

**The Underground Church Network
Freedom Sunday Sermon Sample #1
“Freedom is For Everyone”
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The cry for freedom silently shouts from deep within every girl and boy, woman and man, person. God, the creator of humankind, designed Freedom for Everyone. All people are created in the image of God—in His likeness. God is a social being. In other words, he loves to be in relationship. He created you and me so we can have a relationship with Him and Him with us.

God made us out of His free will. He desires to share His life and all that is good with us. So, when people are born, we are born with a free will, with the privilege and responsibility of choice.

When God created Adam and Eve, they were enjoying a thriving relationship with God in an all-good environment called the Garden of Eden, which means a place of loveliness or a place of delight. They used their free will to disobey God and to do their own thing. They ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God’s best plan was for Adam and Eve to know all that is good.

However, Adam and Eve exercised their privilege of choice; free will. It brought spiritual death upon them and all that would follow, including you and me.

Evil was limited to the evil one until Adam and Eve released its fury by exercising their choice to know evil. At the foundation of why there is suffering, pain, sexual exploitation, forced labor, enslavement and the devaluation of people is evil in the heart of humanity.

Some people overcome evil with good. They act God-like. Made in His image, they bring good to what’s bad, light to what’s dark, hope to the hopeless, voice to the voiceless. Some people play into the nature of evil and express it with the intent to exploit, to use others for selfish pleasure and material gain.

Evil desires to control and dominate. Evil presses its fingerprint upon the men, women, and children that are trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Evil inflicts pain, suffering, and destruction upon the enslaved. God’s design in creating people is for relationship, good and delight. Evil’s design for people is to kill, steal and destroy.

When people talk about Human Trafficking today, it's appropriate to call it modern-day slavery and not "new slavery". A wise man said: "What has been will be again. What has been done will be done again. There is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, 'Look! This is something new'? It was here already, long ago. It was here before our time." (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, NIV)

Trafficking people is an ancient problem. In Genesis 37:13-28, the Bible tells the story of Joseph, approximately 3300 years ago. His brothers were jealous and angry with Joseph so they attacked him, threw him into a pit. They sold him into slavery for 20 shekels to a passing group of traders-traffickers on their way to Egypt. He was a 17 year-old teenager.

In this story:

- Joseph became a domestic slave to Potipher. (Genesis 39:1-4)
- Potipher's wife tried to abuse Joseph sexually. When he refused, she shamed his name and reputation—falsely accusing him of rape.
- Joseph was wrongly imprisoned. (Genesis 39:19-20)

Unlike most trafficked victims, Joseph eventually was restored and prospered. He paid a big price emotionally and relationally.

There are Josephs and Josephines all around us. They are your family members, neighbors, schoolmates, colleagues. They are the waiters and waitresses that serve you. They are the hotel maids. They are the construction workers. To most of us, they are invisible. They are the pained and suffering, the enslaved and abused, who should no longer stay invisible.

There are millions upon millions who have never heard that God loves them. How could they know? How could they believe? They are toiling away day after day forgotten, impoverished, and tortured slaves in brothels and kitchens.

Moses was the voice for the voiceless Jewish slaves in Egypt telling Pharaoh, the one in control, "Let My People Go". Today, you and I are being called upon to be the voice for the voiceless, to tell the Human Traffickers to "let the enslaved go".

Jesus commissioned us to go, not stay. He commissioned us to serve, not be served. He commissioned us to love, not be selfish. He commissioned us to help set people free from the bondages by which the enslaved are held captive.

That's why in Columbia, Christian Chapel is partnering with the Not For Sale Campaign and NFS Missouri, with Stephens College, and Stop Traffic Student Org. at MU, and The Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition. We are working with local shelters, law enforcement, Attorney General's office, the IRS and all justice seekers.

This is our mission to be more than a church. We are a contagious movement of passionate followers of Christ that live out the Great Commission and Great Commandment with in arm's reach of every heart and home in mid-Missouri and around the world.

I believe it's time for a generation of justice seekers to mobilize around God's purpose to set the captives free.

I believe that Jesus is the great emancipator, and the Bible is the great emancipation proclamation. Jesus, the author of Abolition said more than 2,000 years ago: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favor has come." (Luke 4:18-19, NLT)

In other words: No more slavery. No more captivity. No more oppression. No more injustice. No more guilt. No more shame. No more unforgiveness. No more weariness. No more sorrow. No more fear. No more! No more! No more!

May I ask you a question: Has the Lord set you free or are you still in chains? Are we free men and women or chained up, tied up, and bent low under the weight of sin? Are you held captive by greed, lust, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, drugs, alcohol, infidelity, worry, fear, insecurity?

This morning, if you could would you be willing to exchange these chains and pains for love, peace, joy, self-control, and freedom? I have really good news today. Just as these people reported on the cardboard testimonies how they now know freedom in Christ, you also can experience Christ's love and freedom today, because freedom is for everyone!

"If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free." (John 8:36, GNT)

Freedom Is For Everyone

Group Questions

Why do you think Adam and Eve chose to disobey God? What is the result of their choice to disobey God? Do you think they knew what their choice would mean?

In what ways have you known or experienced evil?

Genesis 37-39 tells the story of Joseph. Summarize what happened to him.

In what ways is his story like modern-day trafficking victims? How is it different?

Have you ever been enslaved to something or someone? Tell us about that experience.

How is your situation like trafficking victims? How is it different?

Share how God set you free or are you still captive? If so, do you want to be free?

What would it look like for everyone to be free?

What are some ways we can share this freedom with others?