

Freedom Sunday

International Justice Mission

The shocking truth on modern day slavery...

- There are at least 40 million victims of modern-day slavery
- 29.8 million victims of forced labour in the world today – more than any other time in human history
- Over 3.8 million adults were victims of forced sexual exploitation and more than 1 million children victims of commercial sexual exploitation – with the vast majority (99%) women and girls. (*International Labour Organisation*)
- Most troubling - that 1 in 4 victims of modern-day slavery is a child. (*International Labour Organisation*)
- 4 billion people live outside the protection of the law? (*United Nations*)
- It is conservatively estimated that human trafficking generates about \$150 billion dollars a year (*International Labour Organisation*)

These are real people, trapped, tricked, powerless, desperate - enduring truly heinous crimes and real suffering at the scourge of forced labour, modern day slavery, human trafficking and the commercial sex trade.

International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global organisation that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems. Learn more at IJM.ORG.AU

Action steps you could pursue from Freedom Sunday

- **URGENT NEEDS Offering** – there is a cost to living out the mandate of Isaiah 1:17 – to seek justice, rescue the oppressed and care for the orphan and the widow. There is an opportunity to contribute to some of the most urgent needs within India, to join with IJM in the fight against slavery, oppression and violence – until all are free. The target is upwards of \$100,000 from Australian Churches across the Freedom Sunday services. **Direct deposit details can be provided on request or complete the Urgent Needs Offering Cards provided.**
- Becoming a freedom partner – fill in the **Freedom Partner Card** or go to ijm.org.au/become-freedom-partner to invest \$25 or more each month into rescue efforts, prosecution of those perpetrators of violence and exploitation, law enforcement and legal system training and support system strengthening. You will be sent an official Freedom Partner information kit in the mail. ijm.org.au/become-freedom-partner
- **Freedom Partners are called to Prayer** – IJM knows where slaves are and has a plan to rescue them. We can each join IJM globally to regularly pray for the urgent needs in the field, favour with authorities and justice system, and especially for wisdom and protection of those who work on the front line.

Application

Discussion 1: The God of Justice God is totally separate, above and other than His creation. He is pure and spotless with no fault at all. But he is also wrathful – His holiness expressed in absolute hatred for evil and sin. Read Genesis 3:17, Exodus 3:7 -10, Psalm 12:5, Psalm 89:14, Proverbs 6:16-19; Proverbs 14:31 and Proverbs 17:15, Ezekiel 22:28-31, Isaiah 10:1-2, Romans 1:18.

- How does God feel about injustice? How do these passages speak to the deeper slavery entrapping people in a world where *shalom* had been corrupted?
- What ideas, feelings or questions surface in you when you hear ‘God is a God of Justice’?

Discussion 2: The authority of Christ Jesus proclaimed that His mission involved bringing freedom to the Captives. Continue to read Isaiah 58:6-12, Isaiah 61:1-3, Amos 5:21-24, Luke 4:18-19 and Galatians 5:1 to understand what Jesus came to do.

- Christ has won our freedom, what does this mean to you in your life?
- Why is it important we understand Christ’s authority to declare us ‘free’ when it comes to our ‘living free’ and to engaging with people on your front line who may not yet ‘know freedom’?

Discussion 3: The centrality of Shalom In the New Testament, shalom is revealed as the reconciliation of all things to God through the work of Christ. Colossians 1:19-20. Jesus came to bring peace – shalom. John 14:19-27, Isaiah 9:6-7. Shalom is perhaps the most basic characteristic of the future Kingdom of God.

- How does the world’s understanding and God’s definition of justice align or differ? Deuteronomy 32:4, 2 Chronicles 19:7, Job 34:10-12, Job 37:23, Psalm 50:6, Psalm 89:14, Isaiah 5:16, Zephaniah 3:5, 1 Corinthians 14:33, 1 John 1:9
- What aspects of Gods vision of justice – shalom – impact you most?
- When we hear the cry of the oppressed (locally, nationally, around the world) how do we become tangible expressions of shalom and hope to those around us?

Discuss 4: The work of justice The media often portrays the struggle for justice as a lost cause, echoing the weight of evil and violence, highlighting dark headlines. While it is true that rescuing people from slavery, bringing perpetrators to account, and transforming public justice systems – takes time. While we may not prevail against every injustice every time, justice is realised one faithful step at a time. Years of working and praying until the fruit of patient endurance is realised. Wherever Jesus is, hope is present. There is no hopelessness found in Him. He is the God of hope and hope does not disappoint. Read Psalm 25:1-5, Romans 12:12, and Romans 5:5.

- If it is Gods mission to bring justice, how do we take hold of his hand?
- How should hope distinguish us in our efforts to reach for justice, as those who know God?

Discussion 5: The role of prayer We all have a voice to plead with and are called to pray faithfully and persistently Luke 18:1-8. The seeds of intercession reap a bountiful harvest - God’s work of justice to bring freedom to those suffering. The work of justice requires us to intentionally cultivate a joyful hope, that is patient in affliction and faithful in prayer Romans 12:12.

- Why does God encourage us to pray with perseverance and humility?
- What does being patient in affliction look like for you today?

Discussion 6: The carriers of Justice Read Micah 6:8, Matthew 25:31-46, Acts 6:1-7, Romans 13:4, Hebrews 13:3, James 1:27 and James 2:1-13.

- How are you beginning to think about being a *carrier of justice* to those who need it?