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Today: Shahzad Masih Still on Death Row in Pakistan 9 Years After Arrest at 16

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Shahzad Masih was just 16 years old when he was arrested, and nine years later, he remains on death row for allegedly reporting someone else's words."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Shahzad Masih is still on death row in Pakistan today, nine years after police arrested him at the age of 16 for allegedly repeating someone else's words about Islam. He was a hospital worker in Punjab, a teenager, when a coworker asked him about his Christian faith - and the answer he gave, words he insists belonged to another man, landed him in a cell he has never left. He is 25 years old now.

His appeal to the Lahore High Court has never been heard.

It happened on July 13, 2017. Shahzad was working at a hospital in Punjab when a Muslim coworker began questioning him about his religious beliefs. During the conversation he repeated offensive remarks that he said had been made by Ali, a Muslim friend of his father.

Members of a religious organisation then confronted him. He explained that the words were not his own. It made no difference.

He was taken to an Islamic seminary, handed over to police, and arrested that same day.

The charge was blasphemy under Section 295-C of Pakistan's Penal Code, a law that carries the death penalty for derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad. The trial court rejected his request to be tried as a juvenile, even though his birth certificate showed he was 16. More than five years of legal procedings followed.

On November 22, 2022, the court sentenced him to death by hanging. His lawyers appealed days later. That appeal is still waiting.

Shahzad Masih Blasphemy Case: Arrested At 16, Sentenced To Death

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) is now pressing his case harder than ever. Working through its Pakistani affiliate, the Organization for Legal Aid, its lawyers have filed at least four petitions asking the Lahore High Court to hear the appeal sooner.

Hearings have been scheduled and then postponed, again and again. On November 19, 2026, the ACLJ announced it was intensifying its fight to free him, nearly a decade after his arrest.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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