

Let My People Go, That They May Serve Me

Sermon Outline & Notes

Themes:

Trafficking in Persons

Slavery

Slavery to sin

Abolition

Freedom from sin

Who is anointed/called to lead slaves out of bondage?

Scripture:

Genesis 37:13-28

Exodus 7:6 – 14:31

John 8:36

Luke 4:18-19

Revelation 1:6

I. What is Trafficking?

a) Definitions

Trafficking may be a confusing term to some, but its most simple definition is illegal commercial activity – like drug trafficking or weapons trafficking.

We also use it to describe the trade in human beings for purposes like commercial sexual exploitation:

prostitution,
pornography,
stripping
or labor exploitation such as in
sweat shops,
brick kilns,
cocoa plantations, or
other agricultural settings.

Of course there are technical legal definitions of trafficking in persons that are more complex than this, and they break down the trafficking process in detail. They define trafficking as certain criminal acts:

recruitment,
harboring,
transportation, and
sale of persons

for purposes of exploitation,

often by means of
force,
fraud,
coercion, or
exploitation of a position of vulnerability.

Just like with a lot of issues, when we try to define the problem, it suddenly seems more complex.

b) Illustrations

But instead of focusing on definitions I'd like to share a couple of stories that illustrate what trafficking is and who it affects.

Share 2 or 3 examples

And for each of these, there are millions more people –

people made in the image of God,
known by Him,
loved by Him

each in unspeakable situations of torment and suffering. In fact, there may be as many as 27 million slaves in the world today and that means that millions are hundreds of thousands of people are trafficked into slavery each year.

II. Trafficking in Persons: Not a New Phenomenon

Interestingly, when many people talk about trafficking today, they call it the “new slavery.” But there is little new about it, with the exception of how modern technological advances make it easier than ever for traffickers to traffic and for partakers and profiteers to exploit and profit.

Actually trafficking in persons is an ancient problem and the examples of the practice are seen in the earliest chapters of the Bible.

a) The trafficking of Joseph (Genesis 37: 13-28)

Take the story of Joseph one of the earliest accounts of trafficking in the Bible. We’ve all heard the account of how in jealousy and anger Joseph’s brothers

Attached him
Threw him in a pit, and
Sold him to a passing group of traders on their way to Egypt.

Read Genesis 37:13-28

We know, too, that this event set into motion an incredible series of events from:

Joseph’s service in the house of Potiphar (Genesis 39:1-4);
The false accusation of Potiphar’s wife against Joseph (Genesis 39:7-18);
To his false imprisonment (Genesis 39:19-20); and

His eventual reign over Egypt as second only to Pharaoh himself
(Genesis 41:40-41)

b) The enslavement of the Israelites

These events lead to the eventual resettlement of the Israelites to Egypt (Genesis 46:1-34 & 47:1-11), and ultimately, to their enslavement to the Egyptians (Exodus 1:6-14).

All this from one act of human trafficking!

What an irony, that by the trafficking their brother into slavery the fathers of the tribes of Israel actually sealed the enslavement of their own heirs, and the whole nation of Israel!

c) God uses evil acts of men to bring about liberation of humankind

But as is so often the case with God, what men had intended for evil, He used for His good purpose. For now the stage is set for God to:

Display his awesome power
Reveal His character as the Great Emancipator of humankind and
Foreshadow his awesome act of redemption of the human race through
the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We all know the story of Moses and the dramatic events that lead to Israel's eventual release from Egypt's tyranny, but I wonder if it is real in our hearts. Do our hearts and minds comprehend the meaning and the glory of these events?

God called Moses and Aaron to lead the Israelites out of Egypt – for He remembered His promise to their forefathers and heard the cries of Israel.

God then sends Moses and Aaron to carry one consistent message to Pharaoh, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”

The significance of this message has only recently settled on my heart. I had remembered the famous line, “Let my people go,” but forgotten the “that they may serve me.”

This last half of the sentence confirms to me the message of Rick Warren's popular book "The Purpose Driven Life." Warren beautifully explains that God did not create us because He was bored and had nothing better to do, or so that we could kick back and lead self-indulgent, meaningless lives. No! He created us out of love, for love. He foreknew each of us and created each of us that we might

Worship Him
 Fellowship with Him
 Serve Him and
 Share with Him

But in Exodus, Pharaoh was undermining and thwarting those purposes. So God orchestrated amazing events like (Exodus 7:6-12:41):

Plagues of blood
 Frogs
 Lice
 Flies
 Pestilence on livestock
 Boils
 Hail
 Locusts
 Darkness, and
 Death of the firstborn

until Pharaoh relented and let the people go.

In fact, by the end of this series of torments Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron during the night and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites!" So Moses led the people out of Egypt – the land of bondage, through the Red Sea and ultimately to the Promised Land.

What we see in these events is a great foreshadowing of what God was planning for all mankind. That He would send His Son Jesus, to lead us sinners – we who have sold ourselves into sin – to the Promised of eternity with Him in heaven.

When Christ died on the cross, he essentially sent the message:

“Let my people go, that they may serve me!”

Just as the Red Sea was held apart so that the people might pass from bondage to freedom, at Christ’s death the veil in the temple was ripped apart so that we may pass from

sin,
 captivity, and
 death
 to righteousness,
 freedom, and
 life!

III. Jesus: the Author of Abolition

a) No more slavery through Christ

Similar sin of Joseph’s brothers and how it led to the enslavement of future generations of the Israelites, the sin of Adam resulted in the bondage of his sons and daughters -- all of us -- to sin.

But, Jesus is the Great Emancipator and this book (the Bible) is the Great Emancipation Proclamation. Jesus is the author of Abolition, saying:

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!

You know, the Lord was slave to no one. He was not a slave to

Caution
 Propriety,
 Public opinion,

Fear,
 Busyness,
 Nor did the chains of sin ever shackle His feet or bind His heart and
 hands.

b) Who are you/me serving?

But what about me?
 What about you?
 Has the Lord set you free or are you still in chains?

Are we free men and women or does the devil still have us
 Chained up
 Tied up, and
 Bent low under the weight of sin?

Who is your master?
 Who are you serving today?

Are you serving:

Greed
 Lust
 Anger
 Unforgiveness
 Bitterness
 Jealousy
 Drugs
 Alcohol
 Infidelity
 Sex
 The devil ?

Would you exchange these chains for:

Love,
 Peace,
 Joy,
 Self control,
 Righteousness?

c) We can choose freedom in Christ

You know the amazing Good News is that today

You can cross the Red Sea

You can enter the Holy of Holies

You can call on the name of Christ and be freed!

If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed! (John 8:36)

The thing is – today you and I hold the keys to our own prison. We can put the key in the lock and open the door of our hearts to Christ and step out into His glorious light.

d) Others not free to choose Christ

But there are millions upon millions who cannot because they have never been given the key. They never heard that God:

Loves them

Designed them

Formed them

Foreknew them

Desires them

Even died for them.

How could they know?

How could they believe?

After all, they are toiling away day after day forgotten, impoverished, and tortured slaves in:

Brick kilns

Sweatshops

Chicken farms

Cocoa plantations

Coal mines and

Orange groves

Or maybe they have been sold to brothels where they learn that what is rape to other women is work for them.

In still another scenario, perhaps they are out on the street corner auctioning themselves off to the next person who drives by, selling themselves to finance their child's operation, or for a hit of crack – to numb the abuse, the pain and the shame of their lives.

Is it any wonder that they are where they are? After all they have had no one to speak to Pharaoh. No one to show them the way to the Promised Land.

In Luke 4:18-19, the Lord reads from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah,

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”*

IV. Anointed as Abolitionists

Aren't we, now waiting Christ's return, His anointed? We who claim Christ as Lord and Savior, are the one's now entrusted to preach the good News, to proclaim release for the captives, sight for the blind, and to free those enslaved.

What a message of hope!
What a message of liberation, of freedom!
What a message of emancipation!

But who will carry this message?

Who will take this message to those in caught in the darkness? To those in slavery

The more I think about it the more ludicrous it is for us to have believed that we had rid the world of slavery

In fact, the scope of slavery far exceeds the 27 million caught up in systems and institution that exploit them and deprive them of their very lives. Hasn't Satan trapped hundred of millions, even billions of people, in the bonds of sin?

What is so tragic is that these people do not know that they can break those chains – loose those bonds – as easily as one can snap a twig – because Jesus Christ has purchased their liberty with His blood.

Reread: Luke 4:18-19

Who will take this message?

Who will say to Pharaoh, “Let my people go, so that they may serve me?”

(Have them repeat, “Let my people go, so that they may serve me.”)

We through Christ are called to be Abolitionists

To break the yoke

To bind up and set free

Will you answer Christ’s call to lead the people out of Egypt that may display His glory and fulfill His purpose and serve Him?

Close:

“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen!”

Rev 1: 6



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