

Freedom

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[0:00] We're talking about liberty, about freedom. And in some countries many of its citizens lack! the most basic freedoms don't they? We think of some nations around the world, no freedom! of religion, freedom of press, freedom of speech. And we don't always appreciate what! we as Aussies have. The freedoms that we have. The liberties that we have. The blessings really.

I put to you today though that we see liberties are under threat. There's this kind of change going on worldwide and even in our own nation there's some clamping down. And I was reading in the media how even the liberties we've got tonight maybe they're going to curtail it again or kind of constrain it again where we can't meet in as many numbers. All of it would seem for our own good such a clamp down if it were to be so. And of course we'll comply as we can. But we've seen in recent times just how easily a whole nation can be controlled and captivated by a government such that laws can change just in days and sweeping changes happen that affect the way we live. And this can happen as we see in our day. What if it was a really ungodly government that was to take the reins of power? And there are those that would tell us of what they call liberation these days. Liberation. We've got women's lib. We've got those that would promote philosophies and lifestyles that we know are ungodly and God would call abomination yet they would call it liberation. They would say that our beliefs and lifestyles would be actually a bondage.

But we know that it is truly such folk that are heralding this liberation and parading it and protesting for it that that is actually a bondage. There are those who would riot and protest and say that it's all about love and about rights and yet they're really stirring up a hatred. A hatred against God and a division and a lawlessness. We see the fruits of that. And I guess it makes you wonder what form of government is the best. What would be the best form of government? And of course there's there's polarising of left and right of of blue and red and green. But it's not so much about political parties that I'm talking about here. It's more about the philosophies, the world views.

There are some who would profess that they want to make the world a better place, that they want to save the planet they would say. Yet they advocate as part of their policy platform the destruction of human life when you actually read the fine print. And actually what they're promoting if you take it to the nth degree is really a totalitarian socialist style system of government that would actually take away people's liberties and freedoms such as we have today. So these are things that we ought to wake up and smell the coffee and realise this is what it could lead to.

This is what ultimately we could face. And we've been led astray as a nation when some would fall into line with such ideas and march to that pied piper as it were. And I put to you that societies and values across the world are being transformed. And at the heart of it you could say it's really Darwinism. Darwinian inspired Marxist doctrines. You know Darwin taught the evolution of the species and you look at some of the warped ideas that Darwin himself had. Very racist kind of ideas.

[3:38] And then what it leads to is that we're really just all a highly evolved kind of pond scum. And we've all got some chimpanzees and apes in our lineage. Now last I looked my dad doesn't look like a monkey.

But there's that sense isn't there that as if we would come from such a lineage that we are just all freak accidents of nature. And so we're really of little value.

I saw there's a bit of a Babylon Bee or something whatever it's called where it's a kind of a satire site. And it was saying, what's his name, Richard Dawkins says, no lives matter. No lives matter. Because effectively atheism teaches no lives matter. We're all just, it's pointless and purposeless. And we're just of no value truly. There's no purpose to life if you're an atheist. But when you really boil it down.

We've been lied to. Amen. We've been lied to by such contradictory and hate, God hating ideas. And our world is filled with these fictions, with this false news, with this falsehood.

[4:50] And as a result, virtue is lost. We've lost virtue. While sin is paraded and praised, virtue is gone. It's out the window. And political correctness and corruption has overtaken us as a people.

What's happening? They're saying that evil is good and that good is evil. Just like the Bible said they would. And what is the result? Utter confusion and chaos. And they paint religion, faith as a bondage, as something to avoid. But the big question is, where is true freedom found?

And we as true Christians, we can personally find and tell others of a true liberty of soul.

And a true freedom found in the one true and living God. And we've found that personally. We who know the Saviour, we, you, have been totally set free, truly set free.

That's actually the message of the Gospel, isn't it? That he will set men free. And really it's the greatest message we could ever tell. It's greater than any kind of political message or any philosophical message. This is the one absolute message that Christ has come to set men free from the slavery of sin.

[6:12] Think of this reality of the freedoms that we have. Talked about the freedoms of a nation that we have. For the meantime, we see pictures of freedom of, you've probably seen some videos of, some heartwarming stories of how people have worked hard to rescue an animal, maybe trapped in a barbed wire fence or or perhaps a stranded whale, and where people work hard to free this animal caught in a trap.

And they set it free and what a blessing it is. What a great, good news story. What a joy to see such a thing happen. People love that, don't they? To see an animal set free. People love to watch movies about prison break, of escapes, of the struggles and hardship and then of rescue, of slaves breaking out, breaking free and finding freedom, of people leaving an oppressed country and finding new life as free citizens.

They're good news stories, glad news stories. In times past we know there was harsh and cruel slavery, where there's sad histories in nations. There was times of abuse and oppression and injustice.

And we stand against that. We like to those that would oppose such things. And we would stand against such. Because slavery is something that is degrading, can be degrading. And it's still happening in some countries around the world today, where we see people being trafficked, trafficked, trapped, bought and sold. It's still happening today. There's horrific stories in the Middle Eastern countries.

It's happening even in our time and day. The word tells us of stories of kings and of kingdoms, of evil kings, of good kings, of enslavement, of captivities and of freedom. And it's a book that tells us of the history of that. We can learn from that. Of people made suffering slaves and of others free to be willing servants. There's a big contrast there between a suffering slave and a willing servant.

[8:27] And slavery is seen in the pages of the Bible. For example, we see in the life of Joseph, he was sold like an animal at a market, traded for money twice. And slavery like that can and does happen today. But more so, there's a mental enslavement. People can be mentally enslaved. They can be trapped in lifestyles, hooked. This kind of modern slavery that gets an addiction on people, that gets a grip on people. And they can't seem to break it loose. They've got a grip on it, but really it's got a grip on them. And sometimes the power of sin can be like that. It gets a hold of people and it holds them a prison prisoner. And so where is true freedom found? Someone might reckon that they're quite free and that they are not enslaved. And yet you see some of these great Hollywood, supposedly great Hollywood movie stars, they're trapped in this vicious cycle of drug abuse and addiction, such that their lives are tormented and they can't sleep. You know, you hear stories of some of them taking sleeping pills to get a bit of sleep and ended up dying of drug overdoses. It's commonplace for those that the world would herald as heroes and superstars. They're really slaves, slaves and enslaved.

Some would reckon that freedom is found in a bottle or a drug that they would inject or ingest. Some would say freedom is found in philosophy or self-help. You know, go to some self-help guru, you know, Tony Robbins or something like that, that somehow they can speak themselves into success and that freedom is found in that. And they might think that this is the message that we proclaim today, they would say that religion is the freedom that we should find. That religion is what? Is the answer.

Religion is the freedom. And they would think that if you reform a man, you give him a haircut and a change of clothes, you get him sober, you get him to turn over a new leaf, you reform him, but that's freedom.

But no, religion can actually still be a bondage and a snare. As we know, there's well-meaning, you know, nice people that have religion, but are lost. And they don't know the Saviour. They, I know back in a country town we lived in, there was a bit of a rascal who, he reformed himself. He gave up the booze and the smokes and, and he, it was all a change in his appearance and such, as he became a Jehovah's Witness. But it didn't save him. He didn't save the man. He was just as lost as he was before he became one. And we see today, the church of God is being attacked from within by those who would tie people up in religious knots and make people think that some religious way is the answer to set them free. Some would call for a kind of law keeping.

That, that is the answer that you've got to keep all the laws, all the dietary laws of the old covenant and such. And, and the, and the, and the, uh, those sort of peripheral laws that, that, that talk about such things as that, keeping the intimate, intricate detail of the law. But no, that is actually still part of the problem. We know there's well-meaning people, Seventh-day Adventists for one, and they're missing the boat, they're missing the mark because they've missed it.

[12:09] What is the answer? Man's religion will fail us. Man-made religion, it will never save or set free. And such efforts as setting standards without knowing the Saviour, it will fail you. It will fail you. You can be a fine upstanding gentleman or lady, uh, and set a high standard for yourself of a moral, uh, rectitude, and yet you can miss heaven because it's not about that. Thank God, though, freedom. Freedom. Freedom. Freedom is possible. Amen? We can know freedom. How so?

Because way back, 2000 years ago, our precious Saviour cried. It is finished. All the law keeping, all the, all the, all the types that, that, um, that the Old Covenant projected, uh, pointed to, was fulfilled then.

That the sacrificial lamb was fulfilled then. All the, the necessary righteousness was fulfilled then in Christ because every payment was made for man's sin. And all the law was fulfilled and completed in him.

And the Father tore the veil of the curtain of the temple from top to bottom. The veil that, that, uh, separated, uh, all but, uh, the, the one man once a year into that Holy of Holies. It was torn from top to bottom by the very hand of the Father. And he made the way for us to enter into the holiest. It was made wide open as God, the Father, tore the curtain. But all the while, it's as if religion is trying to stitch it back up. You know, as if the religion tries to close the curtain again. And people still vainly aim to keep the law as a kind of way to God. But no, it's not that. It's not that. Our Lord Jesus does not point us to a dead kind of religion. He has come to bring us life and life more abundant, true freedom. In a way, it's a freedom from religion as such, a freedom that is found in Christ, freedom in Christ. And you can know, we can know present tense, that wonderful freedom in our own soul and life, that liberty given to us by the true and living God. And that's really my heart tonight to communicate that blessed truth of the freedom that's found in Christ, the liberty that's in Christ. The word tells us of, as we'll come to some verses shortly. And this freedom is not enforced by a culture, not where some form of worship is imposed or forced upon us. You know, in yesteryear, they would have a state religion or a state church. And unless you conform to the established church, then you are really under the, in the firing line and in the fire. As we know, those that wouldn't conform to the church, the religion, as it were, that was enforced. And we see that today, for example, the man worship that is still happening today, for example, in North Korea, where people, they actually worship the, the dictator of their country. And they have pictures of him and statues of him. And he are meant to yield obeisance and as bowing and, and sacrificing and reverencing the pictures and the likenesses, the statues of the man who is the dictator of their country, North Korea. And we see that in cults as well, where people worship the man, or it could be

a woman who's running the cult, the cult leader is bowed down to. But we don't have that as, as godly Bible believing Christians, we've got a liberty to kneel to the Lord, to none other. Now there's a lot of people kneeling on football fields and such around the world today, and some crazy conformity to some philosophy of man, to, to somehow bow the knee to, to make some recompense for past history. But we don't kneel to man-made ways or man's kind of thinking. There's only one that we kneel to, who everyone shall kneel to, to the Lord Jesus Christ, as it says in the word in Philippians, that every knee shall bow unto him. And we've got a liberty to kneel to the Lord. And we'll do that willingly as we love him and serve him. And we have a liberty to tell the truth in a world where lies prevail. And this freedom that's promised is given to us and to all by an open invitation. This offer is not restricted. No one is excluded from this offer. Those who are the most unworthy can receive it. That is the astounding, astonishing reality, isn't it? That we, that would reckon, well for myself, that I am most unworthy, that I can be a glad recipient of it. And so can we. You might consider yourself, I'm weak, I'm unworthy, I'm unfit, that he would open heaven's gates unto each one that would simply trust him. And God actually chooses the weak. He chooses the weak. So in a way you could say, well if God chooses the weak, then there's no question where the source of that power comes from. It's not from us. It's not of ourselves. The power is of God. He is the source of our salvation.

[17:58] And yet as a people by and large in Australia, we've rejected the truth that can free us from enslavement. And we've adopted philosophies that actually enslave. We're actually enslaved as a nation, you could say, in that mental prison. That prison of unbelief. That unbelief system. And we see that here in 2 Corinthians 4, as I've alluded to, 2 Corinthians 4, and we see that reference to the blinding of minds.

The word tells us that people can be blinded in their minds. That this unbelief system can so enslave and so hold us in darkness of unbelief. And many are held captive and they don't even realise it.

And that's why for you and me, as godly believers, as we referred to in the prayer, the opening prayer, that God has given us a reason for the hope that is in us. We've got a hope that this world needs.

And when we try to communicate it, you might get some knockbacks. But that's because the blinkers are on. And these folk are under the dominion and they're subjected to the slave master and they don't even realise it.

So it says that here in 2 Corinthians 4 from verse 3, Now the God of this world holds people in this prison cell of unbelief, in this mental system of unbelief.

[19:45] The slave master holds people captive. And you and me, we are the ones who hold the key. We are the ones who have that message that can set men and women free. As they're sitting there in their dark, dingy prison cell, and yet they're filled into thinking that that's as good as it gets.

Now that's the best they can have, is that dark prison cell of unbelief. And it says men love darkness rather than light. And yet if only they could get a glimpse, if only that sunshine can penetrate, if only that light can penetrate their darkness, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. If that would shine unto them, then it would change everything. And yet they foolishly tread on this darkness in rejecting God. And they call that freedom. This is as good as it gets, they think. As they live in their godlessness and their vanity and they're missing the point of life, of why we are made.

They're missing it. As they think that living a life of flesh and sin is a freedom, but it's actually destroying them. And this is the great tragedy, isn't it? For those that don't know the Saviour.

[21:05] You know, the Roman emperors would give the people bread and circuses as a kind of entertainment of the masses to satisfy the mob.

And it kept the population under control. Bread and circuses. You know, give them something to satisfy their bellies and something to occupy their imagination, some entertainment.

And it's the same today, isn't it? The devil does just the same. Bread and circuses. People are still entertaining themselves to death in the 21st century, aren't they? They've got the big plasma, the big screens, whatever it be.

And, you know, 24-7, however many channels. And you can just sit there pressing your button all day long. Their lives are filled with vanities and they have no hope.

And they're in that prison cell and they think this is as good as it gets. They are lost. They have no hope. They are caught in a trap. They're like prisoners. And they polish the chains that hold them. [22:07] And they hate the gospel, the only hope that can set men free. And because their prison masters have trained them so well. Because the world would gear people and engineer people to think this is as good as it gets.

What a picture of captivity. And in contrast, we have that great truth of freedom. Think of the children of Israel. They were held captive.

And it took some convincing for Pharaoh to get God's message. You know, time after time.

Judgment after judgment. And it's just like it was in the days of Pharaoh.

The enemy who holds men captive today doesn't want to let them go. He doesn't want to let them go. But God fights for you. God brings that release and salvation like he did for the children of Israel.

To those who would trust him. God's freedom. The enemy of true freedom, the devil, doesn't want you to get this message. He doesn't want you to communicate this message. He might actually see someone saved.

[23:11] And out of his clutches. And for many in society, truth has fallen in the street. They've fallen prey to the father of lies. Now this message is counter-cultural.

This is a revolutionary message that you have as a believer. And yet, for many, they're in deception, which leads to destruction. It always has. People reject the truth that can save them.

But that shouldn't stop you and me from being a deliverer of it. To be a light bearer. The light of the glorious gospel should shine onto them. We must project that light. We must take that light into the darkest of places.

You know, the word says that we should go to the uttermost part of the earth. And I know there's one preacher, I think it might have been William Booth, that we should go to the guttermost.

No one is beyond the reach. You know, it says that his arm, his hand is not shortened, that it counts save. God's got the long arm. You know, there's the phrase, the long arm of the law.

[24:14] Well, we've got the long arm of the Lord. His arm, he's got long arms. He can reach to the deepest and darkest places. The foulest and furthest.

But they are in the devil's clutches. As surely as a possessed man. And they don't even know it. They're slaves of the system. Of the God of this world. And what is the answer?

Men would try here and there. Some would reckon the answer is politics. You know, change the government. And we'll get another prime minister or whatever it be. Or another kind of party in power.

But really, they're much the same in many ways. And the answer is not in protests, rallies in the street. Not in some kind of liberation movement.

You know, they call them liberation armies. But they're actually full of bondage, aren't they? We know the PLO, for example. It's not a liberation organisation. It's actually an enslavement organisation.

[25:13] Because it's taking people from the true God. And the answer is not in politics. The answer is not in some kind of lawlessness as well. Some would think, well, if we get rid of the police, you know.

There's no law. There's no government. As if that would somehow be the answer. That's crazy. What is the answer? The Word. The Word has the answer.

This Word has the answer for modern man. This is still the good news for modern man. This is the news that people need to hear. And it says the Word is nothing. We see that Romans 10.

Maybe turn Romans 10, verses 8 through 10. We can know the government of God on the inside of us. That's freedom. That's freedom. To know the one who's made us for a purpose.

And he has given us a purpose to fulfil, to live. And we can know his government, the kingdom of God within us. The king himself can take up residence inside of your heart.

[26:11] That's an amazing, blessed truth, isn't it? The one who's made you, made you for himself. And truly set you free.

Romans 10, 8 through 10, it says this. But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. That is, the Word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. It's saying they took this, confess this, share this, deliver this.

Pass this message on. Here is real freedom. This is what the ones in these prison cells all around us need to hear. It's like we're... I mean, there's a phrase that some controversial fellow uses, prison planet.

This is a prison planet. It's a planet that's in prison. Masses are in prison. And they don't even know it. And we have the real freedom to deliver this message of God's saving power to set men free.

[27:28] Christ has come to set men free. Free from sin. Free from the law. Free from sin and death. Free from religion. Free from themselves. Free from legalism.

Now, Jewish tradition created 613 rules for people to live by. And this included 365 negative commands. One for every day of the year.

Now, what a system of constraint. Now, that's not to say we ought not to live right and true and godly and holy. But we're not under some constraints of a rule-bound system.

We don't live by a load of rules. We live by faith. The just shall live by faith. And, of course, freedom does have limits. But what we've been truly set free to do, to be, is to love and to serve our Lord. Free from sin. Free from death. This is redemption. You know, another picture of slavery and of slaves being set free is this truth of redemption.

[28:27] A redeeming. Where our Lord paid everything to purchase us from the slave market of sin. That our Lord paid his precious, perfect blood so we can be purchased out of the enslavement of the slave master of the devil and made his free citizen, his free son and his glad servant.

He set us free by doing everything that had to be done to save us. To free us from everything that binds us and blinds us. He has paid the price. The full price.

The price is paid in full. Paid in full. That's what it says over our debt of sin. And he writes his new covenant within our hearts. Friends, there's a glad message we have.

And how can we picture that in terms of this truth of slavery, of freedom? In a world where darkness and deception seems to overtake so many.

I like to the time of the children of Israel. They were slaves in Egypt. And there's quite a lot of thought pictures you could get just from looking through Exodus, through the story of the children of Israel's travels.

[29:43] And the Lord says, as Moses did to Pharaoh, let my people go. And our Lord says the same for you and me.

That he wants us to be set free. As Christians, to have a freedom of service. A freedom that we know we're not held back by sin. And of course we know sin still has its, and staring at times, we've got to be constantly wising up and cautious and looking for those traps and trips that can ensnare. But the Lord has set us free in that he has declared us free. Free men. Free women. He's broken those chains. So we don't belong to the evil slave master anymore. And we are his free servants to gladly join his service.

It's quite a difference from the slavery of the slave master and the service of the king, of kings. It's our glad privilege to be his servant. And we see that in Psalm 116, verse 16.

The psalmist says this. Psalm 116, verse 16. He says this. O Lord, truly, I am thy servant. I am thy servant. And the son of thine handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds.

[31:03] So the psalmist is saying here, I am thy servant, O Lord. You have taken my bonds. You've broken my chains. Our service unto the king, it's not a drudgery.

It's not a burdensome service. It's a glad service. And we can trust in his plans. The question is, who are you going to serve?

If you're not serving the Lord, then ultimately, by default, you're serving the slave master still. And the Bible talks about two kinds of men.

You see that in Revelation where it talks about, basically, it separates men in two classes. It says you're a bond man or you're a free man. You're a bond man or a free man.

In other words, you're a slave or you're set free. And really, as Christians, you know, in that word picture of slavery and freedom, we are the free men. We are the free women.

[32:03] We're not held in that bondage, in those chains. And our true freedom comes from knowing the truth. It says in Psalm 119, verse 45, And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.

Psalm 119, which notes all about the word of God, that's Psalm 119. Verse 45, I will walk in at liberty, for I seek thy precepts. So true liberty is found in the word of God.

That's true liberty there. And he sets us at liberty. And it's all made possible by his word. Brothers and sisters today, as our Lord came, and he says in John 8, 31, To those who believed on him, he said, Continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

He says, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Now, that really boils down to some very simple things, doesn't it?

Do we know the truth? And if we know the truth, the truth shall make us free. The Bible says that broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there go thereat.

[33:26] And then it says that narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. Few there be that find it. Friends, the broad way is the way of death. It's those who do not know the truth.

They're following a lie. And the narrow way is those who know the truth. The one who is the way, the truth, and the life. To know Jesus, to know his saving. There's only two possibilities here.

Only two. And that's really quite a sobering thought, isn't it? Which road are we on?

The truth shall make you free. He's promised that for you, for me. There's no expiry.

Now, look, there's lots of products. I like to say this. There's lots of products you can buy at the supermarket. And it says expiry date. I've looked on this book and there's no expiry date. There's no expiry of his promises, amen?

[34:29] His promises are still valid. They're still valid. He hasn't said that his promises expire. He said that the truth shall make you free. And believe that you can have total freedom.

And there's a glad truth there that when we know the truth, we are free. Truly free. Totally free. And this is the message we want to tell others, isn't it?

Of this one who can set men free. It's always been his mission to set men free. And it still is today through us. We know in Isaiah 61 where it prophesied of his coming and it tells of the scripture he quoted in Luke 4.

It says, The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

You know, I've been in prison. Thankfully I was on the right side of the bars. But I've been in prison in the sense that I've walked into Yatla and seen what a place it is. And it's a graphic cold place.

[35:36] It's an enclosed place. It's a place of bars and of locks and of padlocks and of guards and of constraint.

And of limits and confinement. And our Lord Jesus says he's come to proclaim liberty to the captives. The opening of the prison to them that are bound.

What a picture that is for you and me. But those, and you know, we've got a heart for those. I know there's some in our number who've gone to the prison to reach out.

There's some limits on that now. But there's this sense of those that seem to be so evidently held captive. But really the whole world is in the same chains of bondage of Satan.

And our Lord tells us when he fulfilled it in his coming of Isaiah 61 and Luke 4, he tells how he set at liberty them that are bruised.

[36:39] He's come to set people at liberty. And this glorious truth we have is something that is just a beautiful truth.

That we have the message of life, of liberty. And yet as believers we can easily, likewise, we can somehow find that bondage can creep back up on us.

It's like those weeds, you know, that encroach, isn't it? You do nothing to make them grow but they always come year after year. And unless you do something, they just get worse and worse.

And they encroach on your garden and they entangle. And the Bible tells about how the opposite of liberty in Galatians 5 is being entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

He says, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Be not entangled again. With the yoke of bondage. You know, the devil wants you to wear his yoke. The yoke of bondage.

[37:38] And the yoke, it speaks of, you know, where you have two animals together around their necks and ploughing the fields. And the devil wants you to yoke together with him.

He wants you to put that wooden instrument around your neck and to plough the fields his way. And go his way. And be ensnared and entangled with that yoke of bondage.

But God wants to break that yoke. Wants to break that yoke. And, you know, sometimes that yoke can be like a kind of religious ideas and religious anything that's not the gospel, isn't it?

Anything that's not the gospel. We can stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. And just another one is Romans 8 verse 21.

It tells about the glorious liberty of the children of God. Now, there's a glorious liberty for you that know Christ. A glorious liberty. This liberty is beyond comparison.

[38:38] It's glorious. It's just so amazing and wonderful. The glorious liberty of the children of God. And he contrasts that with the bondage of corruption. Just think back if we can to Egypt and the children of Israel and those harsh slave masters that they had.

And what a picture that is of the enemy of our soul. The devil is a hard taskmaster. You'll work in his service and you'll just suffer for it.

Ultimately, it's drudgery and despair and pointlessness and hopelessness. You know, he'll make you as comfortable as he can such that you don't care for the gospel.

But Egypt in the Bible is known as the house of bondage. One of the phrases that describe Egypt for the children of Israel as they were held captives there was the prison house.

The house of bondage. And the enemy wants to keep you there. Locked in those prison bars, in those chains, in those fetters.

[39:44] And even when you get saved, he will want you to hanker after Egypt. It's interesting, isn't it, how the children of Israel, God miraculously provided manna from heaven.

Everything was laid on by God miraculously, supernaturally, that they would be fed. Yet these many thousands and thousands, millions of the children of Israel in the wilderness wonderings that God would provide manna from heaven.

In such a blessed provision of God. And yet they still complained. And whined and whined and murmured against Moses. And they still had an appetite for Egypt.

They still remembered what they had back in Egypt. In Numbers 11 verse 5, it says, We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely.

The cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic. Now they had this, it's like, can't you just smell it cooking? Maybe I should have done a cooking demonstration.

[40:44] And as it were, to kind of waft that, the smell of these lovely vegetables and the fish cooking. And the crackling sound and the odour of lovely food to eat.

The enemy wants you to have an appetite for Egypt still. Believer, doesn't he? The enemy wants to have mastery over your soul such that you would still hanker after the things of the world.

The things that you knew in Egypt. Even you who believe. Yes, we're still subject to that temptation. But remember, Egypt is hard bondage.

You don't want to go back there. Satan is your enemy. And we know that God's word is not some irksome set of rules. It's a book of blessing and freedom.

There's true liberty here. Abundant life. It's called the perfect law of liberty in James 1.25. What a blessed description that is.

[41:41] Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, here being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Now this is a perfect law of liberty.

Nothing supersedes it. This is the perfect law of liberty. And the devil wants you to rob you of God's blessing and to drag you back behind those prison bars, to throw you back in the clink.

But we can know God's liberty. There's other verses about liberty. 2 Peter 2 verse 19. God promises a true liberty.

And we have great need of discernment. And there's this picture of ensnarement, of enslavement, and of freedom, of liberty, right through the word of God.

It's a continuing theme. Something you could maybe explore more for yourself in some personal study. Psalm 124 verses 7 through 8 says this. It says, Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers.

[42:45] The snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Know that the fowler, the bird catcher, has got this snare, this trap that he wants to trap and catch.

But it says that the snare is broken and we are escaped. The Lord Jesus sets us free. We should resist that hankering after Egypt, the fish and the cucumbers and the melons and the garlic and the whatever.

And rather think God has set us free from the house of bondage. He's taken those chains and he's broken them to pieces. He's taken that snare that traps and he's broken it beyond repair.

That we can have real freedom in Christ. And that's a freedom that our Lord gives us. Not a freedom, not a binding up with rules or impositions of religion.

But a glorious liberty. Glorious liberty. Glorious liberty as the sons of God. Because that's who we are. And it says in 2 Corinthians 3.17, Now the spirit, the Lord is that spirit.

[43:55] And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Liberty. We've got a wonderful freedom. We who were once held slaves in sin's dominion and bondage.

We who were held captive. He's rescued us. He's gone into the very jaws of hell to take us as ransomed people.

As a redeemed people. He's paid the very precious full payment for your redemption price. And you have a glorious liberty, it says.

We can take heart in that. So let's not hanker after Egypt, brothers and sisters. Let's not think so much about the appetites that would excite us of the things of the world.

But remember what Egypt is. It's bitterness. The Bible says Egypt's slavery for the children of Israel, it was bitter. It says that there was groaning and there was sighing.

[44:56] You know, as you could picture it as you see it in some of these recreated Bible movies where they're building the Pharaoh's temples or pyramids. And we see how the slave masters would treat them cruelly.

And the Bible says that these hard taskmasters of Egypt, they made the life of the children of Israel bitter.

Yeah, with hard bondage. There was a bitterness there. There was a suffering. And there was a constant beating and dominion over them. And Egypt tells of a control, of a domination.

You know, really, without us even realising it, if we're outside of Christ, we're under another domain. We're under another dominion, another kingdom. I like to put it that there's really only two kingdoms.

You know, what is it saying in Colossians that he's translated us? Out of the kingdom of darkness and into... Yeah, here we go.

[46:01] Colossians 1.13. Who hath delivered us, he set us free, he's rescued us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son.

And that's a wonderful truth. You can know that for sure. Believe it here tonight. And not to act, as it were, belligerently or flippantly or carelessly that you should, you know, that you should know that you're saved.

But you should have that thankfulness. Yes, by his grace and mercy, I can know that I'm saved. And that because I'm saved, he's translated me.

I'm no longer... I'm under that dominion. He's taken me as you would fly from one country to another. It's a transfer. It's a translation. It's a relocation.

That you're not under that citizenship anymore. That you've got a new citizenship. Your citizenship is in heaven. Got the passport stamped. Got the boarding pass.

[47:01] Just waiting for the... What Julie likes to do, her little boarding call. You can get her to demonstrate later. But there's that sense where the boarding call, boarding call, passengers, you know, get ready.

You know, there's that sense of, I'm ready. I'm ready for the call. I'm ready for that flight, as it were. And we've got that wonderful certainty by faith that we have that glorious liberty, present tense. And we've left the groaning and sighing of Egypt. The Lord has come to set you free. Friends, here tonight, I'm preaching really to the choir, to the, I think, largely, if not all, but most people here have already grasped this.

They've already received this gift. But if you've yet to receive it, it's a translation. It's a transfer. It's a transaction. He takes, he passes us from death unto life.

It's this relocation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son. And you stop belonging over here to the slave master, as in the hard taskmaster of the devil, who is alike to the taskmaster of Egypt's hard bondage and bitterness.

[48:16] And you've been translated into the kingdom of his dear son, that you belong to the king of kings and the Lord of lords, that you're his son, his daughter, his servant, and you are set free.

Just to close, in John 8, 36, it says this, If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. He's come to set us free.

And the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth. This is the word. This is the word. It's by the word that we have his message of life. And this word, it says that if we confess him as Lord, if we believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, that Christ died for us, that he rose for us, it says that you can know that you are saved.

And you are free. You've been set free. You know, there's so many things more we could say. But to think those two states, you're either a bondman or a free man.

You're either a slave or you're a son of God. You're a servant of God. You've been translated into that new domain.

[49:32] And your citizenship has changed. Your destination has changed. Your loyalty has changed. Your nationality has changed. You belong to the holy nation, the king of kings nation.

And we are free men, free to be a servant of the Lord. And there's a glad joy that we have, as I say, kind of trying to contrast this, that the slavery of the slave master to a servant of the Most High. You know, I know I've talked about it before, how Julie and I had this rare occasion where we went to England and to London.

And we passed the Buckingham Palace. And the servant there opened the gates and said, Would you like to come in? Would you like to come in? And invited Jillian, me, into the palace.

The queen was a bit rude. She wasn't there to welcome us that day. But, you know, it was just the kind of showing off of the Buckingham Palace to the common people. But it was such a privilege to go into that place of royalty, of regality, of this noble place, this place of history and esteem.

[50:44] That was the king's palace, the queen's palace. But also just to, I thought the people that were serving there, what a privilege it would be to be one of the king's servants.

Now, to be one of the king's servants is quite a contrast from being a slave of the slave master, isn't it? That we can know the king of kings and enter his glad service.

It's a totally different context, isn't it? So we are free men. He that has the son is free indeed. He shall make you free.

You shall be free indeed. And so let's know that glorious liberty. Amen? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that your word tells us how men and women can be set free from the clutches of this slave master of sin.

Lord, we thank you that you've paid every possible payment in full for each that will put their trust in you to know that grace, that saving, that glorious liberty.

[51:47] Lord, help us to grasp it, to grasp the reality of that and to be glad of that and to let it change us, Lord, such that we can be glad servants of yours, Lord, not in some onerous, begrudging way as something that's imposed upon us, but gladly, Lord, gladly, that you've made us not only servants of the most high king of kings, but you've made us citizens of heaven and you've made us sons and daughters of the living God.

And we can call you Father because you've changed our whole makeup, our whole family association that we have been born again into your family.

We pray that each one might know that wonderful truth personally tonight, that personally each one might know, yes, I believe, I receive that gift. Thank you, Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.