you to love you. But when I see you, what I see is one of God's children. No matter how righteous you are, no matter how wicked you are, no matter how rich or how poor, you are all one of God's children. And I love you all. And so when I was on my knees, I didn't have to know your name, I didn't have to be in a relationship with you to love you and to pray for you. And so I asked God to please, every day I wake up, I want to make sure that I'm going to be able to do something. Something to make my world a better place, something to make our community safer, something to bring our people together, to understand that in spite of our differences of our race, in spite of our differences of our politics, in spite of our differences of our faith, that we all can come together as God's children and do great things.

And that's what Amendment Four was. That's what Amendment Four represented. In spite of the political nature of the issue, which was voting, this went beyond that. It wasn't about the 1.4 million. What it was about was that we actually in a time, where we see so much hatred and fear being thrown around, at a time when there's so much division in our country, at a time when the political climate is so chaotic, we were able to take the most controversial subject in the most controversial state and pass it with no opposition.

With the 5.1 million people that voted for it, there were 5.1 million votes that was not based on hate, that was not based on fear, but rather based on love, forgiveness, and redemption. And that is what sits at the foundation of our faith. But by the grace of God, there [inaudible 00:32:32]. And if it wasn't for that exchange, when I think about it, and I remember I used to talk to people of faith and I always go back to when I had all these different ideas about when a person convicted of a felon should be able to vote or get their rights back and the timeframe, and all that stuff. I always go back to that time on the cross when Jesus talked to that criminal, right? That criminal asked him, "What can I do to be saved?" And what Jesus said was not we have to wait five or seven years.

What Jesus said, well, you have to do a couple other things. Let me see how if you're really recovered. No, he said, this day. This day, ye shall enter into paradise. And speaking to the instantaneousness of grace. And so we know that that was at the foundation of our faith. And so we were obligated to extend it to everyone else, because there's only ... Do you know that there's a contract that you all entered into, a verbal contract. You guys know that right?

Anyone has ever said the Lord's Prayer? Raise your hand if you have. If you've said the Lord's Prayer, raise your hand. You entered into a verbal contract. There's a little section in the Lord's Prayer, it says, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us for our debts," right? And he says, "As we forgive our debtors. Forgive us for our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

And so basically what we said was, God, I want you to forgive me for whatever I've done wrong, only oh if I've forgiven the people who've wronged me. Only. So, that means that if I am not willing to forgive that guy who traffics drugs or that woman who prostitute, if I'm not willing to forgive that guy who burglarized my house, then I'm basically saying, God, you don't really have to forgive me.

And so it was those values and those principles that sat at the heart of Amendment Four campaign. It wasn't about no Democrat and no Republican. It was never about that. Never. Now, men or politicians might make it about that. But I can't [inaudible 00:35:32], I did. That was not what God had called me to do. This whole campaign came from God, was inspired by God and was covered by God from the beginning all the way up to now. And it wasn't about confusion. You might hear confusing things in the media. But all you have to do is come to our organization, or listen to what we say and you see no confusion.

There is no division. There is no attack in any way. Because that is not what God would want us to do. That is not. You're just looking out here and I'm thinking about how you all represent like strong men of faith that come here over what, 34 years now? That's amazing. That's amazing. But guess what, you can do more. You can do more. We can do more. And this is just but preparation. This is just but preparation. One of the things that it was a lady by the name of Michelle Alexander that wrote a book called *The New Jim Crow* and I remember speaking with her. We was at a convention, over 10,000 people of faith in Louisiana.

We were on a panel and I remember she was telling a story about the homeless man that was living in a park across the street from his church that used to feed and clothe people and she went over there and talked to him say, "Hey, you know that church can feed you?" Like, "Yeah, we go there to eat every day." And she was like, "You know you can get some clothes?" "Yeah, we go there all the time and get our clothes." And then she said, that would seem like a good church to join, that they're feeding and they're clothing, wonderful men of God, and women of God, right, that's doing God's work.

And they said, "Heck no, we won't join." She was perplexed and asked them why. And their answer to her was, that was the one place where they felt the most shame. The one place where they felt the most shame. You see, there's a lot of love here. So many people came up and welcomed me with open arms, shook my hand, I felt that love, and that felt good. But I'm wondering if that homeless person in Parramore is feeling that love. I'm wondering if that returning citizen that just got released or the ones that's in 93rd Street jail are feeling that love, because that's what we need more of in this world.

At the end of the day, we know I always tell folks that hate can't drive out hate, and fear can't drive out fear, and darkness can't drive out darkness. But love, oh that wonderful word, L-O-V-E, love. Sometimes 1 Corinthians 13 might get a little too complex for some people, and sometimes we bastardize, our society has bastardized the word love and has watered it down. In my attempt to just bring it back, and I end with this, the best way that I can explain it is wanting for your neighbor what you want for yourself. What is it that you want? What is it that you want God to do in your life to bless you with?

You take that and you project it on somebody else and that's what you work towards. You don't work for self. You don't work for self. You work so that person, your neighbor, that person that irritates the heck out of you, you work that they get it. That they get to experience that love of Christ, that they get to experience those things that make their lives a better place. You work for them, because in working for them, that's how we get our blessings. Everything I have now is because God decided to bless me with it. I didn't pray for anything, other than to do His will. And so, gentlemen, I beseech you, do the will, continue to do the will of God. Continue. Thank you so much.

Patrick Morley:

So, Desmond has agreed to take some questions. So, we have about roughly 10 to 12 minutes for some Q&A. So please, stand and just be loud.

Speaker 1:

How in the heck did you get 700,000 signatures?

Desmond Meade:

That's a great question. How did I do it? Let me tell you. When we started this campaign, everybody left. Every organization, they scattered. It was just me and volunteers, right? And I traveled the state of Florida. I drove over 50,000 miles a year on my car, going around talking to people, and I'll be honest with you, the first people that I went to talk to were white people who were conservative. That's who I went to because man says I couldn't talk to them. Right. But it was a different type of campaign. It was a campaign that was based around love. And so I would go to conservative areas and I would ask people one key question. Do you know anyone that you love who's ever made a mistake? And that's how we collected actually over a million petitions that way.

Speaker 2:

Wow.

Desmond Meade:

Questions?

Patrick Morley:

Next question.

Desmond Meade:

Don't be bashful now. There you go.

Speaker 3:

Where does the ... So you talk a lot about your past, and how you got here. But can you give a projection of where is your vision? What is your vision? What's the mission?

Desmond Meade:

So I'm glad you said that, right? Throughout the campaign, I continuously liken our campaign to like aftermath of hurricanes, right? Why would you do that, Desmond? Well, believe it or not, there are

moments where we see the beauty in humanity, of humanity. Where you see the beauty or the greatness of our country. And those are typically moments that are after disasters.

When a hurricane blows through here, some of the most beautiful images are when people and neighbors come together, even strangers come together to help each other out, right? One of the images that had stuck out to me, I mean, it's like seared in my mind was when they ... A couple of years ago when they had the hurricanes in Houston, and they had the flooding, right? And that it was a white guy that was ... No, a black guy that was on a boat that rescued a white guy, right? And stopped long enough so he can go back to his house to get this confederate flag, right?

That in spite of what that flag, the image of that flag meant to that African American guy, in spite of the history of that flag, at that moment, that man was able to look beyond that flag and look beyond the color of that person's skin and seeing another human being. You with me? And so that's what we had pattern our campaign after. The story that I tell is that, anyone that you are right now, you're going back home and you're driving down I-4, and with all that crazy construction and you come across an accident, right? You come across an accident on the road, you with me? You decide that you're going to stop and you get out of your car, right? And you run up to that person that's laying on the side of the road.

Your first question is not going to be, did you vote for Donald Trump? It's not going to be how much money you make. It's not going to be, what's your immigration status? Your first question is going to be, are you okay? How can I help? You see, it's in those moments, right? It's in those moments where we are great as humanity, where we are great as a country, you see? And it's those moments that we aspire to be in, because no one really wants to be engaging in this back and forth, and with all this division and this hatred. Deep down inside, that's not how we were built. God did not place that as a dominant spirit in our souls.

Deep down inside, for my campaign, I knew that everybody wanted to be forgiven. Okay, deep down inside, everybody wants to be loved. To be loved. And so when you talk about that vision, that vision is how do we operate? I am 100 plus percent committed to this. How do we operate in the Spirit because what Amendment Four showed was that in spite of all our differences, that we can come together along the lines of humanity, and move major social issues.

And so that's what I aspire that it doesn't matter if you're Democrat, it doesn't matter if you're Republican, that there are some things that, some values that we can come together on. And based on those values alone, we can improve the lives of people in our communities, we can make this country a more prosperous and greater country than what it is right now. That's what I aspire to. Did I answer your question?

Speaker 3:

Totally.

Desmond Meade:

Okay. I think we have time for one more. Yes, sir.

Speaker 4:

Is there another area that social justice or injustices that you endeavor to get into right now?

Desmond Meade:

So I'm glad you said that. So there's like so many areas. For instance, bail reform, where people are made to languish in jails, because they cannot afford to pay bail. Here's the thing, that why it's so hurtful for everyone. Because when you talk about criminal justice, I don't think that there's no other issue that

is so intimately connected to every other aspect of our lives, that impact every other aspect of our lives, right? And I'm going to answer your question, right? I see where like, in 2011, they had a study that showed that when you restore civil rights back to people, that you drastically reduced the rates in which they re-offended, right? Where Florida had a rate of 33%. So 33 out of every 100 people that get released from prison is going to commit another offense within a year, right? But then when you look at the people whose rights were restored, it went from 33 to 11%. What that meant was it saved the state of Florida and taxpayers over a billion dollars a year, that they didn't even have to spend. A billion dollars because that same year, if you guys remember, some of you are businessman, that you remember in 2011, many cities across the state were forcing police departments and fire departments back to the collective bargaining table to renegotiate their agreements, because cities just didn't have the money. But you had 26,000 people that was in the correction world, because Florida at that time spent \$18,000 a year per person just to incarcerate. So those 26, 27,000 people represented around \$545 million, tax dollars. That's a budget for 26,000 people that's bigger than the budget for most cities in the state of Florida.

Desmond Meade:

And so there was a direct correlation. So there are so many ways that it's connected, but I think the best way, believe it or not, the best thing is not necessarily about the policy, but about the narrative, right? And people of faith is actually the best messengers for this narrative. Because there is a narrative that happens about the violent and nonviolent, right? We so easily talk about it, and we're so quick to embrace policies that help nonviolent people, right? But not the violent, and it's really kind of ridiculous.

Desmond Meade:

I'm going to tell you why. Because 95% of people who are incarcerated are going to get released, and you have to choose, what do you want them to encounter when they come home? Because if you want to make it more difficult, then you're going to increase the likelihood of them doing what? All right and if you're so worried about violent offenders, wouldn't you want them to successfully reintegrate much better or quicker than the so-called nonviolent? But here's the thing. You ready for this? I used to tell folks when I tell people the story about Jesus on the cross when he said this day. The other thing, what he didn't do was say, what did you do? Was it nonviolent or violent? You see, because I'm going to tell you something. When you look at the men that God had chosen, Moses murdered, David murdered before he was Paul, he was Saul. And Saul did some things back then that if he were to do it today, we'd be screaming that he be buried underneath the prison. When God sent him to Ananias, Ananias was like, "Hold on, God, you sure you got the right guy? This guy?" God was like, that's who I chose. That's how God do business, right? And so that narrative is that no matter what a person does, if they are released back into our community, it is our duty to make sure that they're provided every opportunity to be able to successfully reintegrate. And there should be no distinction between violent and nonviolent, because they're all coming back. That is that narrative that I think needs to change, because a lot of this false narrative and based on tough-on-crime and all that, listen, it does nobody any good. It's really contrary to our beliefs, it's contrary to common sense. Anyway, thank you all for your time, and thanks for having me.