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Justice Alito Says Free Speech, Religious Liberty and Racial Equality Must Be Preserved

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Religious liberty is central to human dignity,"

(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

Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, 76, told a Washington audience on Thursday 12 November 2026 that Americans must hold fast to three principles to preserve the republic: robust free speech, religious liberty and racial equality. He was speaking in a fireside chat with Mollie Hemingway, editor-in-chief of The Federalist, at the Federalist Society's Antonin Scalia Memorial Dinner during its National Lawyers Convention in Washington, D.C. His words came one week after the 3 November 2026 midterm elections, in which Democrats won both chambers of Congress.

Forty-two House seats and eight Senate seats. That is what Republicans lost in the midterms, with the Alaska Senate race still uncalled when Alito spoke.

The new Congress now holds the power of the purse over every branch of goverment - including, as Alito pointed out, the power to defund the Supreme Court itself. It was against that backdrop that a sitting justice chose to name the three principles he believes hold the republic together.

Justice Alito Religious Liberty: Central To Human Dignity

On religion, Alito was direct. "Religious liberty is central to human dignity," he said, adding: "I think that we have placed religious liberty on a sounder footing than it was on 20, 25 years ago."

The claim is a striking one from a justice who has spent two decades on the Court watching religious liberty cases come and go. Twenty-five years ago, he argued, the law gave believers less protection than it does today. The Court's recent decisions have, in his view, put that protection on firmer ground - and he made clear he believes that ground must be defended, not taken for granted.

He said Americans of many faiths - and of none - will not be able to get along "amicably, productively" without respecting everybody's right to follow the religion of their choosing. It was a practical argument as much as a principled one: a country as religiously diverse as America cannot function if its people, seperated by belief and background, cannot live side by side with each other's beliefs.

Alito Free Speech And Racial Equality: MLK's Dream

Alito named robust free speech first among his three principles, and racial equality alongside it. To make the point about equality, he invoked the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'S speech at the Lincoln Memorial, and its hope that children would one day be judged by the content of their character rather than the colour of their skin.

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?

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