

Let my people GO



ADULT BIBLE STUDY RESOURCE

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FOCUS: God has created all people to be free - moving from darkness to light.

'Afterwards Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'" (Exodus 5:1 NIV)

Why do we have the International Day of Prayer for Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking?

The purpose of this specific Sunday is to intercede through prayers for the victims and survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT). Salvationists all over the world today are united in prayer and supplication on behalf of all people with lived experience, their family and friends, those creating the demand, and traffickers and exploiters. We can (and we are able to) pray many people out of MSHT because we are praying to our God who hears the prayer of all people, bearing in mind that he created every single person free. Nobody wishes to be a slave or to live in fear. Jesus Christ our Lord said this

about himself: 'The Spirit of the LORD is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour' (Luke 4:18-19 NIV).

Is God able to do it? Is he already doing it without us? Yes! And we can join God in what he is doing and about to do as a whole Army down on its knees, heads bowed, crying, praying and petitioning before him for the freedom of his children from the hands of Pharaoh who is clothed in the form of MSHT!

We are in a spiritual warfare and the powerful weapons we have are worship and prayer. Let us

call on God to come and frustrate the agenda of Satan. Since we do not see what happens in the spiritual realm, our enemy Satan is shrewd at reminding us often of what we can see, which is very limited. We are discouraged because the situations of MSHT that we witness in front of and around us seem to remain the same. But in the meantime, our prayers are wreaking havoc in the dominion of darkness and bringing in God's light and freedom!



What is Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking?

MODERN SLAVERY

This is the status or condition of a person over whom rights of ownership are exercised. It's a state of control over a person by use of threats and/or use of violence (physical, mental or emotional). People are exploited in a way that violates their human rights and deprives them of their freedom.

Modern slavery takes many forms and is often in plain sight. Pornography sites, sex industry, domestic workers, factory workers, farm workers, child soldiers and forced marriages are just a few examples of how modern slavery is all around us. Anybody can be a victim (the young, teenagers, the middle-aged, and even elderly men and women). Traffickers manipulate and exploit individual desires and promise to fulfil people's dreams. They are liars who veil their authentic self and, before you know it, a person is trapped in an MSHT situation.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

There are three elements of trafficking: the act, the means and the purpose.

The Act (what is done) - It includes recruitment, transport, transfer and harbouring of a person to be employed. The potential victim is TRICKED.

The Means (how it is done) - It's achieved by the use of force, threat, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, power or the exploitation of vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim. The victim is TRAPPED.

The Purpose (why it is done) - Purposes vary, but ultimately traffickers trade and abuse other human beings for personal benefit, which can be financial or material. The victim is TRADED.

There is no place in the whole world that does not have or is not at risk of slavery or trafficking. It will look different in different countries, communities and contexts, depending on things such as technology, migration routes or the demand for exploitation.

The number of people experiencing modern slavery and human trafficking globally has increased to an estimated 49.6 million on any given day. Approximate worldwide figures indicate that:

- 27.6 million people are experiencing forced labour and sexual exploitation
- 22 million individuals are experiencing forced marriages.

Women and girls make up an estimated 11.8 million of those enduring forced labour and sexual exploitation around the world.

Children make up more than an estimated 3.3 million of those enduring forced labour and sexual exploitation globally.

SOURCE: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage - International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2022



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In small groups, pick one or two questions, then discuss and write down your answers.

- Has someone come into your community offering jobs or education opportunities? Do you have students studying in the capital whose arrangements were made by someone else? Have you confirmed that they are studying or working?
- When you go to the market, do you buy cheap goods? Have you ever asked yourself why they are so cheap and why that question is important?
- What kind of slavery and trafficking is brought about by technology, migration and demand for exploitation?



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

Read Exodus 1:1-14

In this passage of Scripture, we know that the Israelites had gone to Egypt because it had what they desired (food) and they were given the best part - a fertile land in the region of Goshen - because they were shepherds and kept livestock. After living and enjoying grace during the period of Joseph and the pharaoh at that time, those who knew the Israelites and this history died and in came a new king (pharaoh) who viewed them as a threat because of their increasing numbers. This new pharaoh saw an opportunity for cheap labour, and he oppressed them with forced labour. He put slave masters over them and the lives of the Israelites were made bitter, as they had to make bricks and mortar and were exposed to all kinds of harsh work in the fields. The Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What do you think was the reaction of Israelites when they discovered that they were being targeted and that they were no longer free?
- Why do we think they were exploited?

Read: Exodus 3:7-8

The Israelites, God's people, were in misery in the land of Egypt for more than 400 years. God saw their misery and heard them crying out because of their slave drivers. He grew concerned about their suffering and came down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land.

God sent Moses with a message for Pharaoh. It was a command. Moses received clear instructions from God and his mission was freedom for the Israelites. Let my people go!

What two things can we learn from this command about God's heart for freedom for people who are enslaved and are forced into labour?

1. Let my people go! - Pharaoh did not understand what Moses was talking about or, rather, he feigned ignorance: 'Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go"' (Exodus 5:2 *NIV*). He felt his view was based on a valid reason, because he obtained free labour from Israelites, so he refused to listen to their God and to let the Israelites go.

Just like Pharaoh, it can be hard to exit and leave a situation of slavery, trafficking and exploitation. John 10:10 *NIV* states: 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' Just like the thief, situations of slavery, human trafficking and

exploitation steal, kill and destroy the lives of those who are experiencing it. 'Let my people go!' shows how God's heart is for all of his people. His life and his sacrifice on the Cross tells it all, that he has come so that every person, even those experiencing MSHT, may have life and have it to the full. We are called to stand with him in this, and to pray and work to end situations of MSHT for all around the world.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can situations of MSHT 'steal, kill and destroy'?
- What would it look like for a person experiencing MSHT to 'have life and have it to the full'?

Read Exodus 5:3-21

2. Let my people go! - The more Moses pleaded for the Israelites to be let go, the harder Pharaoh made it for them to bear. In Exodus 5:6-8 *NIV*, Pharaoh gave this order to the slave masters and overseers in charge of the people: 'You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota.' Moses hit a dead end after his first conversation with Pharaoh. The Israelite overseers despaired and went to appeal to Pharaoh, but they hit a dead end too. In turn, they took it up with Moses and said in Exodus 5:21 *NIV*, 'May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.'

In verse 22, Moses took his concerns and challenges back to God, asking, 'Why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me?' Moses sought God first whenever he hit a dead end. He relied on God to help him to solve all his problems.

It can be extremely difficult for people experiencing MSHT to be able to exit their circumstances or to be safe or to find hope. 'Let my people go!' is a cry from God's heart that is meant to be embraced and lived out in the hearts of people. 'Let my people go!' is a reminder that we cannot do this work on our own and on our own strength. This is a work in which we too must take the challenges, hardships and struggles back to God so that all his people may live freely. It is a reminder that in order to end slavery, human trafficking and exploitation, we must start by taking it back to God in prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Who do you turn to when you hit a dead end? Do you turn to man or to God?
- Does our silence when we experience challenges and dead ends contribute more to the suffering of those experiencing MSHT?
- What can you be praying about when it comes to MSHT?

GROUP ACTIVITY



Prayer Stations

'This is a work in which we too must take the **challenges, hardships and struggles** back to God so that all his people may live freely'